

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday, 18th July, 2017

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

Also present were Susan Claydon, Lisa Duvalle, Catherine Hall, Audra Muxlow, Nigel Parkes, Sharon Sandell and Ian Walker.

Ash, Brogan, Emma, Kira, Matthew, Tasha and Zac were also present.

Apologies for absence were received from Deborah Johnson and Jenny Lingrell.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

2. VOICE OF THE CHILD - LACC TAKEOVER

Sharon Sandall, Service Manager, Leaving Care introduced Zac and Matthew who were in attendance to talk about their personal experiences.

In particular they highlighted the need for:-

- More emotional support and help when the young person saw their birth family – preparatory sessions or someone accompanying them on the visit as well as support after the visit to deal with any issues that may have arisen
- The Leaving Care Team needed more support (financial) as they had previously through the Bridges Project
- A number of young people had been caught up in the transition period i.e. a cohort of young people had missed out on help with driving lessons
- Accessing their personal records and the possible support required once the young person learnt about their past
- When we talk about young people leaving care what do we think the children had left? What do we think care was and what did it mean for the young people?
- How to further support the transition from leaving care
- Low cost bus travel

The Panel had acknowledged that there had been had a period when support had been cut back with the Leaving Care Team having suffered. Accordingly there was a new outline of entitlement which included driving lessons.

An invitation was extended to the Panel to visit the Journey (the Care Leavers Hub) on 26th September, 2017 at 5.00 p.m.

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

(2) That the invitation to visit the Journey be forwarded to all Panel members.

3. **LAC COUNCIL UPDATE - APRIL-JUNE 2017**

Kira, Emma, Brogan, Ash and Tasha had chosen 4 items from their LACC update report to talk to the Panel about:-

Improving Matching and Placements in Rotherham

- The LAC Council had worked with Dr. Ellie Ott from the University of Oxford to look at their Matching and Placement process in Rotherham. Focus groups had been held to discuss how they would like to improve the process for young people in care. Their suggested improvements were:-
 - Step one – they should have the option to see pictures and a video of potential foster carers, their house, their biological children, any pets and their bedroom so that they may choose which placement they preferred
 - Step two – they should be invited to visit their preferred choices of foster families and stay with them each for a week to see how they all got on living together
 - Step three – after these trials they should be allowed to decide who they wanted to live with

Rotherham Proud DVD

- The LAC Council had worked with the Youth Cabinet and the charity Fixers to create a DVD to express how proud they were of Rotherham and to stop negative stereotypes of the town
- They had written scripts and presented them to camera. They filmed for a full day to create the 2 minute DVD. It was being shown at the Young People's event on 27th July at the Carlton Park Hotel
<http://www.foxers.org.uk/news/15815-11208/rotherham-diversity.php>

The Future LAC Participation

- LAC Council – currently recruiting to give opportunities to more young people aged 11-18 years
- Starting 'little lac' later this year for 8-11 year olds. It would meet every 2 weeks with the aims of
 - Making friends
 - Play games
 - Trips
 - Arts and crafts
 - Having fun

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

- The DVD was available on Youtube
- An ambitious target had been set for recruiting more young people. It was the desire to have 50 young people involved on a regular basis
- Currently there were 11 members of LAC Council as 5 had just left
- "little LAC" would hopefully be a feeder group to the junior LAC and on to 18 years of age onto the Youth Forum
- Junior LAC would be split into 2 groups – nurturing group/upskilling/raising confidence and voice and influence

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

(2) That the email link to the DVD be forwarded to all Elected Members.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25TH APRIL, 2017

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record of proceedings subject to the inclusion of Catherine Hall and Audra Muxlow in the list of those present.

Further to Minute No. 61 (Staying Put), it was highlighted that foster carers whose children remained with them after they left care at the age of 18, should be included in the Authority's total number of foster carers.

Further to Minute No. 68 (Apprenticeship Strategy 2017-2020), there was further evidence that proved that the benchmark of GCSE Grade A-C in English and Maths was too high and beyond the reach of many of the young people. Increased flexibility was required from those offering the apprenticeships with the waiving of the required qualifications for care leavers and supporting them to achieve the benchmark over the lifetime of the apprenticeship.

5. CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN WORK PLAN 2017

Consideration was given to a draft work plan for the Panel for 2017.

Resolved:- (1) That a revised work plan be submitted to the next meeting.

(2) That Panel members e-mail Ian Walker with suggestions of standing agenda items.

(3) That the agenda for the next meeting include an update on the LAC Strategy, Sufficiency Strategy and Leaving Care annual report.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

7. IRO REPORT

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

8. STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING REVIEW OF IN-HOUSE FOSTER CARE

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, presented the above review which demonstrated that the Service was going some way towards a successful implementation of the LAC Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2017-20. However, there was a risk of a lack of capacity and capability within the In-House Fostering Service to deliver against the increased demand for placements and the improved offer to foster carers.

