

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday, 7th June, 2016

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Cusworth and Elliot, Simon (LACC), Abbie (LACC), Lisa DuValle (LACC), Peter Doyle (Consultant), Audra Muxlow (NHS), Collette Bailey (IYSS), Gary Pickles (CIC Service Lead), Rebecca Wall (Safeguarding Manager), Andy Jessop (Primary Headteacher), Ashlea Harvey (Young Inspectors Manager), Sue Wilson (Performance and Quality Manager), Brett Lumley (Residential Care), Emma Darby (Foster Carer Representative), Anne-Marie Banks (Fostering), Lorraine Dale (Virtual Headteacher).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elliott and Sansome.

D1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were raised.

D2. ROTHERHAM LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S COUNCIL (LACC) - CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE REPORT MAY - JUNE 2016.

Councillor Watson welcomed Abbie and Simon, along with Lisa DuValle, representatives of the Looked After Children Council, to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Gary Pickles commended the Looked After Children Council for their continuing output and quality work. The undertakings of the LACC between January and June of 2016 had really been phenomenal. Gary wished to record his thanks to all members of the LACC, and their support workers, for their contributions.

Simon, Treasurer for the LACC, spoke about the Council's voice and influence work on behalf of all looked after children and young people (LAC). The LACC regularly consulted with all LAC on a wide range of things relating to being looked after and being a young person generally.

Simon was concerned to report that the LAC had yet to receive confirmation of their yearly budget as at June 2016. The start of the financial year had been April, 2016. This had the consequence of making it hard to plan meetings and activities for the year ahead. It also made recruiting for new members hard as they would not get an accurate reflection of the LACC and may think that the Council was all work.

Other Children in Care Councils with less looked after children and young people than Rotherham had a bigger budget, meaning that they could do more and meet more. For example, North Lincolnshire had half the number of LAC and yet spent £100k on transport for LAC, including transport to and from meetings. There was no budget for LAC transport to the LACC in Rotherham, which was a real barrier to participation. As

Treasurer Simon asked for confirmation of budget so that the LACC could continue with their important voice and influence work.

Abbie explained the LACC's peer consultation. The Council had devised an innovative and unique questionnaire and had reported on the findings to the Strategic Director with the aim of improving services for children in care.

Rotherham's LACC had been found to be unique and robust in the region for its excellent practice. The annual questionnaire used different questions each year in order to be relevant and the LACC thought carefully when writing the questions.

The Rotherham LACC had created a 'What to Expect LAC and Leaving Care Group'. It was currently available for ages 12-23, but this age range was very wide and it would be good to hold different groups for the 12-23 age-group to be able to differentiate. It would also be good to hold a group for LAC aged from 7 upwards.

Simon and Abbie were asked how the LACC kept in touch with Rotherham looked after young people who were in placements outside of the Borough. They explained the use of the 'Have your say forms', the role of virtual members and social worker links.

Brent Lumley asked whether he could approach the LACC for their views on residential care. Simon and Abbie were receptive to this and asked for Brent to come and meet them. They did refer to the LACC's busy meeting schedule and emphasise the need to plan meetings ahead.

Collette Bailey provided a history of funding for LACC work in Rotherham. Work was required to consider the Council's key objectives and core business.

Simon, Abbie and Lisa were thanked for their attendance, informative presentations and contribution to the discussion.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

D3. REVIEW OF ROTHERHAM VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN.

Peter Doyle was welcomed to the meeting to present his review on Rotherham's Virtual School for Looked After Children. He provided some background information about his career working as a Teacher, Headteacher and Virtual Headteacher.

Peter's presentation covered: -

- Background of Rotherham's Virtual Headteacher;
- The review was undertaken between January – March, 2016. The

Virtual School was in early days in its current format; it had been operating for two school terms;

- Most in-depth review that has been conducted. Met all staff, checked a range of documents, questionnaire responses, foster carers, social workers and IROs.

Strengths of the Virtual School: -

- Staff enthusiastic, experienced and there was a good balance between early years and post- 16;
- Interventionist model had developed to become a challenge and support model – this was a positive move;
- Personal Education Plans – improved markedly with a 97% completion rate;
- Online PEP management and efficient allocation of Pupil Premium Plus funding – very positive;
- Capturing and using data;
- No permanent exclusions.

Areas for development: -

- Job descriptions need to be more specific;
- Budget – core budget is needed, which must be monitored regularly;
- Withdrawal of funding mid-financial year;
- Needed to plan what is happening in the service;
- Attendance and exclusions data is currently unreliable;
- Exclusions – no first day cover. Work sent home – increases pressure for foster carers and safeguarding concerns;
- Pupil Premium Plus applications needed to increase and an analysis of impact needed to be developed;
- Support for the emotional wellbeing and mental health of LAC needs to improve. Educational Psychologist support for LAC needed to be prioritised and it needed to be prioritised with schools;
- Capacity issues - attending meetings, training of designated teachers and network meetings. Specifically in Year 11 and post-16. Administration and IT support is needed to ensure that foster carers can be used to access their child's online PEP;
- Virtual School Governing Body is needed;
- Profile of the Virtual School needed to improve. Networking, training events, Headteacher consortia meetings;
- 88% of Designated Teachers said the Virtual School provided effective support to them;
- 90% of Social Workers agreed;
- 74% of foster carers said that the Virtual School provided effective support to them.

