

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL  
Tuesday, 22nd August, 2017**

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

Also present were Sharon Fenoughty, Catherine Hall, Deborah Johnson, Sharon Sandell and Ian Thomas.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillor Clark, Mel Meggs, Audra Muxlo, Rebecca Wall and Ian Walker.

**17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

**18. LAC COUNCIL UPDATE**

Representation of the LAC Council on this Panel was considered and debated at length.

To avoid withdrawing from meetings for certain items if a LAC Council representative joined the Panel, it was suggested that the Chair attend meetings of the LAC Council and report back on matters discussed on a regular basis.

**19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18TH JULY, 2017**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

With regards to Minute No. 3 (LAC Council Update) the Rotherham Proud DVD had been widely circulated and was available for viewing on Youtube.

Further to Minute No. 4 (Apprenticeship Strategy 2017-2020) and the high benchmark of GCSE grades, the Chair was to take this matter up with Human Resources direct.

In terms of LAC apprenticeships an update was provided on the four currently, one of which was ending shortly, one was proving to be very successful and the two others were being maintained.

**20. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Consideration was given to the current terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel which were currently available on the Council's Website and whether or not they should be revised.

Each section of the document was considered and amendments suggested as follows:-

Section 2 – include “care leavers” in (ii).

Section 3 – include “where appropriate” at the end of (ix).

Section 3 – appointment of Champions:-

- *Housing* – Councillor Watson
- *Employment and training opportunities within council departments and with partner agencies* – Councillor M. Elliott
- *Health (including mental health)* – Councillor J. Elliot
- *Educational Attainment and access to Higher Education* – Councillor Watson
- *Foster carer recruitment and retention* – Councillor Cusworth
- *Response to those who go missing* – Councillor Clark

Section 4 – include Care Leavers Forum after Children in Care Council.

Section 7 – membership – Councillor Cusworth to be appointed as Vice-Chair.

Membership to include key partners and will include senior local police officer, Virtual Head Teacher, a representative from Housing and designated Health lead.

Section 8 – First bullet point include “Strategic” in front of Director, second bullet point to rename Assistant Director with “Assistant Deputy Director, Children and Young People’s Services”.

Section 9 – for the Total Respect training be recommended and commissioned for Corporate Parenting Panel Members.

Section 11 - to rename the Children’s Trust with Children and Young People’s Partnership.

As part of the wider discussion about the Terms of Reference the visits to Children’s Homes alongside the Regulation 44 visitor which Councillor M. Elliott expressed an interest to be involved in. It was also suggested a programme of visits be developed for the Panel to visit the accommodation provided for LAC.

Given the Council’s role as Corporate Parent it was also suggested that the profile of the needs of looked after children and care leavers needed to be raised and to this end an all Member Seminar should be arranged in due course.

Resolved:- (1) That the Terms of Reference as suggested be updated and circulated to the Panel for final sign off.

- (2) That Councillor Cusworth be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- (3) That the nominated champions, as listed, be circulated to the LAC Council and Care Leavers Forum for information.
- (4) That arrangements be made for Councillor M. Elliott to be included in a Regulation 44 visit.
- (5) That a programme of visits be arranged to accommodation for LAC.
- (6) That an all Member Seminar on the needs of looked after children and care leavers be arranged.

## **21. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE - JUNE 2017**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Deborah Johnson, Performance Assurance Manager – Social Care, and supported by Ian Thomas, Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services, which provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children services. This was read in conjunction with the accompanying performance data report at Appendix A detailing trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages where possible.

A service overview and context was provided which indicated a continual increase in the Looked After Children profile and reasons for the increases, sustained improvement whilst not achieving set targets, recruitment of permanent staff giving confidence and stability, Looked After Children population/age distribution and the noticeable increase in numbers in the age range of 10-15.

It was also pointed out that at the end of June (not May as indicated in the report) 73.8% of children had an up-to-date plan, which was a decline on previous months. However, as of today 94% of children had an up-to-date plan.

Attention was also drawn to percentage of reviews completed during 2016/17, upward trend on visiting standards, breakdown detail on placements both inside and outside the borough, placement performance and avoidance of placement disruption, stable placements for care leavers, timeliness for dental checks, declining performance on health assessment reviews, completion of personal education plans for eligible children and local target setting for the Virtual School, numbers of care leavers, access into education, employment and training (with examples) and the need for high quality accommodation provision.

