

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
28th February, 2017**

Present:- Councillor Sansome (in the Chair); Councillors Clark, Cusworth and Elliot.

Also present were Sharon Fenoughty, Karen Holgate, Deborah Johnson, Mel Meggs, Emma Royale, Ian Thomas and Ian Walker.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Elliott and Watson, Lorraine Dale and Rebecca Wall.

D40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

D41. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6TH DECEMBER, 2016

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

D42. ROTHERHAM LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S COUNCIL UPDATE

Mel Meggs, Deputy Strategic Director, presented an update on the work of the Looked After Children's Council (LACC) which had enjoyed another exciting, busy and productive period November, 2016 to January, 2017.

Their work included:-

- Suicide Prevention Logo consultation
- Early Help Looked After Children Post Card
- Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade
- Fixers – 'Rotherham Proud' DVD development
- LACC Pantomime at the Civic Theatre
- Holocaust Memorial Day Event
- Training and Education sessions including Remembrance Sunday and personal remembrance awareness, LACC working together with the Leaving Care Forum, seasonal craft session and Christmas Party – Youth Voice
- Destination Poland

Recruitment of new young people was vital to keep the group fresh and evolving to have a voice and help shape services for Looked After and Leaving Care young people. A recruitment drive was underway to widen participation of the LACC. Young people had created leaflets and a poster to promote their group and had been widely distributed through Early Help Managers, Social Care Managers, VAR newsletters, Virtual School and hand delivered to all LAC Designated Teachers and heads of each School year in all Rotherham secondary schools. LACC members had done everything they could to support recruitment but it was now up

to the Corporate Parents to take this forward and ensure the opportunities were communicated to the Looked After Children they worked with.

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, reported that it was important that a budget was secured as currently the LACC was limited in its activities and recruitment. There were plans in place for the young people to provide training for Elected Members and professionals once they were trained themselves. It was being discussed as part of the Workforce Development Plan.

The LACC had received funding for the 2016/17 financial year but it was not known it was a rolling budget.

Discussions would take place with the Directorate's Finance Team.

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

(2) That the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services continue his discussions with the relevant officers with regard to a budget for the Rotherham Looked After Children's Council.

D43. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Mel Meggs, Deputy Strategic Director, presented a summary of performance for Key Performance Indicators across Looked After Children Services.

It was noted that this was the first performance report for the Panel since the implementation of the new Liquid Logic case management system at the end of October, 2016. As with any major change in system the changeover had created a number of challenges in terms of data quality and reporting. Significant progress had been made, however, teams were still adjusting to new recording requirements and addressing data migration gaps. Caution, therefore, needed to be applied when comparing performance to that achieved earlier in the year.

The report highlighted:-

- Overall Rotherham had an increasing Looked After Children profile. At the end of January there were 482 children in care which equated to a rate of 85.5 per 10,000 population compared to the 2015/17 year end position of 76.6 and statistical neighbour average of 75.8.
- Progress had been with the proportion with a plan increasing from 55.6% in December to 79.4% in January, however, it was significantly behind previous performance levels of 95-99%.
- Timeliness of LAC reviews remained high and monthly performance was relatively stable at above 98%. Slightly lower performance during the summer had impacted on the year to date figures (96.7%).

- Visit data had been successfully migrated into the new system, however, since November performance had been declining. Performance against National Minimum standards at the end of the month was 78.7% and against local standards 65.8%.
- In January the proportion of children who had had 3 or more placements (2 moves) had slightly improved from 12.8% to 11.7%. Whilst it reduced it continued to be higher than all other benchmarks. The target of reducing to less than 10% remained and was still achievable.
- The proportion of long term children in care who experienced a stable placement for over 2 years was 66.2%. This was a declining picture and placed Rotherham below statistical neighbours and the national average.
- There were known delays in the data input for both Health and Dental information. It was likely that performance may change when statistics were re-run in future reports.
- The timeliness of dental checks was declining at 66.1% compared to previous performance of above 71% and a target of 95%.
- Health Assessment reviews in the previous three months had been good at over 95%. It was expected that the fall in January to 92.7% would be linked to data inputting issues. This would need to be monitored in future months.
- Initial Health Assessments remained an area of concern with the number completed each month not reflecting the increase in LAC admissions.
- 90.1% of eligible children had had a Personal Education Plan (PEP) recorded on their social care record. Only 63.7% of children had a PEP which was up-to-date.
- The number of Care Leavers was stable at 224. However, as the data had not migrated on all young people's files there was an inability to report direct on accommodation or Education, Employment and Training (EET) status. The Performance Team was working closely with the Service and systems support to ensure the gap was addressed.
- As of 1st February 10 young people were not in suitable accommodation, four of which were in custody. Of the remaining 6, the Service was in touch and supporting all but 1 who had abandoned their tenancy and wanted by the Police.

