

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL  
6th December, 2016**

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Cusworth, J. Elliot, M. Elliott and Sansome.

Also present were Audra Muxlow, Anne-Marie Banks, Lorraine Dale, Lisa Duvalle, Catherine Hall, Karen Holgate, Deborah Johnson, Julie Lodge, Mel Meggs and Ian Walker.

Courtney, Manny and Kira were in attendance representing the Looked After Children Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Collette Bailey and Ian Thomas.

**D30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted by Collette Bailey and Ian Thomas.

**D31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**D32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2016**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2016, be approved as a correct record with the inclusion of Councillor Cusworth's apologies.

**D33. ROTHERHAM FOSTERING SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015-2016**

Consideration was given to the Fostering Service's Annual Report, 2015/2016. The report provided performance and activity data on the Service, activity and functioning of the Fostering Panel and detailed Service developments that had occurred in the year and those that were planned moving through 2016/17 which included:-

- Fostering Panel Functions and Composition
- Panel Business 2015/16
- Fostering Families – Placements
- Approvals, Deregistration and Resignations
- Children Placed in Foster Care
- Placement Stability
- Unplanned Endings and Disruptions
- Staffing
- Fostering Supervision and Support
- Activities and Events

## **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - 06/12/16**

- Consultation
- Recruitment Activity and Outcomes
- Key Challenges, Developments, Targets and Actions 2016/17

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified: -

- The financial offer to foster carers had been increased and also included support and training.
- Children needed to live within the community they were born in and wherever possible within a 20 mile radius of Rotherham.
- It had to be borne in mind when recruiting foster carers that there were sufficient staffing resources to undertake the assessments and the required support.
- Had consideration been given to the utilising the facilities at the football and rugby grounds and GP surgeries for the advertising campaign? Yes. There was to be a new South Yorkshire Plan and Protect recruitment campaign and all avenues would be explored.
- The conversion rate in 2015/16 had been 11% from 147 enquiries – was that low? It was hoped to have an additional 26 foster carers by the end of March, 2017. It was a massive commitment with enormous rewards.
- How many households did the number of approved foster carers represent? In fostering language when talking about approvals a couple were classed as 1 foster carer.
- Work had taken place with foster carers as to the number of young people they could take e.g. siblings.
- Were there many young people who refused to move from a care home to a foster family? There were some young people who stated that they had a family and did not want another. Some young people could make that emotional attachment that foster care required and felt much more comfortable in a less family environment of a care home. Their wishes were taken into account but work would continue with them to get them to a position where they felt they could move to a family.

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

### **D34. THE LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS' STRATEGY 2017-20**

Ian Walker, Acting Head of Service, Children in Care, presented the draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers' Strategy for consideration.

Looked After Children generally experienced poorer outcomes in relation to their education, health and transitions to adulthood as a result of a combination of negative early life experiences and a legacy of poor standards of care provided by Rotherham as a Corporate Parent. The Strategy provided a framework for the improvements that were essential if the legacy was to be addressed and better outcomes achieved.

The Strategy had been developed following a detailed analysis of the existing quality of service offered to Looked After Children as compared to their identified needs. As a result it had been designed to improve the outcomes for Looked After young people and care leavers and to support their successful transition to adulthood.

Discussion ensued on the draft Strategy with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- If really serious about taking the voice of children on board it should reflect/include the comments made by the young people about their emotional health and wellness
- Had there been a legal opinion as to what the duty on Health, Housing and Education authorities under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 actually was? It was understood that the definition was that there was a responsibility to support CYPS to ensure that all the needs of Looked After Young Children were best met. Housing had agreed to ensure that care leavers had priority allocation to housing. It was a legally challengeable decision; if any young person felt that the duty was not being met it could be challenged in a Court of Law.
- The Strategy should reflect the work being undertaken by the Virtual School around the emotional health and wellbeing support and challenge and training of schools in this area. It was hoped to develop school practices in SDQs.
- Had any LAC accessed a Modern Apprenticeship at the Council? The Council's Modern Apprenticeship Programme was very restrictive and required a GCSE A-C grade in Maths and English. Work was taking place to ascertain if care leavers could be afforded a greater degree of flexibility and that the LAC undertake the required GCSE(s) during the course of the apprenticeship. Funding had been secured for the young people to re-sit the examinations.

