

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**  
**Tuesday, 6th March, 2018**

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

Also present were Tina Arnold, Deborah Johnson, Peter McNamara, Janet Russell Ian Thomas and Ian Walker.

Lisa Duvall, Adorabella, Angelina, Chelsea, Jodie and Kira were in attendance for Minute No. 53 (LACC Update).

Shokat Lal was in attendance for Minute No. 54 (Looked After Children Promises).

Apologies for absence were received from Catherine Hall, Karen Holgate and Mel Meggs.

**51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**52. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19TH DECEMBER 2017**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2017, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

**53. LACC UPDATE**

Kira, Chelsea, Jodie, Adorabella and Angelina, had chosen 4 items from their LACC update report to talk to the Panel about:-

LAC Feedback from Ofsted 2018

- Following the Ofsted visit to the LAC Council in November the following statement was included in their January report:-  
"The members of the Looked After Children's Council do a very good job of making sure that staff listen to them, so that they understand how to improve services for Children in Care and Care Leavers. This includes helping to recruit Social Workers and train Foster Carers"
- The Ofsted Inspector had told senior management that the LAC Council was a real burgeoning strength and said they were vibrant and committed and clearly having an impact on the service provided to Looked After Children

Foster Carer Panel

- A focus group for Looked After Children had been held to explore and discussed questions they would like to be asked of potential carers undertaking the Recruitment and Selection Process
- Based upon their experiences of being in foster care, the group had

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decided upon 8 questions which were submitted to CYPS Fostering Team

### Improving Health Services for LAC

- A Public Health Specialist, together with colleagues from Sheffield Hallam University and Public Health England, had held a focus group to explore what made the LAC Council happy/unhappy which might affect their health
- The information and insight provided would be included in a report about the health needs of LAC in Rotherham and used in the LAC Emotional Health Advisory Group
- The report would try to ensure that every looked after child in Rotherham received the health service they deserved

### Bin Liners are NOT Suitcases Event

- A 6 months campaign by the LAC Council to stop the use of bin liners being used had resulted in a change in Policy and Practice with the use of bin liners ceased immediately and suitcases purchased for every LAC moving placement
- News of Rotherham LAC Council's campaign had moved from local to regional Children in Care Councils and, with the help of the Children's Commissioner for England, was now known nationally
- An event, with over 50 guests in attendance, to celebrate the success of the campaign was held including a video of Looked After Children talking about their precious items they take with them when moving foster care placement following the bin liner fashion show
- The video will be used in training for Social Workers and Foster Carers

The Panel was then shown the video.

Councillor Cusworth, a member of the Fostering Panel, confirmed that the questions devised by the LAC Council had been used in interviews with prospective foster carers.

Ian Walker confirmed that the 180 suitcases to be provided by a local entrepreneur should be received soon and would be distributed amongst those LAC who did not have a suitcase. There would also be a number stored in the localities so any child brought into care would have access to one.

The LAC Council would discuss future projects the following day. They had been working with the Oxford University on research into what they would like when a child went into foster care. They had said they would like every foster carer to have a little video introducing their family to the child in an attempt take the fear away from going into a foster family.

Resolved:- That the January to March, 2018 update be noted.

**54. ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE - LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PROMISES**

Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive, gave the following verbal report on the areas of his responsibility, which included Corporate Communications, Democratic Services, Corporate Intelligence and Improvement, Human Resources and Neighbourhoods (during the transition year) and how they impacted in terms of the LAC Promises:-

**Work Placements/Apprenticeships**

- Overall commitment of 120 apprenticeship placements over the next couple of years - started with 25 and now had 48 so making good progress
- Although good news it was not believed that there was sufficient emphasis on placing LAC and care leavers on those apprenticeship placements
- Over the last 6 months there had been 5 LAC who had come into apprenticeship placements but there was only one remaining. The other 4 placements, which were in Horticulture, had not worked out for a range of reasons
- Work had been carried out to ascertain why the placements had not been successful but what was known that the Service Area had invested a significant amount of time and support to the young people concerned
- There was a need to review whether the placements were right/appropriate for the young person
- Currently there was only one young person (who was a care leaver) currently in an apprenticeship placement
- There were only 2 young people in work placements

