

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday, 19th December, 2017

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

Also present were Catherine Hall, Peter McNamara, Janet Russell and Ian Walker.

Damien Wilson was in attendance for Minute No. 42 (Looked After Children Promises) and Vicky Schofield for Minute No. 43 (CSE and Missing Children).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clark, Lisa DuValle, Karen Holgate, Mary Jarrett, Deborah Johnson, Mel Meggs and Audra Muxlow.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

41. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH OCTOBER, 2017

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th October, 2017, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

Arising from Minute No. 28 (Corporate Parenting Panel Revised Terms of Reference), it was clarified that representation was sought from a Mental Health provider.

Catherine Hall undertook to contact Barbara Murray at RDaSH with a view to attendance at future meetings.

Arising from Minute No. 30 (Looked After Children Promises), it was noted that those Elected Members present at the Council meeting on 13th December, 2017, had signed the Promise. The Chairman would contact those who had not been present.

Arising from Minute No. 31 (LACC CPP Update July to September 2017), all Panel members had been invited to a fashion show on 16th February at RCAT from 12.30–2.00p.m. to celebrate their achievements in changing Policy and Practice in the Council to replace bin liners with Suitcases for our children and young people.

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, reported that the LAC Council had made a presentation at a regional event at which the Children's Commissioner had been in attendance. The Commissioner had been blown away by the young people and had tweeted a photograph that was had been taken with them. This had led to a debate on social media with a split of 75%-25% of local authorities with regard to the This is NOT a Suitcase Campaign with 75% of authorities saying that it was a nation-wide experience.

A social entrepreneur had made contact and offered to provide 100 free bags; he had sent a sample bag for the LAC to look at and approve. A local businessman had also made a commitment to provide 200 suitcases/sports holdalls.

Flat pack boxes had been purchased for those items that would not fit in a suitcase/holdall.

42. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PROMISES

Damien Wilson, Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment, gave the following powerpoint presentation on the work of his Directorate and how it impacted on the lives of children and young people:-

Regeneration and Environment Directorate included

- Asset Management Service – what it did, what it had done and what it was going to do
- In the last 4 years, over 1,300 additional school places had been delivered contributing to the 94% of parents being given their first choice school for their children

- Business links through RiDO
 - LEAF (Local Employment Advisory Forum)
 - GUTS (Get Up to Speed)
 - Looked After Children (LAC) Business Tour
 - Apprenticeship recruitment support to local employers
 - University Campus at Doncaster Gate
 - Gallery Town
 - Heart of Steel

- Road Safety Activity
 - Road Safety Education and Training
 - Road safety lessons and assemblies at primary schools
 - Pedestrian training
 - Walking buses
 - Drive for Life young driver initiative
 - Road Safety Engineering
 - Part-time advisory 20 mph speed limits outside schools
 - Introduced Traffic Regulation Orders on School Keep Clear markings
 - Working with schools, parents, the Council's Parking Services and local Policing teams to address school parking problems

- Facilities and Catering
 - Cleaning for 68 schools
 - School meals to 90 schools = average of 17,815 meals per day
 - 64 established points for school crossings, 53 paid for by the Council (meeting national criteria) and 11 under a Service Level

Agreement with the respective school = potential crossing of 17,400 primary school children on a daily basis

- Local Plan
 - Provides a long term plan for future prosperity
 - Provides certainty for developers and investors
 - Ensures everyone has the opportunity of a decent home and a job – boosts housing delivery
 - Attracts investment, people and jobs to Rotherham
 - Ensures planning for infrastructure to support development
 - Protecting the environment
- Sites and Policies
 - Over 14,000 good quality new homes including affordable options between 2013 and 2018 – 99 sites for new homes
 - 235 hectares of employment land – 40 employment sites
- Community Safety and StreetScene
 - Taxi Licensing
 - Food Hygiene Inspections
 - Trading Standards
 - Private Sector Housing enforcement and Selective Licensing
 - Air Quality
 - Home to School Transport
- Culture, Sport and Tourism

Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs –Services for Children and Young People

 - From birth to School (age 0-4)
 - At Primary School (age 4-11)
 - Teenagers (age 11-18)
- School Loans Service

Subscription service for Primary and Special schools and academies:-

 - Museum artefacts
 - Non-fiction topic loans
 - Fiction exchange
 - Story-reading and targeted reader development
 - Interactive classroom sessions
 - Support for school events and staff training
- Rotherham Heritage Services
 - Fun for younger children
 - Informal learning activities
 - Pay per use service for primary schools
 - Schools workshops for Foundation Key Stages 1 and 2
- Rotherham Theatres

- Work with schools, children's performance groups and organisations to help them achieve their ambitions in dance, musical theatre and drama
 - Provide work experience, shadowing and volunteering opportunities for school and college students
 - Over 25,000 children and families enjoy the annual pantomime
 - Annual Shakespeare Festival with Open Minds Theatre Company and 40 schools and will see its 10th anniversary in 2018
- Leisure and Green Spaces – Active Rotherham
 - Promotes increased levels of physical activity amongst all sections of the community including children and young people
 - The Team also manages Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium which is highly valued as a venue for school sports events and for clubs offering young people opportunities to develop sports skills
 - Mega Active holiday activities
 - In2Athletics
 - Rother Valley Country Park
 - Offers a wide range of activities aimed at children of all ages and abilities
 - Clifton Park
 - Offers an exceptional range of activities for children in the heart of Rotherham
 - Play and Green Spaces Events
 - Environmental Education and Projects
 - Why It Matters: Benefits of Participation
 - Students who are physically active tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance and classroom behaviours
 - Children are smarter, better able to get along with others, healthier and happier when they have regular opportunities for free and unstructured play in the out of doors
 - People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health
 - Students from low income families who take part in the arts at school are 3 times more likely to get a degree
 - 16 year olds who choose to read books for pleasure outside of school are more likely to secure managerial or professional jobs in later life

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- A willingness to discuss the possibility of reduced cost/free access to leisure facilities for Looked after Children and their carers, however,

there were cost implications as it was a Leisure PFI

- There would be apprenticeship opportunities within the Directorate for care experienced youngsters
- There were 34 care leavers who were NEET and available for work which equated to approximately 37% of the overall care leavers. Half were not available for work and most would require nurturing and handholding.
- Often an apprenticeship broke down because of the complex issues the young person had in their background which did not allow them to sustain a 9.00-5.00 job and had had to have a degree of flexibility balanced against the business needs. The Directorate's support could extend beyond the Council; it worked with employers and a range of employment opportunities where, with careful selection, work could be done in advance of any employer coming into the area when it was known what skills were required and match to a suitable young person

The Chairman thanked Damien for his attendance and presentation.

Resolved:- That Ian Walker, Head of Service Leaving Care, be invited to a future Regeneration and Development DLT meeting to discuss opportunities for LAC children.

43. CSE AND MISSING CHILDREN

Vicky Schofield, Head of First Response, presented a report which set out the process, practice and current activity in relation to CSE and Missing issues for children in care:-

Operational Arrangements

- Evolve included representatives from the Police, RMBC Social Workers, Barnardos Social Care Worker, CSE Nurse and RMBC Return Home Interviewers
- The Team was jointly managed on a day-to-day basis by the Detective Sergeant and Social Work Team Manager
- Missing Children were referred in accordance with the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board procedure by South Yorkshire Police through the Children's MASH
- CSE was identified by the use of indicators and screening tools across Social Care Services and the partnership
- The Team provided direct support to children and advice to the broader service aimed at reducing risk and achieving disruption/prosecution of offenders

Current Position

- Data and qualitative knowledge of Rotherham's Children in Care indicated that there was a complex cohort of older young people some