There was a strong partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce. There were more than 500 companies in the Rotherham area who the Chamber could access to provide a pre-apprenticeship programme to support young people even if only for ½ a day a week to gain an experience of a working environment and then look to support them to re-sit exams.

Agreed:- (1) That the draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers'

Strategy 2017-20 be noted.

(2) That the wording under No. 4 The Corporate Parent with regard to the duty on Health, Housing and Education authorities be reworded in consultation with Legal Services.

(3) That any comments on the draft Strategy be provided to Ian Walker.

(4) That the Chairman report to the next Panel meeting on his discussions regarding access to the Council's Apprenticeship Programme for LAC.

**D35. OFSTED ACTIVITY REPORT- CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

Ian Walker, Acting Head of Service, presented a summary of the Ofsted inspection of the Council's children's homes in 2016.

Liberty House Short Breaks Residential Home was registered with Ofsted and was inspected by them twice a year. They received a full 2 day inspection and an interim 1 day inspection. The full inspection determined the grade and the interim inspection assessed progress in relation to the grade. The Service had been graded as 'Outstanding' on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2016.

The report also clarified the decision made by Commissioner Bradwell on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2016, in relation to Silverwood and Cherry Tree House Child's Homes.

An Ofsted Monitoring Visit had taken place on 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> October, 2016, of the Looked After Children Service. This had concluded that the Council had taken effective action to address the significant shortfalls identified in the 2014 single inspection. There was a more stable senior management team that had demonstrated a strong focus on performance management and had established a determined, effective leadership with clear objectives and aspirations as well as a sustained focus on improving outcomes for children. It was also stated that senior managers had undertaken a honest and robust self-assessment of the Service and, as a result, knew itself very well. Whilst progress had been slower in the Looked After Children's Service than in some of the other services areas across Children's Services, there was clear evidence of improvement in some key areas including strategic management, vision and planning, performance management and quality assurance arrangements, service restructure, recruitment and retention and compliance with statutory requirements.

The outcome letter had also highlighted areas as being in need of further development which were set out in the report submitted.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- How was the lack of commitment by some agencies to the Working Together 2015 guidance monitored? The agency concerned had been challenged. All of the actions were part of the Improvement Plan which was submitted to the Improvement Board of which the agency was a member.
- As the agency was an outside body what power did the Local Authority have to ensure it met the objectives of the action plan? It was a legal requirement that the agency concerned commit to the attendance at the Strategy meetings and they were being called to account.
- Were lessons being learnt from the strong management team at Liberty House? Yes. There was a template that was to be spread across the wider services
- How could the Authority rectify the standard of service given to the children who were placed out of the Borough? The return home interview was very important and should be pursued. There was a temptation for outside agencies to not persist once a young person had stated that they did not want to complete an interview.
- Why had the number of LAC increased but the number of Children gone Missing from Care had reduced? There was a range of actions within the Strategy which would result in a reduction in numbers. The LAC Service was a very wide service and work was taking place on identifying a staffing resource to act as the dedicated person managing that Service who would visit the out of Borough placement and provide the Head of Service with the information. At the moment it was not known why young people went Missing from Care but that person would provide an analysis of why those young people went missing, hold the out of authority placement to account and to challenge them.

Providers had been called to Panel to justify face-to-face the quality and degree of service they offered with the ultimate sanction of withdrawing the young person from their service. The Authority's experience could then be shared with the Yorkshire and Humber Consortium.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Panel's congratulations be placed on record to the staff and management of Liberty House for their Outstanding Ofsted rating.