- 71.3% of care leavers were in EET. For those aged over 18 this dropped to 64.7% although this still compared well against the benchmarking averages of 50.4% (statistical neighbours) and 48% (national average).
- There were 9 adoptions in January, the highest figure for a single month in over 12 months. It was hoped that there would be a further 6 adoptions completed before the end of the reporting year giving a total of 35 (43 in the previous year).
- The rising number of LAC had resulted in an increase in the number of average number of cases per LAC Team Social Worker to 12.9. The maximum was now 18. A management review of all children with a Section 20 legal status had identified the potential to return home for up to 15 children.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Liquid Logic covered Early Help, Social Care and Adult Social Care – all Departments and Services that could take advantage of the system were doing so
- Liquid Logic was also accessed by the Rotherham Foundation Trust
- Good progress had been made with the system with the workforce developing the skills to use it. As the workforce became more confident in its use, the need to manually check the data will reduce. There was a further training session for Social Workers
- Suggested training session for Elected Members
- There were monthly meetings with Health administrators to look at the health data to cross reference the information
- The system was totally reliant on manual input of the information so there would always be a need for checks and balances, however, there were some efficiencies expected e.g. enable Social Workers to spend more time with the children and families and better quality assessments
- Improved staff levels had reduced caseloads and enabled a better quality of work
- 5 Social Workers had been recruited to the LAC Service together with 3 new Team Managers. It was hoped to recruit shortly to the Service Manager post from the candidates that had applied
- 14 Advanced Practitioners had been appointed. These postholders would have smaller caseloads and support the newly qualified Social

Workers and work with the more complex children

- The outcome of the recent Ofsted monitoring visit would be published on 13th March in which there would be a specific comment about the positive culture in Rotherham and Social Workers feeling valued and well consulted on changes
- A project with voluntary organisations which would provide a twelve weeks programme for a number of young people leaving care and preparing them for the world of work. Running in parallel work had been carried out with the Chamber of Commerce offering a range of work experience and day release opportunities. Wilmott Dixon were looking to offer 16 apprenticeships a year, with financial remuneration, with ringfencing for care leavers. The GCSE Maths requirement would be waived and would support the young person to achieve the qualification during the course of the apprenticeship
- The Council, as Corporate Parent, still had no care leavers undertaking an apprenticeship
- The Communications Team would be issuing a press release once the Ofsted outcome was released
- A Looked after Child in employment/training would be allocated a Personal Adviser and a dedicated EET Worker who would liaise regularly with the place of work/educational placement to ensure the support package was in place. They would work with the young person to sustain their commitment to the work environment as well as the work placement to ensure they sustained their commitment to the young person
- Ofsted was returning to carry out a monitoring visit of care leavers on the 3rd/4th May. A Peer Review would be undertaken prior to the visit

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

(2) That a training session be held for Elected Members on Liquid Logic.

(3) That the issue of Corporate Parent expectations with regard to apprenticeships for care leavers be raised at the Senior Leadership Team by the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services.

(4) That a deep dive of Care Leavers take place at the April meeting.

(5) That a report on the Regional Adoption agency be submitted in May/June.

D44. OVERVIEW OF CORPORATE PARENTING TRAINING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

Discussion ensued on the further training that Elected Members would wish to undertake.

Resolved:- That training take place on:-

Care Regulations

The different people in a "life" of a Looked After Child.

D45. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER OVERVIEW

Sharon Fenoughty, Independent Reviewing Officer, presented an overview of the number of Escalations by IROs via the formal Challenge and Escalation process.

The IRO Handbook and Care Planning Regulations (2010) clearly placed responsibility upon the IRO to 'monitor the child's case' on an ongoing basis. There was the expectation that the IRO would challenge managers where necessary and 'champion' positive care planning which was timely and relevant in respect of individual children. As part of the monitoring function, the IRO also had a duty to monitor the performance of the Local Authority's function as a Corporate Parent and to identify any areas of poor practice. IRO's sought to ensure good outcomes for children were identified and seek to support this on an individual basis through the quality assurance role they had within the LAC Review process.

