

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**  
**Tuesday, 2nd July, 2019**

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

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from M. Elliott.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9TH APRIL 2019**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2019.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

Arising from Minute No. 63 (The House Project HP), it was noted that officers had met with the national lead from the National House Project to discuss Rotherham's progress.

The first cohort of young people would move into their tenancies during July/August and work was already taking place on those who would be best placed to move into the next cohort of tenancies in 2020. The 2020 cohort would focus even more on those young people in out of authority placements who it was thought would return to Rotherham unsupported. It would also have a marked impact on the out of authority placement budget.

Arising from Minute No. 64 (Ofsted Focussed Visit – Challenge 63), it was noted that a report was to be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> July and the Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> July regarding foster carer fees and allowances. A further report would be submitted in September regarding the Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy. Further discussions were required regarding Challenge 63 but it was suggested that it wait until after the May 2020 election.

Minute No. 67 (Looked After Children Update), praise was given for the Total Respect training and felt to be very worthwhile.

It was noted that the Looked After Children would be attending the Designated Teachers meeting very shortly to deliver a presentation on the Caring Language Campaign.

**3. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S PROMISES**

Judith Badger, Strategic Director, Finance and Customer Services, gave a

verbal update on the work of her Directorate with regard to Looked After Children's Promises and apprenticeships in particular.

### **Apprenticeships**

A young person, a student at a local college, had worked in Finance earlier in the year for one day a week for 7-8 weeks. He had expressed a real interest in accounting. Discussions had commenced with regard to an apprenticeship with Sheffield College identified as being the training provider for the Accounting Technician qualification.

Unfortunately, the apprenticeship would have to be advertised externally so the young person would have to compete against other applicants but he could be supported by his Leaving Care Worker to get the best opportunity.

It would be advertised over the summer holiday ready for enrolment in September.

There were other issues around the apprenticeship salary rate and how that would work for this individual if they were still cared for, where they lived and how it affected their benefit. However, work was ongoing to ensure that it could take place.

### **Foster Carer Fees and Allowances**

A report was to be considered to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> July and the Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> July regarding foster carer fees and allowances. There was a close working relationship between Finance and Children and Young People Services. It was a reflection of the progress Rotherham had made.

Discussion ensued with the following questions raised:-

- LAC in Rotherham had highlighted their need for free access to leisure facilities as they were aware that some local authorities provided this was a part of the package of care. Was there a plan for Rotherham to provide the Local Authority foster families with a free family leisure pass?  
As part of the wider Customer Services Review, the website would be renewed and the customer offer e.g. online transactions, how to access services. The Review would also include the Rothercard and look at the whole variety of categories of person who the Authority might want to help access services through some form of discount or enhancement
- How does the Directorate engage with young people, therefore, taking into account of the 'voice of the child' within the Legal Services Team? The Legal Team worked with Children Services with respect to Care Proceedings and acted on instructions from the client

The Social Worker would be the intermediary for the young person.

Legal Services and Children Care worked much closer together to maximise the relationship; if there was a disconnect in that relationship it could work against the best wishes of the family and children.

- Could consideration be given to increasing the £57.90 allowance given to 16/17 year olds who were not accessing employment education or training to £60? Very few people went into a bank to draw money out and the use of cash points limited young people to only being able to draw out £50 and having to physically go to a bank for the £7.90

It was agreed that the information be sent to Judith who would consider the request and, if appropriate, submitted to the appropriate decision making body

The Panel thanked Judith for her attendance.

#### **4. EXTENSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS TO HOMES OF FOSTER CARERS, SPECIAL GUARDIAN AND ADOPTERS (REVISED POLICY)**

Ian Walker, Head of Service, presented a report that had been considered by the Directorate Leadership Team regarding the revised Policy for Extensions and Adaptations to Homes of Foster Carers, Special Guidance and Adopters.

The Policy set out the criteria adopted by the Local Authority to provide funding to Local Authority foster carers and adopters to extend their home or to part-fund new home purchases where, necessary to do so, to meet the needs of Looked After Children. The Policy would also be applicable to people within the family and friends network of the child who would offer care to that child to either prevent the child from becoming Looked After or to support a child ceasing to be Looked After but for the lack of available bedroom space.

It was not designed to enhance the lifestyle of either the carers or of the Looked After Child other than in the case of children with a disability when the funding may be used to address the challenges they may encounter due to their disability. It was also increasingly apparent that there were a number of legacy issues whereby commitments had been made to families that would not fit in with the more restrictive eligibility criteria.

