

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday 31 January 2023

Present:- Councillor Cusworth (in the Chair); Councillors Browne, Burnett, Z. Collingham and Pitchley together with Matthew Boud, Lynda Briggs, Pete Douglas, Monica Green, Anne Hawke, Rebecca Wall and Julie Warren-Sykes.

56. REBECCA WALL

The Chair reported that it was Rebecca's last meeting before she left the Authority. The Panel wished her well for the future.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

58. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items to be considered that necessitated the exclusion of any members of the press or public.

59. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2022

Resolved:- The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th September, 2022, were agreed as a true record.

60. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL - DECEMBER AND JANUARY UPDATE

Angie, Baron, Bell, Bobby, Emil, Hope and Rosie, supported by Lisa Duvalle, gave a presentation to the Panel on the work of Rotherham's Looked After Children's Council drawing attention to:-

- Amplify Event, Manchester
- Advocacy and Independent Visitors Consultation
- Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service
- York Visit and Pantomime
- LACC Animation Project
- International LAC Council Tour (may be France)
- LAC Campaign Priorities 2022-23:-
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - LACC Animation project
 - VIP Summer Fest Awards 2023

The LAC Council had tirelessly campaigned for a free leisure pass for Looked After and Leaving Care young people for the past 3 years. In December 2022 the Panel shared an update with the LAC Council on the free leisure activities secured so far:-

- VIP Big Brother Project 2023 – free gym membership for 50 boys aged 11/15 years
- VIP Sister Project 2023 – from gym membership for girls aged 9-15 years
- VIP Swimming – free swimming for Looked After and Leaving Care young people across 4 leisure centres aged 0-25 years

However, the young people shared their frustration and not being provided with the access codes for the gym so they could not be used and the amount of personal budgetary information that had to be provided to access the VIP Sister Project.

Issues were also raised about family time once a LAC was post-18. It was felt that communication need to be clear so all parties were aware of the expectations

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

(2) That a meeting be held with a representative of the LAC Council, the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel, the Head of Service Children in Care and Regeneration and Environment to discuss the issues raised with regard to the free leisure pass.

(3) That when the IRO review report was submitted in June that it include feedback on family time and focus on the child's voice.

(4) That consideration be given to including a standard agenda item of an update from the Head of Safeguarding.

61. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2023 - 2028

Rebecca Wall, Head of Service Children in Care, presented a report , for information, previously approved by Cabinet on 17th October, 2022 (Minute No. 57 refers).

The Strategy identified the principles that were applied when commissioning the provision of secure, safe and appropriate accommodation and support to children in care and care leavers over the next 3 years. It provided the needs analysis that would inform market management work seeking to ensure that there was the right mix of provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and that the provision mix provided positive outcomes and value for money.

The previous Strategy (approved in June 2019) had 6 key priorities for the Market Management Project. Progress against all these priorities had been reviewed to support the development of the new Strategy.

The revised Sufficiency Strategy focussed on what Rotherham Council

knew about its children and young people and the information about local homes for children. It included the voice of Looked after Children.

Discussion ensued on the Strategy with the following issues raised:-

- The last year had seen an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeker children which had placed pressure on 16+ provision
- Work with Roundabout (to commence on 1st March) with an offer of 8 beds
- Due to successful DfE funds, the number of 16 residential beds for emergency accommodation would increase to 20 across 7 Rotherham settings
- Real focus and linkage throughout the Strategy to Early Help, managing demand as it came through the "front door"
- 25% reduction in the initiation of Care Proceedings
- Joint commissioning between the Council and ICB bringing everyone together for collaborative planning
- Challenge to remain competitive for foster carers
- Work had taken place on joint commissioning for Social Care and Education. Visits had been made to ensure the appropriate care was in place together with safeguarding and that the education was of a high standard

It was noted that the report had also been considered by the Improving Lives Select Commission.