Rotherham Escalation and Challenge process was re-launched following review in September, 2016. There were five stages which could be commenced at any point and at any stage. The level was determined by the IRO and Operations Manager for the IRO's. Determining factors would be the urgency and level of authority needed to make decisions to progress the issues identified.

The process should provide for no more than twenty working days to resolve the issue. In practice, however, it could take longer due to the complexity of the issues raised via the process.

The IRO activity from October, 2016 to the end of January, 2017 was as follows:-

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Contact with CAFCASS
October	14	1	1	-	-
November	19	2	2	-	-
December	10	2	3	-	-
January	1	-	2	-	-
Total	54	5	8		0

Key themes and issues raised via the Escalations were:-

- Concerns over care planning or drift and delay
- Delay in progressing Care Proceedings and lengthy periods of care under Section 20
- A lack of supervision leading to a lack of management oversight and grip
- Concern around decision making, Safeguarding issues and risk being managed in placement
- Delay in finding a long term placement despite ongoing assessment highlighting the placement cannot meet the needs of the child
- Delay in permanence planning in respect of SGO's
- Concerns regarding transition to Adults Services and delay in the Adult assessment process commencing
- Delay in the provision of therapeutic support
- Concerns around the regulation of placement with parents and management of risk related to this
- Lack of health assessment
- Lack of PEP and or appropriate education provision
- Progression of contact
- Placement suitability
- Lack of appropriate written assessment given current level of need and risk

Discussion ensued with the following points raised/clarified:-

- IROs were an emerging strength in the organisation and recognised by Ofsted
- The IRO's prioritised their work with the priority being to complete the reviews
- There was a heavy workload and every effort was made to ensure that all the reviews were on time, that all children were seen before reviews and that the reports and recommendations were completed
- The complement of IROs had been increased due to the increase in LAC
- The average caseload was between 50-70 cases – the target was 70 as set out in the national Statutory Handbook
- Issues were increasingly addressed in the lower end of the escalation process indicating that the IRO and LAC Worker were working more collaboratively

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

D46. MISSING FROM CARE

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, presented a report regarding Looked After Children missing from care.

There had been a recent improvement in the quality of the data available relating to this issue. The data evidenced a significant improvement in the numbers of missing incidents, the numbers of children involved and the length of time those young people went missing. The reduction would have a positive impact upon other performance measures and the general safeguarding of Looked After Children.

The report highlighted:-

- 50 LAC missing incidents (reduced from 91) involving 24 young people (12 to 17)
- Number of young people involved – 24 (reduced from 47)
- Average time missing – 4 hours (reduced from 6.5 hours) with the longest time missing of 21 hours 30 minutes (reduced from 23 hours 15 minutes)
- 18 Return Interviews completed

The Local Safeguarding Children Board was completing a multi-agency audit relating to 1st-30th September, 2016. The early findings showed there was evidence of real strength in multi-agency partnership working. There was evidence that the voice of the child was apparent in more of the interventions and that the children were influencing decision making in their lives.

There was also evidence that the new process for children who went missing (the tracker, trigger plan, operational meetings, screening through MASH, designated RHI Officers) had strengthened the focus on these children and helped to make better decision around their risk and safety. There was also evidence that the Early Help Services were beginning to impact positively on these services.

The South Yorkshire Missing from Home and Care Protocol was currently under revision and still in draft form. Rotherham was part of the South Yorkshire Missing Group which was currently developing a revised protocol. It was anticipated that this would be submitted for consideration to senior management in Spring 2017. This was, in conjunction with the College of Policing Briefing and Guidance, would further ensure best practice and that all missing person were investigated.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

D47. ROTHERHAM LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVER'S STRATEGY 2017-2020

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, presented the final version of the Looked After and Care Leaver's Strategy 2017-20 for formal

approval which provided a framework for the improvements that were essential if the legacy was to be addressed and better outcomes achieved.

The document had been considered by the Panel previously as well as a number of other Boards/Panels.

Resolved:- (1) That the Looked After and Care Leaver's strategy 2017-20 be endorsed for adoption by the Council.

(2) That the Corporate Parenting Panel review the Strategy and support its key objectives.

(3) That the Corporate Parenting Panel monitor the implementation of the Strategy and hold individual officers/partner agencies to account for any delays or barriers being experienced.

D48. GUIDE TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE IN ROTHERHAM

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, presented a guide as to how the Authority would provide young people leaving care with financial support to enable them to make a successful transition to adulthood and how the Leaving Care Team would help them gain confidence in managing their money.