**Democratic Services**

- A lot of work had taken place ensuring LAC and care leavers were involved in Civic events
- The LAC Council was the Mayor's VIP guest on Armed Forces Day and would be leading the procession
- Inclusion in events at the Rotherham Show
- Child Friendly Borough work – lot of activity particularly around the Voice of the Child, Different but Equal Board and the Town Centre Master Plan

**Corporate Communications**

- This was very limited due to the issue of identifying young people but more could be done

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The range of opportunities needed to be widened across the Council
  - the greater the opportunity the greater match made

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- Learning was required in terms of preparing young people for leaving care/work opportunities
- Possibility of work experience that could turn into work placement if successful
- There was some work taster programme/try before formally move into an area offered
- There was a level of training and support to managers who would be working with the care leavers in recognition of their needs
- A presentation was to be made at the Improving Lives Select Commission on the work of a Child and Young Person Friendly Borough

The Chairman thanked Shokat for his attendance and presentation.

Resolved:- That Shokat Lal liaise with Councillor M. Elliott, Carers Champion for Employment and Training Opportunities within Council Departments and with Partner Agencies, on the work taking place to ascertain why the apprenticeships/work placements had failed.

### **55. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT - JANUARY 2018**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Deborah Johnson, Performance Assurance Manager, Social Care, which provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children Services for January, 2018. 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 (607) and reasons for the increases, a slight decline (89.7% compared to 92.2% last month) on compliance of plans and a significant decline in the proportion of LAC reviews completed in time (77.2% from 90%).

The performance on LAC visits had been reviewed and, upon reflecting on the significant performance improvements overall and increased stability in the core LAC Teams that supported good relationship development with children, it had been agreed to move to the nationally required visiting pattern where it was appropriate for the child. This approach would continue to be monitored by the Head of Service at fortnightly performance meetings.

Despite the overall increase in numbers, the proportion of children placed in a family based setting remained above 83%. At the end of January the

number of children who had had 3 or more placements (2 moves in the previous 12 months), had decreased to 67 from 73 earlier in the year. The target remained of reducing to less than 10% which was also the national average.

The number of long term LAC in a stable placement has shown month on month improvements since August. At the end of January 63% of the long term LAC had been in the same placement for at least 2 years compared to less than 60% in August. However, this still placed Rotherham below latest statistical neighbours and the national averages of 68%.

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

- Monitoring of Social Workers visits to young people
- Quality of the visit and recording thereof
- Initial Health Assessment appointments at the hospital
- Number of care leavers who had a pathway plan
- Improvements and quality of statutory visits
- Number of children being placed out of area – national issue and time spent by Social Workers travelling to and from the placements
- Increasing evidence of direct work and life story work being undertaken during visits
- Placement stability
- The Virtual School's priorities for the forthcoming year were promoting the emotional wellbeing of young people and reducing the number of school exclusions
- Very low adoption disruption
- Fantastic work of the Therapeutic Team
- No benchmarking data/targets set on some Indicators
- Liquid Logic
- Rolling out/embedding of Signs of Safety
- Social Workers caseloads

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

(2) That the May Panel meeting have a Health theme.

(3) That Sara Whittaker, Rotherham Therapeutic Team, present a report to a future Panel meeting on the outcomes of the Intensive Intervention Programme.

**56. MUSLIM FOSTER CARERS PROJECT**

Ian Walker, Head of Service Leaving Care, presented an update on Rotherham Fostering Service's participation in the Muslim Fostering Research Project being run by the Fostering Network.

The aim of the Project was to gather and analyse data to identify good practice and evaluate how identity was taken into consideration within fostering as well as exploring barriers associated with the recruitment of Muslim families to develop a targeted recruitment campaign.

Following the research project completion in March 2018, there would be a launch event of the research findings and good practice identified with each involve service invited. Involved Fostering Services would also be given a bespoke training package developed from the practice learning that could be delivered to prospective foster carers, approved foster carers and staff.

The Fostering Network would remain involved with Rotherham's Fostering Service until July 2018 to assist in embedding the good practice recommendations into the Service.

Resolved:- That the update be noted.

## **57. RIGHT CHILD, RIGHT CARE - FIRST UPDATE**

Ian Walker, Head of Service, Leaving Care, presented a report on the increasing numbers of Looked After Children in Rotherham although it was emphasised this was not significantly out of step with many local authorities.