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

62. PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2 2022/23

Consideration was given to the Quarter 2 2022/23 Corporate Parenting performance report which provided a summary of performance for Key Performance Indicators across the Looked After Children (LAC) Services. Appendix 1 of the report submitted provided performance on a page giving an overview of the Service's performance in comparison to the same period 2020/21 and Appendix 2 provided trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages where possible.

The report highlighted:-

- The number of children and young people Looked After had increased by 6 to 535, however, it was 29 below the same period in 2021/22. A key increase had been linked to unaccompanied asylum seeking children arriving via the National Transfer Scheme but also being placed as adults by the Home Office in hotels, who after accessing legal advice, sought support as a child
- 54 children had become Looked After and 46 ceased to be Looked After

- There were currently 33 unaccompanied asylum seeking children that were looked after by the Authority. The Commissioning Team were working hard to ensure that the Authority was able to offer placements/accommodation commensurate to need
- 90.2% of eligible Looked After Children had an up-to-date plan, a decrease of -1.9% in comparison to last year (92.1%)
- 76.5% of LAC in a family based setting had decreased compared to 79.8% at the end of Q1. Placement stability was an area of focus that the Fostering Service, responsible Team Manager and IRO had been engaged with to review what worked and what their roles were in working to prevent placement breakdowns
- 119 in-house foster carer households registered at the end of the quarter in comparison to 133 (-14). There were 4 foster family approvals in Q2 making 6 approvals year to date. However, 4 families had ceased to be foster carers bringing the total so far to 11, 5 less foster families at the end of the quarter. There were 9 prospective foster families in the recruitment process 7 of which had panels scheduled between October, 2022 and January, 2023
- Of the 541 children and young people Looked After by Rotherham, 6 were known to the Youth Offending Team
- 8 children had been adopted since April 2022 which was a reduction of one adoption for the same period last year
- 13 children had been adopted since April 2022, a decrease (-4) compared to the same period last year
- Since the Covid-19 pandemic, an improvement in the percentage of up-to-date health and dental checks was being seen with 68.5% of dental assessments and 83.1% of health assessments being up to date
- 77.2% of initial Health Assessments had been completed in time
- 92.8% of reviews during 2022/23 had been completed within timescales equating to 706 reviews in time out of 761 that were completed April to September 2022 (91.7% (341/372) in Q2)
- At the end of the Summer term 97.5% had a PEP compared to 98.3% Summer term 2020/21
- At the end of Q2 there were 311 young people in the care leavers cohort, an increase of 27 compared to the same point in 2021 (284) 78.1% of which had an up-to-date pathway plan (2.0% improvement)
- 97.4% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation. Of the 8 in unsuitable accommodation, 4 were in custody. However, the percentage of care leavers in employment, education and training showed a 9% increase with 71.2% at the end of the quarter compared to 61.6% at the same point in 2021

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- A South Yorkshire group had been established to look at dentistry, flexible commissioning and how to move it forward. A training package had been compiled for dentists to understand the vulnerabilities but there had been a slow uptake

- Consent was also an issue for dentists and unaccompanied children requiring the assistance of a translator
- A child placed with a foster family would normally attend the same dentist as its foster family unless the practice was full. In those cases the child would be referred to the Smile Foundation
- The Community Dental Service targeted vulnerable groups, dental phobic, children with learning disabilities etc. Someone with a dental phobia would not be referred to the Smile Project

Resolved:- (1) That the Quarter 2 2022/23 performance report be noted.

(2) That the next performance monitoring report include an update on dental checks.

63. PROMOTION OF FOSTERING THROUGH FILM

Resolved:- That this item be deferred until the next meeting with a representative of the Children's Capital of Culture Working Group being invited to the meeting.

64. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

It was noted that the report was submitted for information with the 2022/23 annual report being submitted to the June meeting.

65. SAMANTHA SYKES FOUNDATION TRUST

Resolved:- That this item be deferred until the next meeting.

66. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to consider.

67. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on 28th March, 2023, commencing at 4.30 p.m. to be held in the Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.