

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Monday, 20th July, 2015

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Hamilton and C. Vines.

Also in attendance were: - Jane Parfremment (CYPS), Sue Wilson (CYPS), Paul Dempsey (CYPS), Jane Hopkinson (DfE), Catherine Hall (Rotherham CCG), R. Wall (CYPS), C. Bailey (CYPS), Hannah Etheridge (Legal and Democratic Services).

Apologies for absence were received from Lynne Grice-Saddington (Right2Rights), Karen Holgate (NHS) and Maryann Barton (CYPS).

D1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

D2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20TH JANUARY, 2015.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, held on 20th January, 2015, were considered.

Councillor Watson asked for updates on the future reports discussed under item number D58. When would these be available for consideration? These were the 'Care Leavers' Week', 'Options on the future role of Liberty House' and GCSE and A-Level outcomes for Looked After Children.

It was agreed that these reports would be considered at a future meeting as part of the work programme for the forthcoming year. Councillor Watson requested that, in the meantime, updates be provided to him as soon as possible.

Lorraine Lichfield had provided one accuracy update outside of the meeting in relation to minute number D61 (Virtual Headteacher's Annual Report, 2013-2014). This related to the fourth bullet point in the section of the minutes covering the discussion section. Lorraine's amendment provided greater clarity: -

Two mental health workers had been recruited through MAST for a pilot project (funded through LAC pupil premium funding) intended to help improve the emotional health and wellbeing and readiness to learn of identified looked after children.

Agreed: - (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 20th January, 2015, be noted.

(2) That the reports mentioned under D58 of the minutes of the previous meeting be prioritised for future meetings, and Councillor Watson be

provided with an interim update as soon as possible.

D3. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE.

Jane Parfremment, Director of Safeguarding Children and Families, spoke about the break in Corporate Parenting Panel meetings since the publication of the Casey Report and the Secretary of State, Eric Pickles', announcement. Since the report and announcement, the group had not met due to the governance changes that this had brought. It was now important for the Corporate Parenting Panel to begin to meet again with renewed energy.

Jane had submitted a revised draft terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel. It provided: -

- A real sense of ownership and clarity for Elected Members, including proposing a role of 'Champions' and undertaking Regulation 44 Visits;
- A proposed role for Elected Members in championing their Corporate Parenting responsibilities in other areas of the Council, or in another area of their life;
- Involvement of partners in the Corporate Parenting Panel;
- Strong links to other plans and strategies;
- Champions with responsibilities for key issues for looked after children;
- Partnering of the Corporate Parenting Panel with the Governance Board of the Virtual School, with each group meeting alternate months;
- The Corporate Parenting Panel would have a strong profile in relation to Corporate Parenting;
- Revised and strengthened membership, concerning both Elected Members and other stakeholders: -
 - Foster Carer and representatives from the Children in Care Council;
 - Police – the Corporate Parenting oversaw key issues that were important to the Police;
 - A headteacher to act as challenge to the Virtual School.

Jane explained that she would work on the draft terms of reference and forward plan for future Corporate Parenting Panel meetings in August, 2015, to be presented to the September, 2015, meeting.

The purpose of Rotherham's Corporate Parenting Panel would be: -

- To have overview of services to Looked After children and Care Leavers across the Council and assist in ensuring services are provided efficiently and effectively;
- Ensure that the Council provides such care, education and opportunities that the Panel would afford to their own children;

- To lead on behalf of the Council and partners of the Local Authority to ensure that all services directly provided for children and young people in care, and care leavers, were scrutinised to deliver to a high standard and to all statutory requirements;
- To raise the aspiration, ambitions and life chances of children and young people in care, narrowing the gap of achievement between children in care and their peers;
- To ensure that children in care are protected and supported to develop as healthy citizens, able to participate in their community;
- To ensure that all elected members are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities and that all Council services are mindful of the needs of children in care and respond accordingly within their particular remit.

The report explained that the Corporate Parenting Panel would see statutory reports and would be able to recommend any changes they felt necessary.

Under the proposal, the Corporate Parenting Panel would be responsible for Champions for Children in Care. Each Champion would have overview of the following strands: -

- Housing;
- Employment and training opportunities within Council departments and partner agencies;
- Health (including mental health);
- Educational attainment and access to Higher Education;
- Foster carer recruitment and retention;
- Response to those who go missing.