Peter had been asked to commit to a return visit in January, 2017, to

monitor progress.

Foster carers have always been due to have access to the system to access their child's PEP. Lorraine explained that a capacity issue had hampered getting all on stream. From the end of this academic year, all foster carers should have read-only access. Majority of foster carers have accessed on-line training.

Would a foster carer's access always exist? No, only as long as the child was placed with them. Pupil Premium Plus is an issue.

Exclusions issues were discussed including accessing the PRU system and a joint approach around emotional health and wellbeing.

Councillor Watson thanked Peter for his report. He was reassured from the content and looked forward to an update in early 2017.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

D4. 2015/2016 YEAR END PERFORMANCE - CORPORATE PARENTING.

Consideration was given to the report presented by Sue Wilson relating to the 2015/2016 year end performance, including the month of March, 2016.

The report covered areas of good and improved performance and commentary on the areas for further improvements.

Analysis of childrens' Plans had been a focus for the Strategic Director for Childrens' Services since he started in his role and these were managed on a weekly basis.

Every looked after child had a visit in-line with national standards. and Rotherham's local standards were above the national expectation.

There were 432 LAC as at 31st March, 2016. 76.6 of each 10,000 of population are children in care.

Edge of care work: - children potentially coming into care have support packages implemented to try to prevent this. All through the age groups will be supported. If children needed to be looked after they would remain LAC.

Placement stability is monitored – making sure the placement is correct and stable.

Health warning on health and dental – some definitions differed between the two agencies.

PEPs – previous item highlighted how rigorous these are.

SHOPFA – 2013/2014 – average of 661 days between LAC and placed for adoption. Now 338 days as per 2014/2015.

315 days in 2013/2014 to 137 days in 2014/2015.

Councillor Elliot asked how foster to adopt figures were handled?

Sue explained that the figures were worked out in an 'end-to-end' method. Impact and continuity for the child is improved. Packages are already in place, so this helps timeliness.

Councillor Elliot asked about breakdowns in adoptive placements.

This is monitored.

Audra asked about the age-profile and thematic analysis of children taken into care?

This is reported weekly within the internal monitoring scorecards.

60% of children coming into care were between 0-11 years old. Changing picture – 15-17 year olds were currently the most represented group. Large sibling groups were a factor in Rotherham's LAC population.

Agreed: - That the information presented be noted.

D5. HEALTH OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ANNUAL REPORT.

Audra Muxlow presented the Health of Looked After Children and Young People Annual Report. She described it as a mixed and challenging picture. Activity had almost doubled over the past two years and additional capacity to meet the appointments was required at the point when children and young people became looked after.

Review Health Assessment – consistently achieving more than 99%. Exception reports predominately down to young people's choice of not wanting to attend at that particular time.

Immunisation and vaccination update for LAC – 83.6% compared to a larger Borough wide attendance. Dental visits are also low. Oral health is a long-term predictor of public health, particularly that within the teenage years.

Work was underway on a joint protocol for notifying when children were brought into care.

CQC Safeguarding Team visit – Spring 2015. Happy with arrangements as a Service. Smart Action Plans were recommended, to include the

voice of the child. Audit completed and submitted to partner agencies and school nursing service.

Improve experience of children accessing the services – records had flags notifying who were LAC. This aimed to encourage holistic support of children by practitioners and avoid duplication of children having to give their stories and experiences multiple times.

Work on voice and influence with the LAC Council.

Aspirations for the Service: -

- IROs had not seen the health passports yet. This started to be used in December, 2015, in the Leaving Care Assessments that had taken place;
- Feedback taken from LAC on the dataset in the Passports to minimise any potential stigma;
- PEPs for 0-2 year olds were required. Currently working on the up to 18 PEPs. Need to include health links;
- Commissioning process undertaken in relation to school nursing. If this went to an outside agency, the Rotherham Service may end up being rated on service not delivering.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

D6. ROTHERHAM'S RIGHT 2 RIGHTS SERVICE.

Rebecca Wall presented an update on the Right2Rights Service.

She informed the Corporate Parenting Panel: -

- There had been agreement to a significant Right2Rights staffing increase;
- Advocacy – legally required to do;
- Independent visitor – was not statutory, but was provided if requested;
- Number of ongoing advocacy referrals. Negotiation of issues between young people and their social workers;
- Vulnerable children transitioning to adult services. Transition offer being assessed for future improvements;
- Younger age-group service was being considered and developed;
- Number of independent visitors needed to be a focus. The role was unpaid but volunteers did get expenses. A two-year commitment was requested and the Service promoted fortnightly visiting. There had been a drop in the number of volunteers coming forward for training. The Service needed to recruit more to match more.

The Improving Lives Select Commission as due to look at the transition

issues, in particular the different thresholds between Children and Adult Services.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.

D7. OFSTED ACTIVITY REPORT - RESIDENTIAL SERVICES.

Brent Lumley presented a report that outlined recent Ofsted activity in Rotherham's Residential Children Homes.

- Silverwood – risk assessments, safeguarding issues. Focus on consultation;
- Cherry Tree – additional resources, enhanced management visits. Focus on consultation;
- Liberty House – positive feedback from parents about service quality. Ofsted found it to be Good in January. Interim visit in March found sustained effectiveness. Aspiring to be Outstanding.

Agreed: - That the information shared be noted.