**D36. CCG COMMISSIONING COMPLIANCE TOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVER HEALTH SERVICES**

Catherine Hall, Designated Nurse Looked After and Safeguarding Children, submitted, for information, the NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group's Looked After Children and Care Leaver self-assessment, peer challenge and call to action conference with regard to

their commissioning commitment to children in care.

NHS England North had tasked all 68 Clinical Commissioning Groups to complete the self-assessment tool and RAG rate themselves. The self-assessment was then analysed and a peer challenge processed development. Following the independent analysis of CCGs, a call to action conference was held on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2016 to discuss the findings and ascertain the next steps nationally.

NHS Rotherham's LAC and CL action plan was submitted at Appendix 2 of the report submitted.

NHS England were hoping to influence the Department of Health with regard to the health needs of LAC and to roll out this piece of work nationally.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Was there any progress on the difference between the data sets relating to review health assessments? The data sets were set by the Government. For the Local Authority the young person had to have been in care for a year as at 31<sup>st</sup> March. Health would count anyone who was taken into care during a financial year.
- Health Care Assessments were carried out within 20 working days of admission into care and then 12 months for the over 5's and 6 months for under 5's.
- Was there a Service Level Agreement between the Local Authority and CCG providers? If so was it monitored/reviewed? The CCG commissioned the Acute process (Annual Health Assessment) and the Council currently commissioned the Health Visiting and School Nurse Services. There was a robust Service Agreement with the TRFT to ensure they met the needs of Rotherham's LAC with Karen Holgate, Dedicated Nurse, overseeing the quality of the work from the Health Visiting/School Nurse Services and that it met the needs of the young people. Paediatricians were utilised in Rotherham to conduct the Health Assessments which were performance monitored on a quarterly basis.
- How did we take the concern out of the whole package and have a joint Health Assessment? There was very close working and nothing was missing. There was to be an integrated Health Visiting and School Nursing Service for 0-19's. Work was taking place on setting up a Looked After Children's Emotional and Physical Wellbeing workstream to make sure all the officers were sat round the table.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

Consideration was given to the update from Courtney, Manny and Kira on the work of the Looked After Children's Council (LACC) which had enjoyed another exciting, busy and productive period (July to the end of October, 2016).

It was noted that the LACC had positively influenced the consultations on Rotherham Residential Accommodation, with particular emphasis on the proposed closure of Cherry Tree House and Silverwood House, and NHS Healthcare consultation. Their work also included:-

- Get In Gear: Accessibility of Public Transport for Young People Consultation
- Child's Voice Digital Solutions Trial and Consultation
- LAC Council Voice in Improving Rotherham for Young People
- Ofsted – Video Conferencing Interview
- Fostering Review
- New York Stadium Tour
- EID Celebration-EID Mubarak
- Rotherham Show
- Pride of Rotherham Awards
- Fixers – Rotherham Proud DVD Development
- Youth Voice – Residential Filey
- Don't Hate Education Training
- Destination Poland Fundraising – Marathon and Ten Mile Walk

The LACC had lost 1 of its members recently who had been an active participant for 5 years. Abbie had represented the LACC on the Panel and engaged in Voice and Influence consultation work to give her voice to help shape Children's Services. She was now studying Creative Writing at the University of Bedfordshire.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised and clarified:-

- Had the LACC received assurances that health professionals were well trained and understood the impact of being in care on young people and that School Nurses would be trained in Mental Health? The School Nursing Service was currently undergoing transformation. It would be a 0-19 service combining School Nurses with Health Visitors and would take on board the LACC's comments. The Mental Health Trust would provide Mental Health training within the Foundation Trust.