- of whom had very significant entrenched needs that had arisen over a long period of time
- Current practice appeared to be successful in identifying risks and in reducing missing episodes
 - During a recent inspection the practice had received positive comments

Missing Children

- Work had been carried out with case holding Social Workers recently with regard to the impact of children being missing and the potential for this to be reflective of other risks for them
- A review of practice had shown that practice was improving and a better understanding of the reasons why children went missing
- Children's overarching assessment and care plans now routinely included information about the risks presented from children going missing
- Current data showed a declining number of missing episodes for some of the most vulnerable children
- The vast majority of Return Home interviews were carried out in line with statutory guidance i.e. 72 hours of the child being found. This far exceeded the performance of most other local authorities

Child Sexual Exploitation

- There had been an increasing number of children for whom CSE was thought to be a likelihood in recent months; this was understood to be linked to better practice around identification
- The work of the Evolve Team was helping others to develop their practice in this regard
- Direct work with children was helping to develop services' resilience and confidence in talking about what had happened to the children or who they were spending time with

Both CSE and Missing children functions had action plans in place in relation to future work. Data sets were in place as well as quality arrangements. There were plans to embed a multi-agency quality assurance process, in addition to the current single agency audits, to inform how to more effectively address the issues across the partnership.

There were also plans to embed joint supervision at regular intervals between CSE Social Workers and case holding Social Workers across the organisation.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Reduction in the numbers of children missing in recent months
- Rotherham was doing something different from other local authorities. Some young people were being taken out of the regimented children's home environment and put into their own tenancy, with high levels of

support. This has reduced the number of missing episodes

- The CSE risk assessment was a multi-agency process conducted at EVOLVE involving the Police, Social Care, Health practitioner, Barnardos, CAMHS, allocated Social Worker and an invitation to the school. The formulated plan was led by the SCE Social Worker and allocated Social Worker and very much aimed at risk reduction and prosecution of offenders
- The low number of Return to Home interviews referred to children out of Authority where Rotherham commissioned others to conduct the interviews on its behalf

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

44. LACC UPDATE OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2017

The Panel noted the Rotherham Looked After Children's Council and LAC Club update for October to December, 2017 which included:-

- The LAC Council had successfully met the core 3 aims of their Voice and Influence Project
- The young people engaged in the local community Remembrance Sunday parade and had successfully participated in an OFSTED Inspection
- Delivered a presentation to the Regional Children in Care Council Conference at Leeds University
- Continued work to design and deliver the 'Bin Liners are **NOT** Suitcases' Campaign and fashion show
- Launch of the newest LAC participation group, the LAC Club, which was growing in numbers
- The young people had embraced the ethos of ethical participation
- The second Pride of Rotherham Awards held at new York Stadium in October
- The LACC now had 32 young people actively engaged on a regular basis with 17 engaged with the formal LAC Council

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

45. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE - OCTOBER 2017

Consideration was given to the report presented by Ian Walker, Service Manager, on behalf of Deborah Johnson, Performance Assurance Manager, Social Care, and which provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children Services for October 2017. 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 (572) and reasons for the increases, significant improvement in the timeliness of LAC reviews, improvement on 2016/17 outturn position with regard to Personal Education Plan and the quality of which, together with education planning, was beginning to have an impact on educational planning with Key Stage 2 outcomes improving in 2017 compared to 2016.

However, compliance on plans had declined slightly on the previous month to 91% compared to 92.3% of children having an up-to-date plan at the end of September. Performance had since improved to 96% as at 8th November, 2017.

Following management investigation of poor performance, discrepancies had been identified between the 'plan cycle' within systems reports and the LAC review timescales to which it should be linked. This was recalibrated and 2016/17 monthly data re-profiled.

Compliance against national minimum visiting standards had improved and was currently 94.8%.

