

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**  
**Tuesday, 10th November, 2015**

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Hamilton, C. Vines, Ahmed, Currie. Officers in attendance were: - H. Etheridge, J. Stanley, H. Mangham, J. Hopkins, K. Holgate, C. Hall, L. Grice-Saddington, S. Wilson, A. Harvey, J. Parfremment, D. Johnson, M. Barton, R. Wall, C. Bailey, M. Whiting.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from L. Dale, P. McCurry, P. Davies.

**D19.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made.

**D20.       MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2015.**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2015, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

**D21.       COMMUNICATIONS: -**

It was noted that Councillor S. Ahmed had joined the Corporate Parenting Panel as a second representative of the Improving Lives Select Commission. Councillor S. Currie had also joined the Corporate Parenting Panel. Councillor Watson welcomed them to the group and looked forward to working with them in the future.

A celebration dinner for foster carers was taking place on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel were invited to join the celebration.

Councillor Ahmed asked about the terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel. She felt that there was a gap for an audit quality assurance representative.

**D22.       FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT.**

Consideration was given to the Fostering Service's Annual Report, 2014/2015. The report outlined what the Service's future priorities were: -

- Increase the number of foster carers to build-on the increases over the previous four years (132-167 foster carers);
- Caring for sibling groups and older children (10+ years old);

- Strengthen support to enable children to stay at home or with extended family;
- New 'Be a Hero' campaign;
- Positive achievements in placement stability for children and young people;
- Increased number of young people 'staying put' post -18;
- Increased support for carers;
- Increase in fostering celebration events;
- Increased uptake of training by foster carers;
- Newly established Permanence Fostering worker post;
- The business transacted by the Fostering Panel over the year.

Discussion followed and the following points were raised: -

- The length of time that the fostering application process took – around four months. One Elected Member was aware of a family who's process had taken eighteen months. It was agreed that this was unusual. A report on the process would follow;
- Were assessments undertaken in a multi-agency approach, or conducted in silos?;
- Was the training available appropriate, were there any gaps?;
- Sufficiency strategy.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That a report on the fostering approval process be presented to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

## **D23. ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT.**

Consideration was given to the Adoption Service's annual report, 2014/2015. The report noted that: -

- The Service had to achieve a high level of recruitment of prospective adopters to meet the needs of children who had an adoption plan and to ensure timeliness for children achieving permanence;

- There was an emphasis on older children and sibling groups and children with additional needs;
- The Adoption Service promoted the use of Early Permanence planning for children and the support available from the Therapeutic Team;
- The average A1 measure for children in adoption placements as at 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015, was 340 days, against a scorecard measure of 426 days;
- Rotherham's 'A1' measure currently exceeded the target by 86 days. 83% of children currently placed met the A1 measure of 426 days;
- The average A2 measure for children in adoption placements as at 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015, was 136 days, against a scorecard measure of 121 days;
- There were 30 children with a plan of adoption as of 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015. Seven had had a placement order for more than 4 months;
- 22 children had had an adoption order granted between 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015;
- Six adoptive families were approved between 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015;
- The business transacted by the Fostering Panel over the year.

An adopter who had been through the Early Permanence programme attended the Corporate Parenting Panel and spoke powerfully about her family's experience, their thoughts and feelings about what had happened. She shared her feelings about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. The members of the Corporate Parenting Panel thanked the Adopter for her heart-warming story, it was a privilege to hear.

Questions were raised, including: -

- Customer surveys – how do we improve subsequent adopters' journeys?;
- Adoption networks.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

**D24. SUPPORT TO ROTHERHAM CARE LEAVERS.**

The report outlining the support to Rotherham care leavers was presented. The services provided were clearly defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000) and the associated guidance from The Children Act (1989) relating to Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

The report set out the differences between eligible, relevant and former relevant in respect of leaving care support. Assessment and planning for the groups was considered.

The report outlined Rotherham's provision: -

- Personal advisers;
- Financial support and claiming benefits;
- Weekly living allowance;
- Accommodation;
- Setting-up home allowance/leaving care grant;
- Keeping in touch;
- Education, Training and Employment;
- Duty/emergency support;
- The Integrated Youth Support Service's role;
- Housing options for the overall service – a hub was required. This needed to be central/accessible, private and welcoming.

The report shared highlights and achievements of young people. Rotherham was very proud of all young people and their achievements in education, training and employment. Celebration events were planned for 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2015.

Questions were asked about the report: -

- Did the young people have appropriate access to CAMHS for issues like self-harm?;
- Was there appropriate support for care leavers accessing appropriate housing;
- Was the customer survey questionnaire appropriate and accessible for care leavers to complete?.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That further consideration be given to the Leaving Care Service's hub.

(3) That further consideration be paid to the Council's housing strategy and whether it met the needs of care leavers.

**D25. MISSING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

Consideration was given to the report presented that provided an update on Missing young people. The report showed the number of incidents and return home interviews between April – November, 2015. Any issues identified in return home interviews were referred to the child's worker to manage and address.

Discussion ensued on the report presented: -

- What were the trigger points for further work with young people;
- What was the quality assurance process for the return to work interviews?;
- Why did the data only go back as far as April, 2015. – It was explained that this was due to different trackers being used across the period. There was data pre-April 2015;
- Family CAFs;
- Were there concerns that children going missing could be subject to FGM?.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

**D26. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT.**

The performance of services for looked after children to 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, had been submitted for consideration.

Good and improved performance during August 2015 in relation to looked after children was health and dental assessments – 90.6% and 94.1%.

Areas of concern during August, 2015, in relation to looked after children was up-to-date Personal Education Plans – 68.1%.

Red rated indicators as at the end of August, 2015 were those relating to:

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- LAC cases reviewed within timescales;

- % of LAC with up-to-date Personal Education Plans;
- Average number of days between a placement order and being matched with an adoptive family.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

**D27. RESIDENTIAL HOME ISSUES.**

The report providing an update on Children's Residential Service Ofsted judgements and Regulation 44 reports was considered. The report provided information about the outcomes of Woodview Children's Home and Saint Edmund's Children Home, and the management responses/action plans now in place.

Questions followed the presentation of the reports and action plans. These included: -

- The communication process for key stakeholders. Councillor Vines expressed dissatisfaction about how he had found out about the inspection outcomes;
- What would happen to staff who were found to be at fault?;
- Involvement of Elected Members in Regulation 44 visits;
- Why had issues not been picked-up by the Regulation 44 visits and by Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers visiting children in the homes;
- Where was the quality assurance and was whistleblowing used?;
- Were concerns raised in supervisions / appraisal processes?;
- Councillor Ahmed was concerned about the long-term impact living with such poor standards could do to the young people in the Children's Homes. It could erode their self-esteem or lead them to believe the poor standards were acceptable;
- Were complaints made and were they taken seriously?.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

**D28. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETINGS: -**

Resolved: - That the next Corporate Parenting Panel meet on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 at 5.00 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.