Nationally, the Government had reported 2017 as having seen the biggest annual surge in the numbers of LAC for 7 years increasing from approximately 65,000 to 72,670. However, the rate of increase had accelerated further since and currently stood at 90 children becoming looked after every day. A corresponding national decline in the number of children leaving care had led to debate regarding the underlying causes for and potential responses to the exponential rise.

A Looked After Children Summit had been held in Rotherham in January 2018 to develop proposals.

To ensure that there was the right child in the right care there would be 2 broad strands of work needing to be successfully implemented; improved practice to support more children to stay out of care and improved practice to safely support more children to be discharged from care.

In respect of the work to support more children to stay out of care the following interventions were now in place:-

- Family Group Conferencing
- Edge of Care Team
- Multi-Systematic Therapy

together with the following development work:-

- Pause – to work with women who had babies removed with the aim of avoiding future pregnancies which would lead to repeat Care Proceedings
- MST-FIT – apply an evidence based model to support young people to return to their parent’s care following a period of being looked after
- Expansion of the Edge of Care Team
- Pilot to explore possible use of Crowden Outdoor Education Centre to provide short term regular respite care for birth parents and diversionary activities for young people
- Staff training to deliver Non-Violent Resistance

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised:-

- Foster carers choosing infant aged children
- Number of foster carers resigning/retiring
- Survey monkey taking place with foster carers as to how support could be improved

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

**58. ELECTED MEMBER CHAMPIONS UPDATE**

**Housing/Educational Attainment and Access to Higher Education**

The Chair had no update.

**Employment with Training Opportunities within Council Departments and with Partner Agencies**

Councillor M. Elliott and Sharon Sandell, Service Manager Leaving Care, had visited Mears’ training facility at the New York Stadium. Mears had spoken about their keenness to be involved in community projects which Sharon would follow up with them.

Feedback had been received from Fortums. One young person had been referred to them for training but there was no outcome known as yet. There had been discussions about their mentoring programme but unfortunately the officer responsible was off work currently. Sharon would follow up on their return to work.

Feedback was still awaited from Mears’ domiciliary department.

**Foster Care Recruitment and Retention**

Councillor Cusworth’s meeting with Diane Clark has been cancelled due to the adverse weather conditions.

A leaflet had been produced asking Elected Members to give consideration to nominating one family as a foster carer a year which would give 63 LAC new families a year. The leaflet was to be distributed at the next Council meeting.

**Health (including Mental Health)**

Councillor J. Elliott had been provided with the following information from Catherine Hall, Rotherham CCG, as to the current situation:-

- The increase in children being brought into care had become a significant challenge for providers and health care namely the Rotherham Foundation Trust (TRFT). TRFT had increased the number of clinics for paediatricians to undertake Initial Health Assessments. They had dedicated an additional administration team and Business Support Manager and had committed specialist resources in ensuring that health assessments were timely. However, the numbers were overwhelming
- There was an urgent need for commissioners and providers to work together to ensure the capacity for HIAs continued to meet the rising needs
- The NHS RCGG, in the short term, had committed to funding the additional 16 IHA clinics, 4 children per clinic, but the CCG Children's Commissioner was working with TRFT Business Support Manager on qualifying this and seeking assurance that TRFT were able to provide the sufficient increase in the time frame specified (1.4.2018)
- In the medium term there was a need for commissioners, namely the Council and NHS Rotherham CCG, to review the ways health care delivery for LAC was commissioned to fully appreciate the financial implications of the delivery of statutory health care assessments and utilise the best model to ensure Rotherham children's needs were met. Meetings had been set up and clinicians were in the process of looking at models of care in other areas

**59. REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP**

Discussion ensued on the benefits of having representations from South Yorkshire Police and a foster carer on the Panel.

Resolved:- (1) That the Chair follow up possible representation from South Yorkshire Police.

(2) That discussions take place with Anne-Marie Banks, Service Manager Adoption and Fostering, with regard to a representative from the Mockingbird Project.

**60. 2018/19 MEETING DATES**

Resolved:- That meetings be held during the 2018/19 Municipal Year as follows all commencing at 5.00 p.m.:-

Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2018  
28<sup>th</sup> August

16<sup>th</sup> October  
18<sup>th</sup> December  
12<sup>th</sup> February, 2019  
9<sup>th</sup> April

**61. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting be held on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2018, commencing at 5.00 p.m.