The submitted report outlined risks and uncertainties of local authorities not having robust arrangements. The proposal for Rotherham's Corporate Parenting Panel recognised that: -

- Resources had been strengthened to ensure the development of improvement services for children and young people who are Looked After in Rotherham;
- A Quality Assurance Framework had been developed to ensure that the quality of services for children and young people was regularly audited and assured;
- Lack of robust corporate parenting arrangements would negatively impact on outcomes for Looked After Children;
- The effectiveness of corporate parenting arrangements were a key line of enquiry within Ofsted inspections of children's services.

Discussion on the proposed terms of reference was held.

Councillor Vines welcomed the protocol and thought that it was an improvement and would enable better engagement. A representative from the Job Centre Plus would be useful. It could be hard for LAC to get into the world of work. They did not have the familial support that their peers had and often lost out on having a family member mentor them and help them secure their first job.

Councillor Watson spoke about the role of Champions in impressing on all Elected Members the importance and requirements of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities. If the Corporate Parenting function was failing, all 63 Elected Members were failing. He wished for all Elected Members to regularly undertake Regulation 44 visits to Children's Homes. However, it was important to remember that the buildings were people's homes and the visits could not be disruptive. In order for Members to fully participate in the visits they needed sufficient notice. Visits should be set-up well in advance.

Councillor Hamilton asked for a model structure for Regulation 44 visits and for each Elected Member to be given an area to specifically analyse during the visit.

The previous membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel was considered and suggestions were made for membership of the group going forward: -

- Representative/s of the Fostering Panel;
- Representative/s of the Adoption Panel;
- Another member from the Improving Lives Select Commission;
- Representation should be offered to all three of the political groups on the Council to have one Labour, one UKIP and one Independent / Independents' Group Elected Member.

There were clear links with the following politicians and their attendance from time-to-time would be beneficial: -

- Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health - Councillor D. Roche;
- Advisory Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Economy – Councillor D. Lelliott;
- An Elected Member on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Councillor Hamilton thought that a specification for the role of member of the Corporate Parenting Panel would be useful and help to recruit new members and increase interest.

Councillor Vines suggested that all Looked After Children be given the contact details for their Ward Members so that they could contact them in the same way any other constituent would if they had concerns.

Jane Hopkinson, Department for Education, added that it was not just the Corporate Parenting Panel's responsibility to be a corporate parent, the responsibility belonged to everyone. Children looked after out-of-borough needed a Champion. Jane suggested that an adult who was previously looked after would provide a useful perspective.

Rebecca Hall suggested that young people should regularly attend the Corporate Parenting Panel, although consideration would need to be given to how this could be facilitated to make their attendance a positive experience.

Councillor Hamilton suggested that the web cast system within the Council Chamber be used to record the meeting with young people, this could then be shown to other Elected Members to show what the Corporate Parenting role consisted of.

Councillor Watson asked for an all member seminar on the function of corporate parenting. It was noted that training was being provided by David Simmonds to all Elected Members on 28th July, 2015.

Learning and development materials were being designed and would be circulated in due course. Caroline Webb and Warren Carratt were leading on this.

Councillor Vines was keen that visits be made to children who were placed out-of-Borough. They needed to be treated like any other looked after child.

It would be positive if the Adoption and Fostering Panel members attended the Regulation 44 visits as they made decisions linked to placements.

Jane Parfremment agreed to convene a meeting towards the end of August to discuss key membership and develop a work plan for the meeting.

Agreed: - (1) That the draft terms of reference document be supported.

(2) That the information shared be noted.

D4. PERFORMANCE REPORT - LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - MAY 2015.

Sue Wilson, Head of Service for Performance and Planning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate, presented a performance report to the end of May, 2015. The report was in a new format in line with other performance reports. A corporate parenting dashboard was being developed.

The submitted report outlined the CYPS Performance Board that Commissioner Newsam established in January, 2015. From July, 2015, onwards the Board continued to meet weekly, alternating between

Children In Need and Safeguarding and Looked After Children themes. The attendance had been broadened to include Team Managers from the focus area to promote engagement and ownership of performance management at all levels of the organisation.

Looked After Children Performance Board meetings included Care Leavers, Fostering and Adoption, LAC Outcomes, and Placements. Corporate Parenting Panel performance reports would focus on the key measures identified at the Performance Board.

A programme of Quality Assurance would be implemented to ensure that casework was at least 'Good'.

Six performance indicators were rated as red: -

1. LAC cases reviewed within timescales;
2. Health of LAC: up-to-date health assessments;
3. Health of LAC: up-to-date dental assessments;
4. Percentage of children with up-to-date Personal Educational Plans;
5. Percentage of eligible LAC with an up-to-date Pathway Plan;
6. Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family.