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". As a result, 1 adoption completed this year 1,624 days after the child became Looked After demonstrating the determination and perseverance of the Adoption Team. Although there had only been 16 adoptions in the first 6 months of 2017/18, a number were on stream to complete before the end of April and the Service was hopeful to surpass the 31 achieved in 2016/17.

The Panel sought clarification on a number of points including:-

- Monitoring of Social Workers visits to young people
- Support for foster carers
- Counselling process for pre-adoptive parents
- Activity days held to enable prospective adoptive parents to see the children and form an emotional attachment

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

46. CORPORATE PARENTING RESOURCE PACK

The Panel noted the Local Government Association Corporate Parenting resource pack.

47. OFSTED FEEDBACK - LAC SERVICE

Ian Walker, Head of Service Children in Care, presented a report giving a

brief overview of the formal feedback received from Inspectors who had conducted the recent Ofsted inspection.

An All Member seminar had been arranged for 29th January, 2018 at 9.00 a.m.; the inspection report would be published that morning.

48. MENTORING SCHEME FOR CARE LEAVERS

Ian Walker, Head of Service Leaving Care, presented a report on the above scheme being developed by the Learning Care Service.

The aim was to develop a scheme whereby the most disengaged and vulnerable looked after young people and care leavers were provided bespoke one-to-one support from a senior manager or Elected Member in the Council to assist them in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.

A mentor could be defined as being “a more experienced individual willing to share knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust”. A mentor would share their experience and give advice and guidance as part of a development path which would open doors and widen the mentee’s networking systems i.e. supporting progress to EET opportunities.

There would be 3 main people involved in the process – the young person (mentee), the mentor and the mentee’s key adult (Social Worker or personal adviser).

It was expected that the mentor would provide at least 90 minutes per month for their matched care leaver and would be for at least 6 months but no longer than 18 months.

The EET Action Group would identify young people who it was felt would benefit from a mentor and would be part of the process of matching although the ultimate decision would be made by the young person themselves.

The invitation to be a mentor would also be extended to members of the Panel.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

49. CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE - UPDATE

Housing/Educational Attainment and Access to Higher Education

The Chair had no update.

Employment and Training Opportunities within Council Departments and with Partner Agencies

Councillor M. Elliott and Sharon Sandell, Service Manager Leaving Care,

had met with Fortums and was in the process of arranging a similar meeting with Morrisons.

Fortums had explained their work experience opportunities and mentoring experiences.

A meeting had also been held with Mears to discuss their apprenticeships. Their training facilities were incorporated into the Rotherham United Football Club building which he would visit in the New Year.

Mears was also heavily involved in the domiciliary world and would provide job opportunities.

The next aim was to meet with Liberty Steel at Aldwarke.

Foster Care Recruitment and Retention

Councillor Cusworth had met with Diane Clark earlier that day. The Fostering Service had had a stall at Wentworth Show recently with a display of metallic balloons with "500" on them aiming for a more proactive response from the people passing by. It had not achieved the engagement from adults as hoped but had had lots of children asking what the 500 was. However, some enquiries had been received with a couple looking quite positive.

42 names had been captured since the summer, 4 of which had progressed, 2 were still progressing and another 4 that were being worked on as solid leads. There was a push now to link the Service back to Rotherham Council.

Arrangements were to be made to hold an All Member seminar.

There were currently 161 foster families in Rotherham. An annual foster carer survey would now be carried out in May in the lead up to Foster Carer fortnight in an attempt to ascertain why people were leaving the Fostering Service as a foster carer.

The resignations being reported to Fostering Panel at the moment were foster families that had not had a child in placement for a long time. The prospective foster carers coming before the Panel recently seemed to have more confidence in dealing with the Fostering Service and knew what they could ask for.

Resolved:- That Brent Lumley be invited to the next meeting.

Health (including Mental Health)

Councillor J. Elliot had nothing to report.

50. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved:- (1) That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 27th February, 2018, commencing at 5.00 p.m.

(2) That an item be included on the next agenda relating to the Child Protection Information System.