Rotherham's policy was to persevere in seeking adoptive placements for all children. However, 55% of children in the adoptive pathway process

had been assessed as “hard to place” of which there were a total of 68 children. Further information was to be provided on the adaptations to adopters’ homes should they be willing to adopt a child with specific disabled needs.

The Panel welcomed the information relating to the number of cases per Looked After Children Team Social Workers, which was relative stable at 10.7.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the contents of the report and accompanying dataset (Appendix A) be received and noted.

(2) That a breakdown of data on placements both inside and outside the borough be circulated to all Panel Members for information.

(3) That further information be circulated to Panel Members on the adaptations process for adoptive parents.

## **22. LEAVING CARE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Sharon Sandell, Service Manager Leaving Care, which provided an overview of what Rotherham’s Leaving Care Service provided to support the young people aged 16 – 21 (25 where there was the extended duty and the current staffing complement).

Further information was provided on the accommodation project – Hollowgate; a block of 10 self-contained flats with 24:7 staff support on site to support young people manage their accommodation and tenancy in a way that gets them ready to move to their own accommodation over a planned timescale.

Rotherham’s Leaving Care Service continued to be members of the National Benchmarking Forum and Local Regional Group. This supported the service to sustain awareness of legislative and best practice developments, build professional networks and access thematic events.

The Leaving Care Service had now settled into 2 Chatham Villas. Young people know where their Personal Advisors and Social Workers were and readily accessed them on a regular basis both on a planned and casual basis.

In addition, Hollowgate has recently undergone a revision of its admission criteria which has resulted in significantly reduced call outs to the Police and created a more settled environment to support young people progress. The numbers of successful transitions to secure tenancies has increased as a result.

The performance of the Leaving Care Service had improved significantly over the last year – performance was nearing 100% of Pathway Plan

completion for young people after 18 and over and was 87% overall. This was a site of challenge at performance clinics so that both the timeliness and quality of plans had improved.

As part of the preparation for OFSTED and noted in their monitoring visit were some concerns about an understanding of leaving care legislation, entitlements and eligibility for service across CYPS and partner agencies. In response the Leaving Care Service had developed Leaving Care/Pathway Plan training to support people developing an understanding of the legislation and how to produce good quality pathway plans. Three sessions have been delivered to 35 members of staff to date across LAC, LC, Localities and the IRO service with four more planned for the autumn and this had been well received to date.

Taking into account this report it was suggested moving forward the Panel receive further reports on missing children, those at high risk, what could be done better and evaluation and in addition a report looking at CAMHS and access to assessments and oversight of the working arrangements.

The Panel welcomed information about the Looked After Children Service and acknowledged the work taking place.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the possible implications for the Service arising from recent legislation be noted.

(3) That further reports be submitted on Missing Children and CAMHS to future meetings.

## **23. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY - FIRST REVIEW**

Further to Minute No. 47 of the meeting of this Panel held on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, consideration was given to the report presented by Ian Thomas, Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services, which provided the first update of progress/developments six months into the planned three year cycle of the Strategy and identified where further work was still required in order to achieve its agreed objectives.

A more detailed report would be presented in the longer term as the Strategy became more established with associated remedial action where necessary.

**Resolved:-** That the report be received and the contents noted and any challenges raised as appropriate.

**24. CHALLENGE AND ESCALATION OVERVIEW**

Consideration was given to the report whose key aim was to provide a regular overview of the number of Escalations by Independent Reviewing Offices via the formal Challenge and Escalation process (this replaced the Dispute Resolution Process in September 2016).

Particular reference was made to the Independent Reviewing Officer's monitoring and challenge alongside the escalation and challenge process, which was a formal route by which the Independent Reviewing Officer could escalate their concern to the appropriate management level.

The process should provide for no more than twenty working days to resolve the issue, depending on the complexity of the issues raised via the process.

Clarification was sought on the capture of evidence and the forms for completion held within Liquid Logic (clearly set out in the procedure) and the need for a more stable workforce through the reduction of agency staff.

**Resolved:-** That the report be received and the contents noted.

**25. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:-** That the next meeting be held on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 at 5.00 p.m.