

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**  
**Tuesday, 16th October, 2018**

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

Also present were Anne Marie Banks, Pete Douglas, Catherine Hall, Tina Hohn, Helen Mangham, Sharon Sandell, Ian Walker, Rebecca Wall, Jon Stonehouse, Sue Wilson and Cathryn Woodward.

Lisa Duvalle together with Adorabella, Angelina, Chelsea, Jordan, Kira, Kiran. Judith Badger was in attendance for Minute No. 28 (Looked After Promises).

Apologies for absence were from Councillor M. Elliott.

**25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28TH AUGUST, 2018**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2018.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2018, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

Arising from Minute No. 15 (EID Party and Foster Care Matching for Muslim LAC), it was noted that there was engagement with the local community which would hopefully have a massive impact on Muslim LAC. There was also 2 voluntary IVs from the Muslim community.

**27. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL UPDATE**

Adorabella, Angelina, Chelsea, Jordan, Kira, Kiran had chosen the following from their LACC update report to talk to the Panel about:-

Diana Award Winners – LAC Council Shaping Services

- Members of the Looked After Children's Council (LACC) had attended a star studded ceremony in Leeds to collect a prestigious Diana Award for their outstanding contribution to society
- The LACC was publically honoured for the work they had done to campaign for the rights of children in care in particular the 'Bin Liners are NOT Suitcases' campaign

Eid Party and Muslim LAC

- Should have the same importance as a Christmas party for Christian LAC
- Muslim Foster Care Project

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- Mosque visit

### LAC Summer Activity Programme

- Town Hall visit
- Skeggy Vegas Trip

### Community Engagement

- Rotherham Show 2018

### Pride of Rotherham Awards

### Lil LAC Club Activities

- Participation sessions now moved to Dalton Youth Club
- Actively recruiting to give as many children the opportunity to have fun, meet and make new friends and play games

Resolved:- That the October 2018 update be noted.

## **28. STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES - LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S PROMISES**

Judith Badger, Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services, gave the following verbal report on the areas of her responsibility and how they impacted in terms of the LAC Promises:-

### Finance and Customer Services

- Responsibility for the majority of the corporate services of the Council
- Officers included accountants, solicitors and IT professionals
- Responsibility for the Capital Programme that supported the budget holders who managed Children Services
- The Council had invested over £20M in CYPS

### Procurement

- Worked with Children Services to support the procurement and tendering processes around care placements and the commissioning of care services

### Council Tax

- Recently offered Council Tax support to care leavers

### Legal Services

- The biggest financial challenge was the costs in supporting Children Services in safeguarding and protecting children
- Involvement with the Licensing function in particular with regard to taxi licensing

### Information Management

- Freedom of Information and Subject Access requests
- Work with the Information Commissioner to ensure protection of

victims/survivors of CSE by not disclosing information with regard to costs of CSE claims against the Council whereby the victim/survivor could be identified

- More work required on Subject Access requests

Judith was thanked for her report.

**29. REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS AND APPROACH TO CHILDREN MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR FAMILIES**

Sharon Sandell, Service Manager Leaving Care and Contact Service, presented a review of arrangements and approach to children maintaining relationships with their families.

A review was undertaken in February 2018 which covered the whole process from the point at which decisions were being formulated and considered to remove children through to how services recorded and used the time children spent with their families to build memories and support parents/adults in their parenting. A sub-group had also been established to explore buildings and environments.

The Contact Service was now known as The Family Activity Base Team (FAB Team) and the Contact Centre known as Family Activity Base (FAB) and based in the Cranworth Centre, Eastwood.

One of the key priorities for the review was to create opportunities to offer a rationale and a story for the child as they moved through care and into adulthood by placing arrangements for children and families seeing their families in a more prominent position at the heart of decision making. Part of this was to develop a comprehensive document which underpinned the Service's approach to how decisions were made for children to maintain a relationship with their families and how the decisions were recorded but also for young people to read about their relationships with their families in a more meaningful way. The Policy and Practice Guide was attached at Appendix A of the report submitted.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Numerous comments made by birth parents with regard to the standard of the property where contact took place
- The new arrangements had not been launched as yet - the finances were not in place as yet; currently the existing resources were being better managed.
- The report was a wish list should the finances become available
- A number of additional properties had since become available in the Council portfolio as possible localities which would be investigated
- Travelling distances for the family v the child – the child's best interests outweighed the family
- It was important to model an environment that agencies would expect birth parents to achieve if their children were to be returned to their

care

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

(2) That a further report be submitted once/should the finances become available.