Sue Wilson spoke through the identified performance headings within the submitted report (7.2 – 7.9): -

At the end of May, 2015, there were 406 LAC (currently 425 on the day of meeting). This was in line with statistical neighbours and above the national average. Analysis was being undertaken on the reasons why this was the case. There had been a number of large families coming in to care. Typically there were 14/15 new LAC a month; in May and June 2015 there had been 24/25. Analysis was looking at what the presenting issues were.

Placements – LAC with 3 or more in the past 12 months: - 44 (10.5%). The twelve months was 'rolling'.

Councillor Watson asked about movement to permanency for these children. Jane Parfremment confirmed that Special Guardianships were being worked on. Michelle Whiting and Paul Dempsey were in the final stages of developing a policy.

Improvement work on children with up-to-date visits and reviews within timeframe: - Visits were improving month-on-month since start of financial year, they were up to national standard. Service Managers were focused on this.

Health and dental assessments: – there were discrepancies between LA and Health data. At the end of May, 80.8% LAC had an updated assessment. 59.9% on dental. Issues related to recording on the

different systems used.

Councillor Vines asked why the target figures were so low?

Issues related to registration with a dentist and assessments taking place. Older young people could decline. They had a right to decline and this needed to be respected and recorded accurately.

Jane Parfremment outlined weekly performance meetings that were taking place and covering all areas of LAC Services. The data would be used to hold Team Managers to account. Currently data performance was nowhere near good enough and all professionals needed to ensure that everything was being done to ensure looked after young people were being offered check-ups and encouraged to have them.

Councillor Watson asked for an update to the next meeting giving a breakdown on the data as far as possible based on placement type.

Personal Education Plans: – an E-PEP was being developed. Current performance was low. The system would go live in August, to be used from September. This would include developments around the Virtual School. An all member seminar was planned on the Virtual School.

Adoptions: – Paul Dempsey explained how the data was calculated on a monthly basis. It would often take more time to find the best placement.

Councillor Vines asked how long children would be in foster care before it became apparent that they needed to be adopted?

Jane Parfremment confirmed that by their 4 month review (second review) professionals should be looking at some form of permanence for the child. Children in proceedings and being removed from an unsafe environment would always have their permanency considered and the timetable to achieve permanency should be within 26 weeks.

Councillor Hamilton asked about Fostering to Adopt.

Paul Dempsey explained that this initiative was now called Early Permanence. Very often, and especially when there were multiple children removed from a family, pre-birth assessment looked to other family members first. Assessment work with families looking to adopt would also include the fostering approval process. Children could be placed as a foster arrangement whilst adoption process was underway. Usually there was a change in provider between the two stages, meaning a change for the child/young person. However, the child would not have to move in an Early Permanence arrangement. A child placed under this at birth would not have any moves at all, allowing them to build attachments from day one. There were some risks for adults if the Court did not agree that adoption was in the child's best interests. Early Permanence placed more risk on the adult/s involved, than the child. Rotherham had made 8

or 9 Early Permanence placements so far.

Sue Wilson asked for feedback on the report and whether there were any gaps?

Jane Parfremment suggested the long-term matching process.

There were 197 looked after children in placements in the Borough, and 102 out of Borough. Often the out of borough placements were very close in neighbouring authorities.

Jane Parfremment explained that capacity was being looked at along with a geographical mapping of where children were. Rotherham Social Workers visited the children placed out of Borough in exactly the same way as with children placed in Borough. Health professionals from the area/authority where the child was placed visited the Rotherham children placed out of Borough, but this was to allow children to see health professionals with the best knowledge of the local provision available. The services of the other health professionals would be paid for by Rotherham through a re-charge to the other local authority.

Rotherham was designing its own specialist placements to enhance provision.

Councillor Vines asked about the number and capacity of residential homes – had it been sufficient over the past 5 – 10 years? Jane Parfremment explained the analysis would not look as far back as ten years, due to the inability to make comparisons to present day provision because of changes in practice and expectations. However, work would be undertaken to look at more recent trends in provision and capacity over the past five years.

Agreed: - (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That the Corporate Parenting Panel continue to receive regular performance monitoring updates.

D5. UPDATE ON OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF CHILDREN'S HOMES.

Paul Dempsey, Service Manager – Family Placements and Residential, explained that Rotherham Council ran five residential children's homes. Nationally, Ofsted inspected each home twice a year. One would be a full two-day inspection, the second a one-day inspection. The new Ofsted framework included nine 'Quality Standards'. The Ofsted rating of 'Adequate' had been re-named 'Requires Improvement'.