The revised Policy was designed to support the Local Authority in meetings its legal duty to provide sufficient accommodation or Looked After Children and to be intrinsically linked with the principles of the Demand Management Strategy and Placement Sufficiency Strategy.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

#### **5. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Cathryn Woodward, Performance and Data Officer Social Care, provided a summary of performance for key performance indicators across Looked After Children Services for April, 2019. 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 stated that April appeared to bring the first real results for Right Child Right Care (phase 2) with 29 discharges from care achieved over the month and only 16 admissions giving a net reduction of 13 children in total and an overall number of 627 by the end of the month. The discharges from care meant that all of those planned were achieved within April suggesting some growing confidence within the Family Court regard the Council's permanent planning. As a result 13 children had been discharged via permanence (SGOs) over the course of 2019 so far.

The report also drew attention to:-

- 16 children admitted to care and 29 ceased to be Looked After giving a total of 627 LAC at the end of the month. The rate of LAC per 10,000 population was 110.1%, however, Rotherham remained exceptionally high in comparison to statistical neighbours at 87.8%
- The percentage of children who ceased to be Looked After due to permanence was 27.6% compared to 31.7% in 2018/19 and 27.3% for 2017/18
- The percentage distribution by legal status remained consistent with 55% of children subject to full Care Orders, 28% on an Interim Care Order, 11% on Placement Orders with Care Order and 5% under Section 20
- The proportion of LAC with an up-to-date care plan was 94.7%. Despite the improvement in performance, there was still work to be done and was going to be an area of focus in June's LAC Service Development Day
- 93.4% Statutory Reviews within timescale
- 95.5% statutory visits
- 62.3% of LAC of LAC were in long term stable placements
- The number of children experiencing 3 or more placement moves had reduced to 12.5% with the actual number of children affected reducing from 91 to 78
- 81.5% of LAC placed in family based settings including internal

fostering, independent fostering, pre-adoption placements and those placed with parent/family/friends

- The year end figure for 2018/19 Initial Health Assessments undertaken within 20 working days of entering care was 51.7%. During April 72.2% had been undertaken in time
- 80.8% of LAC had an up-to-date assessment as at the end of April. This was a decline in performance compared to previous months
- Dental assessment had also declined to 82.6% of LAC with an up-to-date Dental Assessment
- 95.9% of LAC had a PEP at the end of April 2019 and 96.7% of LAC had a PEP meeting during the 2018-19 Spring term
- There had been a realignment of the performance reporting for the Care Leavers cohort to reflect the requirements of legislation. Performance would now be reported on the wider cohort of young people identified as care leavers. This gave a cohort of 303 care leavers at the end of April
- 85.3% of Care Leavers had a Pathway Plan with 77.6% having an up-to-date Plan. The cases without a Pathway Plan tended to be young people aged 16 the majority of which would have an in-date care plan and would be addressed by transitioning young people to a Pathway Plan on Liquid Logic
- The number of care leavers who were in Education, Employment or Training had reduced to 60.1%
- 66% of LAC were in foster placements
- 4 households and 2 deregistered during April. This gave a net increase of 2 households for the year to date, totalling 150 in-house fostering households
- 14 new foster families approved with a further 7 active assessments ongoing with 2 more on hold and 3 IFA carers considering a potential move to RMBC
- The Foster Carer Diversity Scheme had led to 8 new foster families being allocated for assessment and a further 3 viability visits looking positive for progression to full assessment
- 32 children had been adopted, an increase on the 27 achieved in the previous year
- There had been one adoption in April and a further 36 children

- already placed with their prospective adoptive families
- 22 adopter families successfully approved a significant increase on the 14 approved in the previous year
  - For 2019-20 there were 14 prospective adopters already at stage 1 of the recruitment process and 3 in stage 2
  - LAC average caseloads had reduced for the first time in many months from 19.4 to 18.8 in the long term teams and from 15.3 to 14.4. in the Court and Permanence Teams largely as a direct consequence of the success of the Demand Management Strategy

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/highlighted:-

- From September there would be a LAC Nursing Team who would work with LAC children and have a greater focus/target than the wider 0-19 Service as well as keeping a tighter oversight of the out of authority placements
- The Team would work 9-5 thereby offering after school appointments. Flexibility of working hours had been emphasised during the recruitment process
- There was no issue with the dental services in Rotherham; it was a recording issue
- Very few Health Assessments highlighted that a young person was not registered with a dentist. The Community Dental Service had agreed that any referrals for LAC who had moved into the area would be able to access a local dentist
- Afternoon clinics for Initial Health Assessments had started in April
- The Virtual School's Governing Body meeting would agree targets for acceptable performance in respect of all individual performance measures
- There had been an improvements in schools' abilities to manage the more complex children's behaviour
- It was planned to hold a further Foster Carer Diversity Scheme event at the Unity Centre

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

## **6. CHAMPIONS' FEEDBACK**

It was felt timely to review the Champions given the new Panel membership.

Resolved:- That discussion take place with Panel Members with regard to the allocation of "Champion" role.

## **7. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN UPDATE**

Apologies had been received from representatives of the Looked After Children Council.

**8. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -**

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2019, commencing at 3.30 p.m.