**30. ROTHERHAM FOSTERING SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18**

Anne-Marie Banks, Services Manager, Fostering and Adoption, presented the Rotherham Fostering Service 2017/18 performance report and the updated Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2018 which fulfilled the requirements of Standard 1 of the Fostering Services Minimum Standards (Care Standards Act, 2000) and Regulations 3 and 4 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

The report set out:-

- The 3 teams within the Fostering Service i.e. Recruitment Team, Mainstream Support and Specialist Support
- Fostering Panel and its composition
- Fostering Panel Business 2017/18
- Fostering Families – Placements
- Approvals, Deregistration and Resignations
- Children Placed in Foster Care
- Placement Stability
- Unplanned Endings and Disruptions
- Staffing in the Fostering Service
- Fostering Supervision and Support
- Activities and Events
- Consultation
- Complaints and Compliments
- Training
- Fostering Recruitment Activity and Outcomes
- Fostering Service Recruitment Target Key Areas
- Key Challenges, Developments, Targets and Actions

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The team of workers within the Service were highly motivated and committed to children
- Introduction of a marketing and communications lead, a dedicated Duty Worker whose role was to lead on matching and making placements as well as a dedicated Fostering Advisor role
- The need to recruit/retain foster carers - 24 foster carers lost last year
- Review of the demographic of foster carers
- Massive progress had been made with the Panel Advisor driving the change

- Placement stability was the best it had been for 2 years
- Work taking place with the Fostering Network with regard to retention of foster carers
- The issues flagged up by the Fostering Panel had helped strengthen the Service
- The Service had used Signs of Safety on a case and developed practice guidance of how to support foster carers

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

(2) That a 6 monthly progress report be submitted to the Improving Lives Select Commission.

**31. ROTHERHAM ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18**

Anne-Marie Banks, Service Manager Fostering and Adoption, presented the Rotherham Adoption Service 2017/18 annual report together with the updated Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2018.

The report set out:-

- The Adoption Service
- Activity
- Timeliness of Adoption
- Family Finding
- Early Permanence Placements (Fostering to Adopt Placements)
- The Adoption Panel
- Staffing
- Adoption Support Services
- The Regional Adoption Agency
- Improvement and Development for 2018/19 onwards

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Rotherham had its own Therapeutic Team and had committed a Post-Adoption Worker to utilise the adoption fund effectively to provide therapy for children including those placed out of authority
- It was not always known what resources/services were available to children placed out of authority and relied upon the Adoption services where the children were placed to source the appropriate service on behalf of the Authority
- There had been some nervousness with regard to using Early Permanent Placement for older children but it had been used due to disruption of an adoption placement and had enabled the right support to be in place, gave the opportunity to support through the fostering phase into adoption and meant that the young person did not have to endure another move

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

**32. CORPORATE PARENTING MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - AUG 2018**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Sue Wilson, Head of Service Performance and Planning, provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children Services for August, 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 June this had increased further to 651.

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 651 children at the end of August equated to a rate of 115 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 5-9 years (23% compared to 19%) and a lower proportion aged over 16 (17% compared to 24%).

The percentage distribution by legal status remained consistent with 53% of children subject to full Care Orders, 32% on an Interim Care Order, 10% on Placement Orders with Care Order and 5% were under Section 20.

Despite ongoing high demand, a high proportion of LAC had up-to-date plans. Compliance had increased to 91.4% at the end of August compared to 89.5% at the end of March 2018.

In recent months there had been a decline in the timeliness of LAC Statutory Reviews (96.1% March 2018 to 85.6% August 2018)). This was reflective of the summer holiday period when many IRO's, Social Workers and foster carers were not available. This would be closely monitored in September to ensure that it was not part of an ongoing trend.

