

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Monday, 9th July, 2018

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Elliot and Jarvis.

Also present were Tracey Arnold, Tina Hohn, Ian Walker and Rebecca Wall.

Angelina, Adorabella, Brogan, Jordan Kaylen, Kira, Manny, Skye and Zuzana together with Lisa DuValle were in attendance.

Apologies for absence were submitted by Collette Bailey, Councillor Cusworth, Councillor M. Elliott, Catherine Hall, Karen Holgate, Mary Jarrett and Mel Meggs.

1. ICEBREAKER

All present took part in constructing the highest spaghetti tower.

Team Jayne and Me took the prize.

2. DIANA AWARDS

Rotherham LAC Council had been given national recognition and awarded the prestigious Diana Award in recognition of their 'outstanding contribution to society' through their voice and influence projects including the 'Bin Liners are NOT Suitcases' Campaign.

The Diana Award judges thought their story was 'truly inspirational'.

The LAC Council had been invited to an award ceremony in September at the Leeds College of Music to collect their award. In addition each award holder had been invited by Earl Spencer, brother of the late Princess Diana, to visit Althorp House, her childhood home.

3. LAC COUNCIL CHAMPION REQUEST

The LAC Council and Lil Lac Club requested that Councillor Gordon Watson be the LAC Council Champion.

A vote took place and Councillor Watson was appointed the LAC Council Champion.

Councillor Watson said that he was proud to accept the position.

4. EID PARTY AND FOSTER CARE MATCHING FOR MUSLIM LAC

Kiera brought the Panel's attention to the need for cultural and spiritual equality and the fact that an EID Party for Muslim LAC should

have the same importance as a Xmas party for Christian LAC.

The young people were aware that there was a new project to try and recruit Muslim foster carers in Rotherham. They would like the Panel to support them to put in place a Muslim LAC so they would be able to have an EID celebration party every year as it was as equally important as the non-Muslims.

A number of Muslim LAC lived with non-Muslim carers who did not celebrate EID or Ramadan. The young people asked that Social Workers give the opportunity to LAC Muslim children to spend the period of Ramadan with a Muslim family.

Keira had been teamed up with a Muslim family and had attended an EID party.

Ian Walker, Head of Service, reported that although the pilot project had not started as yet, engagement with local mosques had significantly improved. The intention was to increase the number of host families and to team up with individual Muslim young people in order that the experience of Ramadan could be shared and hold an EID party.

Tina Hohn, Virtual School, queried if EID was celebrated in secondary schools. All schools should be celebrating EID as part of the cultural diversity and were encouraged to do so. She undertook to get that message out when she spoke to the Virtual School.

Manny felt it was a problem more for secondary schools than primary.

5. FUNDING AND LACC BUDGET/BANK ACCOUNT

Manny and Keira had undergone an interview process for the position of Treasure and Vice-Treasurer to ascertain if they could cope with the burden of the positions. They had been appointed to the respective positions as from March, 2018 to April, 2019.

The LAC Council received £6,000 in funding from the Council split £3,000 to LAC and £3,000 to Lil LAC although requests had been made to increase the budget.

A big chunk of the budget was spent on room hire. The young people had been busy writing fundraising bids but they were very time consuming. However, as the LAC Council did not have its own bank account, they did not qualify for the bids.

The LAC Council asked the Panel, in its role as corporate parent, if it could support/help them get their own bank account.

When applying for funding, organisations were reluctant to give the funding without there being a bank account even though the LAC Council

had its own Constitution and Terms of Reference. Any funding could be put into the Corporate bank but the young people did not want to do that.

Discussion ensued with the following suggestions made:-

- Setting up as a charity – have to have £2,000 in a bank account to achieve charitable status for a specified period before you could be considered
- Voluntary Action Rotherham – already contacted and spoken about the different opportunities available. Everything was now in place apart from the bank account
- What did other LACCs do - no other LACC's had bank accounts but they received the funding that they needed

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LAC COUNCIL THANKED MEMBERS OF THE PANEL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THEIR ACTIVITIES AND FOR THEIR ATTENDANCE.

7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8TH MAY 2018

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th May, 2018, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

Arising from Minute No. 69, it was noted that, with the retirement of Lorraine Dale, the management structure of the Virtual School had been changed and would now consist of a Head, 2 Deputy Advisers and 2 Education Advisers which would give extra capacity.

Work would also take place with regard to the Gypsy/Roma Traveller community using the good practice derived from LAC.

8. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S COUNCIL UPDATE JULY 2018

The Panel noted the LAC Council update report May and June, 2018, which highlighted some of the LACC's work during the period including:-

- Diana Award for Outstanding Contribution to Society
- Improving contact with families
- Voice of the Rotherham Child event
- CICC Regional seminar at Leeds Civic Hall on 30th May
- Interview Panel for Strategic Director
- LAC Council Treasurer and Vice-Treasurer

9. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Further to Minute No. 66 of the meeting held on 18th May, 2018, it was noted that the changes had been incorporated from the previous meeting and a slight amendment to include reporting to the Local Safeguarding Children Board twice a year when we really only need to do so on an annual basis.

Resolved:- That the amended Terms of Reference be approved.

10. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT - MAY 2018

Consideration was given to the report presented by Ian Walker, Head of Service, on behalf of Deborah Johnson, report author, which provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children Services for May, 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. Between March 2017 and March 2018 the number of LAC had increased by 29% (488 to 628). As at the end of May this had increased further to 642.

This increase in LAC numbers and the consequential shortage in available placements, had had an increase in the number of young people placed outside of the local area which in turn had had a negative impact on Social Work capacity. However, despite the additional capacity pressures, in general performance remained sustained across a number of areas.

Rotherham continued to have an increasing Looked After Children profile. The 642 children at the end of May equated to a rate of 113.4 per 10,000 population; this was significantly high when compared to the statistical neighbour average of 81.3.

Overall Rotherham's LAC age profile followed a similar distribution to that of the latest national comparator. The most notable differences being the higher rate of children aged 1-4 years (16% compared to 13%) and a lower proportion aged over 16 (16.8% compared to 24%).

The percentage distribution by legal status remained consistent with 52% of children subject to full Care Orders, 31% on an Interim Care Order, 10% on Placement Orders with Care Order and 6% were under Section 20.

After a period of consistency, compliance on plans at the end of May had dropped to 87.4% (from 90%). This area still remained under close management scrutiny in performance meetings and had increased to

89.5%.

There had been a decline since the end of 2017/18 in the timeliness of Statutory Reviews (96.1% to 78.8%). The timeliness had declined once again this month to 78.8%. This had been attributed to ongoing sickness and capacity issues within the IRO Service although there was also an issue in respect of a smaller number of Reviews not being held due to Social Workers not having completed their pre-Review reports.

Despite the overall increase in numbers, the proportion of children placed in a family based setting remained stable at 81%. The increase at the end of 2017/18 in the number and proportion of children experiencing multiple placement moves had continued. 13.8% (88 children) had had 3 or more placements. This had in part been linked to the shortage or placement choice created by the national increase in LAC making appropriate matching decisions an increasing challenge but work continued to work with providers to improve this for Rotherham children.

Following incremental improvements during 2017/18 the proportion of long term LAC who had lived in the same placement for over 2 years appeared to have plateaued at 61.3% (92 out of 150 children). This had been impacted by the increasing number of long term LAC and the desire to bring children closer to home and into family placements.

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

- The number of older LAC refusing health and dental checks
- Ongoing work with the Paediatrician to get Initial Health Assessments undertaken in places other than the hospital
- Undertaking by Rotherham CCG to offer all their apprenticeships in the first instance to LAC
- Retention of foster carers still an issue
- Relaunch of Challenge 63 in September
- Forecasted number of adoptions - 41 for this year
- National spike in the time it was taking from lodging an Adoption Order application and being heard in Court
- Rotherham was recognised as the regional lead in the use of EPP

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

11. LIFELONG LINKS

Lifelong Links was a DfE pilot project currently being implemented by 7 local authorities including North Yorkshire County Council and Kent County Council.

The programme had been introduced from the USA where it was found that the young people involved achieved positive outcomes in terms of placement stability and making and sustaining lifelong connections.

The DfE wanted to extend the trial to 12 local authorities. There had recently been awareness raising sessions attended by representatives from the LAC Service where the potential value of the project was recognised.

The aim of Lifelong Links was to create a lifelong support network for children and adolescents in the care system given that young people were likely to benefit from being connected to a supportive adult and that good contact between them and the wider family led to higher levels of support when they left care. It was aimed at LAC under the age of 16 who had been in care for less than 3 years and where there was no plan for them to live their family/to be adopted/achieve permanence. Evidence from the USA demonstrated that 50% of the young people involved in the project had no placement changes compared to 33% of the control group and that 81% of young people were able to establish long term connections not previously available to them.

Rotherham had submitted a bid that was currently going through the checks and balances stage.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) An update would be provided to Councillor Elliot with regard to the number of places bought from foster agencies.

(b) The Chair had visited Future 19 in Maltby which provided accommodation for 16-17 year olds in the process of leaving care. Rotherham had bought 3 places within the project. If any Member wished to visit the facility they should contact the Chair.

13. DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved:- That further meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel be held as follows all commencing at 5.00 p.m.:-

28th August, 2018

16th October

18th December

12th February, 2019

9th April