Rotherham currently had three children's homes rated as 'Good', one 'Adequate' and one 'Inadequate'.

The submitted report provided the detailed feedback from the Ofsted

Inspector in relation to the most recent reports, Woodview in June, 2015, and Silverwood in July, 2015.

Silverwood was graded as 'Good' and the Ofsted inspector's comments included: -

- Positive feedback from the children and young people;
- Risk Assessments and Care Plans were Good;
- Young people felt safe;
- Good relationships between staff and young people;
- Staffing was consistent;
- There was a commitment to education;
- Leadership was good, effective management, all staff felt supported, supervisions and PDRs were in place, a lot of staff training was undertaken;
- There was a good relationship with all Services.

Woodview was graded as 'Inadequate' and a Compliance Notice had been issued. The Notice set out actions that must be completed by 24th July, 2015. These included: -

- Update all Risk Assessments to include current risks and strategies to manage them and children's Care Plans;
- Minimise the risk of fire by encouraging the young people reduce their risk of cigarettes and take steps to ensure the young people did not smoke in their bedrooms;
- Staff to build better relationships with young people to provide effective behaviour management;
- The practices of locking doors and restricting access to certain areas of the home should be reviewed. Reviews of risk management, such as waking night staff, should be considered.

The Ofsted Inspector's report noted that the new manager at the home recognised the strengths and weaknesses there and had an action plan in place to address the issues in the home.

The submitted report outlined Regulation 44 reports and how it was a requirement that an independent person visited each month to assess the extent that the home safeguarded and promoted young people's welfare. The independent report must be submitted to Ofsted.

It was proposed that named Elected Members visited the Council's Children's Homes in their role as Corporate Parents. It was proposed that these visits be aligned to the Regulation 44 visits to minimise the disruption for the young people in their home, and for Elected Members to be informed by the work of the Independent Visitor.

Ofsted had sight of Regulation 44 Visit reports. If concerns were reported on the independently authored reports it was likely that they would inspect

the home as a result.

Improvement work taking place across all Children's Homes included a project looking at what it was like to live and work in a Children's Home. This aimed to make them as much like a 'normal' home as possible.

It was suggested that Elected Members undertake thematic visits to Children's Homes, with a workshop session prior to the visit.

Councillor Vines asked whether it would be better to have more frequent visits; six-monthly did not seem adequate to ensure that the Council and Corporate Parenting Panel had a grip on things. Jane Parfremment agreed that this would provide better insight but would require more commitment. The impact on young people having so many regular visits would need to be considered. If it was the same people undertaking the visit, it would be useful for witnessing and understanding young people's journeys.

Councillor Vines asked for an assurance that the actions in relation to Woodview were sorted in light of the approaching deadline. Paul Dempsey confirmed that they were.

Councillor Vines asked what social pedagogy involved. Jane Parfremment outlined the use of the phrase. It had been useful in changing attitudes and reinforcing that the environment was the children's home when thinking about access, safety, attitudes of all stakeholders and so on. For example, residential homes must not be viewed as a workplace but the children's homes. The children should have the same access and freedoms any other child would have in their home.

Councillor Vines asked about waking night staff. Did they sleep whilst they were working? Jane explained that the staff received a 'sleeping in allowance', not a full rate. Staff were rota'ed to ensure continuity with the same staff there in the morning as when the children went to bed the previous night. Feedback from young people suggested they preferred the staff to sleep at night, like in other family homes.

Councillor Hamilton asked about the status of long-term provision. Short and long-term Care Leavers' provision was discussed. The Council also had two salaried emergency foster carers.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

D6. CORPORATE PARENTING GROUP WORK PLAN.

This item was considered under the item relating to the Corporate Parenting Panel's terms of reference.

Jane Parfremment agreed to call a working party meeting to consider the work plan for the forthcoming year. This which would be presented to the September meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

D7. MEMBERSHIP AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS.

This item was considered under the item relating to the Corporate Parenting Panel's terms of reference.

It was agreed that meetings would take place every other month.

D8. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETINGS.

Agreed: - (1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel meet on the following dates during 2015/2016. All meetings would begin at 9.30 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall (with the exception of 22nd September meeting): -

- Tuesday 22nd September, 2015 (beginning at 2.30 pm);
- Tuesday 10th November, 2015;
- Tuesday 19th January, 2016;
- Tuesday 8th March, 2016;
- Tuesday 12th July, 2016.

(2) That the following items be considered at the next meeting: - Sufficiency Strategy, Virtual School, Health assessments for Looked After Children, Performance report, Corporate Parenting Panel's work and development plans.