Despite the overall increase in numbers, the proportion of children placed

in a family based setting remained stable at 82.6%. August had seen a further improvement in the proportion of long term LAC who had lived in the same placement for at least 2 years (66.9% - 101 out of 150 children), an improvement of 5.7% compared to the end of March 2018 and reduced the gap with statistical neighbour average to 1.3%. This was the best performance of the year so far and bettered the performance achieved in 2016/17 and 2017/18. The measure had been impacted by the increasing number of long term LAC and the desire to bring children closer to home and into family placements.

There had also been a positive reduction in the number of LAC experiencing multiple placement moves in the last 12 months from the highest point this year of 14.8% at the end of May to 11.9% at the end of August.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/highlighted:-

- A seminar had been held on 10<sup>th</sup> September with Health colleagues where it was agreed that there would be greater flexibility both in terms of venue and additional after-school clinics for health assessments. The paediatrician had also agreed to undertake more of the sessions in community based settings. It would be run as a pilot to assess the impact on the young people and professionals the outcome of which would be submitted to the Panel
- Relaunch of Challenge 63

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

(2) That an update be provided to the next Panel meeting on the pilot being undertaken with regard to the increased flexibility for the health assessments.

### **33. VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD TEACHER REPORT 2018**

Tina Hohn and Pete Douglas presented the 2018 Virtual School Head Teacher Report which was contained information under the headings of:-

- The context regionally and nationally
- The current school age population
- Education Outcomes summary
- Primary Outcomes
- Year 11 Outcomes
- Care Leavers
- Attendance
- Exclusions

together with Appendices:-

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- 1) Promoting Emotional Wellbeing and Removing Barriers
- 2) Virtual School Team 2018
- 3) Key Questions for School Leaders
- 4) Pupil Premium Plus 2018/19
- 5) The Budget 2018/19
- 6) Previously Looked After Children and Young People
- 7) Signs of Safety
- 8) The Virtual School Vision

The following issues were highlighted from the report:-

- Quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) had improved significantly since the last inspection
- Ensuring children placed out of authority received the same service and input as those children in Rotherham and the surrounding areas
- The attitude of young people had changed towards education and PEPs and wanted to be involved
- 2 new Educational Advisors had joined the Team as well as a 0.6 Speech Therapist
- A vast number of schools had undertaken/about to undergo a variety of training programmes including Attachment Friendly School programme, emotional coaching and ELSA
- All schools could access the training but the priority was given to those that had the most LAC through Pupil Premium
- Solution focussed staffing meetings and interventions had seen a 3.2% drop in the number of fixed term exclusions
- Educational Psychologist had visited schools which had influenced some to change their policies and practises resulting in reduced exclusions
- As Educational Advisors, the schools were visited at least 3 times a year so it was hoped the momentum would be kept through the PEP meetings as well as the Educational Psychologist still being full involved
- It was hoped to undertake a piece of whole staff training and then set up a network in school in an attempt to manage Y3 in Attachment Friendly schools and look to establish School Attachment Champions
- Pleasing KS1 results and very good FS2 results
- Focus on closing the gaps for the end of KS2 and the readiness for secondary school. A qualified teacher to work with Y5 and 6 children on a 1:1 basis
- Interventions in KS3 and 4 were seeing real benefits. A software system, Sound Learning, was a bespoke intervention put in place for pupils to catch up
- Attempts to improve data analysis
- Issue with persistent absence with regard to young people, particularly Y9-11, who had moved out of the area and length of time it took for the admission process to get them back into education
- Although attending PEP meetings, emotional support was not provided to out of authority LAC that children placed within the



- Borough accessed
- Concern regarding raising the attainment and progress in KS4
  - Work also took place with the foster carers as well as extra tuition for the children. They received training from Early Years not only from the academic perspective but also from the emotional and wellbeing aspect from the Educational Psychologist

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received.

(2) That future reports include a summary of the headlines in improvement and performance that the Panel's attention wished to be drawn to

**34. CHAMPIONS' FEEDBACK**

There was no issues to report.

**35. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETINGS: -**

Resolved:- (1) That a further meeting be held on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 commencing at 5.00 p.m.

(2) That discussions take place with the LACC with regard to future start times of the meetings during 2019.