The findings highlighted key issues around organisation, support and a culture of performance and learning all of which were directly impeding the Service's ability to operate effectively in the market and improve the quality of practice.

There was a continued lack of a joined up approach across the In-House and external market. This resulted in a lack of clarity in relation to the respective functions and focus which subsequently failed to maximise quality of provision/optimum matching of placements.

Attention was drawn to:-

- Recruitment performance of foster carers was strong – 218 in-house foster placements
- The Fostering Team was now performance managed including dormant places e.g. illness, foster carers needing a break. Foster carers were provided additional support to get them ready for the fostering role once again
- Development of a better relationship with IFAs
- Fortnightly performance review meetings/setting of performance targets with managers explaining why targets had not been met/highlight what was working. There was a need for more analysis of why foster carers dropped out of the process
- Ongoing work to ensure a foster carer was included in any discussions between a child's Social Worker/supervising Social Worker
- Compliance with writing of a care plan had now been established but the quality of the care plan was equally as important with input from the foster carer and the young person concerned
- Improvement in the hand overs from Out of Hours Social Work to the LAC Social Worker

- The need for the young person to be able to contribute to the referral form
- With the additional funding provided, every worker would receive 15 days training/personal study time
- The Signs of Safety training would give a very clear picture over the coming months of those staff who wanted to progress

It was noted that the report had been completed last year with data taken 3-4 months prior to its completion so was almost a year out of date.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be approved and be referred to the Fostering Panel.

(2) That an action plan be developed the implementation of which would be overseen by a newly established Foster Care Service Improvement Group.

(3) That an update be submitted to the Panel on the implementation of the LAC Strategy and Sufficiency Strategy.

9. DISRUPTED PLACEMENT UPDATE

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

10. MISSING FROM CARE

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

11. LAC STRATEGY AND SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY UPDATES

An update was to be submitted to the next meeting.

12. OFSTED UPDATES/REG 44 VISITS

It was noted that there was no update to report.

13. IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATES

It was noted that there was no update to report.

14. RDASH CAMHS UPDATE

Nigel Parkes, Rotherham CCG, presented an update on progress for the CAMHS service as it continued to work towards improving the waiting times for access to service, service delivery and the provision of advice and consultation. Attention was drawn to:-

- The total caseload for Rotherham CAMHS was 1,055 young people of

which 4 were Looked After Children

- The Service continued to consistently meet the 24 hour target for urgent assessments
- The total number of children awaiting assessment had reduced from 150 to 100 on average waiting under 6 weeks to for an appointment – the aspirational target was 3 weeks
- There were 196 children awaiting treatment compared to 360 a year ago

Nigel also presented the review of the pilot for Looked After Children accessing Rotherham CAMHS which had run from November 2016 to 31st March, 2017.

It had been decided to treat all referrals as urgent. In that time period there had been 18 referrals into the Service 8 of which were linked into the Council's LAC Therapeutic Treatment Team.

One of the positives had been the development of a very close working relationship between RDaSH CAMHS and the LAC and Adoption Team. As a result a recommendation of the pilot had been that all LAC referrals be not treated as urgent but all go through the LAC Team in the first instance. The pilot had recommended:-

- Implement the new pathway for routine referrals to RDaSH CAMHS via the LACTT
- Commence regular consultation meetings with the LACTT
- Urgent referrals to continue to be seen as per RDaSH protocol
- Neurodevelopmental assessments to be supported by SW and LAACTT by providing life history and developmental history
- Develop clear information sharing agreements and documentation of consultation and advice sessions

There had been no official response to the recommendations by the CCG as yet.

There was a contract between the CCG and RDaSH for the provision of Mental Health Services. The Council had been a partner in the contract previously. A Section 75 Agreement was being developed that allowed the Council and Health to create a shared budget and shared organisation in the way commissioning of services were dealt with. The Agreement would allow the pooling of funding that went into LAC and manage the services much more closely. It was hoped it would bring real benefits to LAC and also efficiencies of services

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The preference to formalise the agreement with regard to prioritisation of LAC children to avoid any possible misunderstanding if personnel changed, financial cut backs etc.

- The prioritisation had not had the impact feared – 18 referrals in a 4-5 months period
- It avoided the young people having to go through the process twice
- Foster carers were not bothered whether it was CAMHS or the Therapeutic Team as long as the young person received the support in a timely fashion
- RDaSH now had Locality Workers working out in the community

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) The Chairman stated that over the last 9-10 months the Panel had approved a number of policies and the Panel needed to be aware of what impact they had made if any.

It was thought that the update on the LAC Strategy would cover a number of the policies.

The Chair would meet with Ian Walker to discuss this further.

(2) The Chairman had recently met one of the young people who had successfully obtained an apprenticeship. There were now 3 apprenticeships within the Council.

Resolved:- That the Strategic Directors be invited to future meetings and inform the Panel of their Directorates' efforts with regard to LAC.

16. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 22nd August, 2017, commencing at 5.00 p.m.