The guide outlined all of the sources of income available to care leavers depending upon their own particular individual circumstances and provided information as to how they could access the income. It also outlined the additional support that the Local Authority, as a good Corporate Parent, would offer to its care leavers and what in return was expected of the young person.

All care leavers who were ready to move onto independence would receive an allowance to set up home together with financial help with education and training courses including higher education or help to get/keep a job.

Care leavers had been fully consulted in respect of the contents of the guide and had contributed to the detailed financial commitments.

The new Policy was expected to work within the 2017/18 cash limit for Leaving Care Allowances. The 2017/18 budget would be increased to take into account this budget pressure.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- This had never been done in Rotherham before
- A leaflet and booklet would be developed for care leavers

- The financial support included a whole range of offers including offer of accommodation support, support in education accommodation during the time they attended university, driving lessons
- It would be run in conjunction with the development of Chatham Villages drop-in sessions that care leavers would be able to access
- It would have the same principles of the Transitional Housing Benefit but was what a good parent would do for their child
- The need for work nationally around preparing care leavers for parenthood

Resolved:- That the Guide to Financial Support for Young People Leaving Care in Rotherham and the accompanying financial commitment be endorsed.

D49. ROTHERHAM LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2017-2020

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, presented the Rotherham Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2017-20 which had been developed in line with the duty to provide or procure placements for Children Looked After (CLA) by the Local Authority. This included a duty of 'sufficiency' that required Local Authorities and Children's Trust partners to ensure that there was a range of sufficient placements which met the needs of children and young people in care and to take steps to develop and shape Service provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care at a local level as far as it was reasonably possible.

The Strategy set out how Rotherham's Children's Services would fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory duty by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in and leaving its care.

The outcome of the Strategy would be to safely and appropriately reduce the number of young people requiring care by the Local Authority, responding to the challenges identified and improving outcomes for children.

It was expected that the 'one market' approach to the commissioning and provision of secure, safe and appropriate accommodation and support to children in care and care leavers over the next 4 years together with the strategic intentions of the Strategy would provide significant cost avoidance and opportunities for savings and were essential to the sustainability of improved outcomes and the budget.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- 13 expressions of interest had been received in January from potential foster carers
- Range of innovations within the Fostering Recruitment Service and it was hoped that the advertised post of Marketing Officer would further increase the profile on social media

It was noted that the report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 17th February, 2017.

Resolved:- That the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-21 be noted.

D50. OFSTED UPDATES/REGULATION 44 VISITS

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services, reported that under the new regime for inadequate authorities, Ofsted conducted monitoring visits on a quarterly basis.

There had been 2 monitoring visits to Rotherham; the first focussed on Looked After Children with the second taking place on 3rd/4th May.

There would be a further visit in September.

Liberty House had been rated Outstanding when Ofsted had visited. A further interim inspection had taken place in January, 2017, and found that it was Outstanding with "improved effectiveness".

From next year Ofsted would be replaced the Single Framework Inspection with a 2 week programme of inspections focussing on practice.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

D51. HEALTH/CAMHS

Karen Holgate, Named Nurse Looked After Children and Care Leavers, presented a report on Looked After Children's Statutory Health Assessments.

The Foundation Trust had been informed of eleven children/young people becoming Looked After the notification of which was received on average 4.9 working days from the child becoming looked after. Of the 11, 9 had had their initial Health Assessment undertaken (with 1 young person within 6 days of becoming Looked After), 2 appointments were booked but not yet undertaken due to a delay in the notification process.

As at the end of January, the completion of Review Health Assessments within the statutory timescales remained stable at 95.1%. Dental attendance was recorded at 89.5% and children/young people with up-to-

date immunisations at 87.9%.

There was close working between Health and the Local Authority with a strict pathway devised stipulating what should happen on day one through to day twenty identifying which agency was responsible for that part of the pathway. Work was taking place to ascertain where the gaps/issues were and how they could be improved. The notification process had been an issue but access to Liquid Logic had hopefully resolved the situation.

Another area of concern was the length of time it took for the reports of the Paediatricians to be typed and returned to the Council. A Peer Review was to take place shortly.

It was noted that the CAMHS element of the report had not been submitted due to the Presenting Officer having been involved in an accident and currently not at work.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

D52. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETINGS: -

Resolved:- That further meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel be held as follows:-

Wednesday, 25th April, 2017
27th June
29th August
24th October
19th December

All commencing at 5.00 p.m.