Manny felt that the health professionals were only trying to fix the physical side of him and not the mental side. It had been hard, both mentally and physically, being in care. It was only right that children in care should be treated in a respectful way and be able to get their point across and not be pushed aside. They needed more help than others because they did not have the parental guide to help them through.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - 06/12/16**

- Had the LACC received any more feedback from the Transport consultation? The chairs had been turned around in the bus station so they were against the windows as the young people had not felt safe with people walking behind them with the way they were positioned previously.
- Had there been any feedback with regard to the extra training for drivers? It was ongoing with nothing received in writing as yet. It had been said that young people should be paying their own bus fares to attend meetings such as this Panel. For young people leaving care at 16/17 years of age it was quite an expense and the LACC were losing people because they could not afford to attend meetings and, therefore, losing their voice.

Ian Walker stated that no young person should be paying for their own transport costs to attend any participation event. He would meet with the LACC to discuss how best this could be addressed.

- It was suggested that an e-mail be sent to all Elected Members informing them of the LACC's funding raising efforts for Destination Poland. It was clarified that the criteria for the Community Leadership Fund would allow for a donation to be made.

Courtney, Kira and Manny were thanked for their presentation and attendance at the meeting.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That Ian Walker meet with Lisa Duvalle to discuss the issue of transportation costs for LACC members to attend participation events/meetings.

### **D38. 'THE CARE WE RECEIVE AS CHILDREN COLOURS OUR WHOLE LIFE' (CARE QUALITY COMMISSION 2016)**

Catherine Hall, Designated Nurse Looked After and Safeguarding Children, submitted for information the arrangements made by the Local Authority and the support that the health economy in Rotherham provided to ensure that LAC received their healthcare entitlement.

The report had been considered by the Local Safeguarding Children Board on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2016.

The report set out the support processes for ensuring children and young people in care received the level and quality of care you would expect not only celebrating the strengths but also highlighting the weaknesses.

As at the end of September, 2016, the compliance rate of Review Health Assessments were:-



0-5 years Rotherham	100% compliance
0-5 years Out of Area Placement	88.8% compliance
5-18 years Rotherham	99.5% compliance
5-18 years Out of Area Placement	95.1% compliance
Overall RHA's	97.5% compliance

Performance with regard to Initial Health Assessments was not as good. Within 20 days of a child coming into care such an Assessment had to be undertaken. It looked at the parents' health to establish if there were any health issues that might impact upon the child and dated back to the delivery of the child. It also included social care and work with the family to gain their consent.

Rotherham had seen a significant increase in the number of children coming into care – 116 in 2013/14 to 213 in 2015/16. There had been a need to flex the health clinics with the Acute Trust increasing the number of from 54 to 75.

The report also highlighted the fact that each local authority was looking at some point of having a number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children coming into the area. Currently it was an unknown quantity but thought it would not be more than 39 children, however, it was not known what their particular health needs would be.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/highlighted:-

- How many Initial Health Assessments were conducted within the 20 days? In September/October no child received an Assessment within the 20 days, however, every child did receive an Assessment just not within the 20 days.
- Was there any dominant factor within the process? A multi-agency health summit had scrutinised the process from start to finish which was a long sequence of actions that all interlinked and had to be addressed. LAC Nurses were to be given access to Liquid Logic which would quicken the process as currently it took between 5-7 days of a young person coming into care and the LAC Nurses receiving notification. With direct access to Liquid Logic they would know on day 1 of an admission into care which immediately provided more time. It was hopeful that this would go some way to address some of the barriers that existed.
- How would that be monitored? It was monitored and challenged on almost a weekly basis. The Deputy Director met with the Service every week and looked at all the exceptions, what the impact was on the child and what could be done to quicken it up. It was risk managed through the system.
- What pressures would that put on the Service? There was some pressure but it was for the children. The difference it made to the children by all the activity needed to be understood.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - 06/12/16**

- If Looked After Children were engaged early in the health processes then they were more likely to stay engaged whilst in care.

Agreed:- That the report be noted.

### **D39. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That future meetings be held as follows:-

Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017  
25<sup>th</sup> April  
27<sup>th</sup> June  
29<sup>th</sup> August  
24<sup>th</sup> October  
19<sup>th</sup> December

all to commence at 5.00 p.m.