

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: 19 September 2018

Time: 4.00-6.50pm

Venue: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillors L Every (Chairman), A Bradnam, K Cuffley and C Richards (from 4.10pm)

Co-opted Members: P Asker (from 4.55pm) and S Day

Apologies: Councillors A Hay (Vice Chairman) and A Costello (substituted by K Cuffley)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from as noted above. There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 13 JUNE 2018

The minutes of the meeting on 13 June 2018 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. ACTION LOG

The Action Log was reviewed and verbal updates noted.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

The Quality Assurance and Audit Service Manager and Participation Worker stated that two additional young people would be working alongside the Sub-Committee's Co-opted Members to provide substitute cover at meetings and to help share the workload. Officers would continue to support all of the young people working with the Sub-Committee. The Participation Service now had a full complement of staff and Just Us groups were continuing to run. Care leavers forums were being offered on a monthly basis in the south of the county and it was hoped to offer something similar in the north. The Picnic in the Park on 1 August 2018 had been a great success with a good turnout and positive feedback. A date would be set shortly for a similar event next year.

Arising from the report,

- Members commended the Picnic in the Park which they had found to be a well organised and fun event which had offered a safe space for families, councillors, officers and other stakeholders to come together and share experiences and both offer and receive support;
- Members sought more information on the Mind of my Own (MOMO) initiative. Officers stated that the MOMO app was a tool which offered a direct means for young people to express themselves and make contact with their social worker. It was differentiated according to age and needs and all queries must be answered within three days. There were currently around 200 young people registered and about 300 officers in Cambridgeshire which made the county the top user nationally. Officers were working to continue to increase uptake and an

apprentice had been employed to support this work. The Chairman asked that the Sub-Committee should be kept in touch with the development of MOMO in future reports;

(Action: Participation Service Managers)

- The Chairman highlighted the importance of Care Leavers' forums in making the Sub-Committee and officers aware of what support young people wanted and needed Post 16. Members would be happy to attend some of these meetings if the young people would find this helpful and she asked that officers should make sure that the young people were made aware of this offer to attend and the value which Members attached to their views.

(Action: Participation Service Managers)

It was resolved to:

- a) note developments in the participation team.

5. VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Chairman reminded those present that the exam results contained in the report had not yet been validated and so must be treated with a degree of caution. However, Members attached great importance to the attainment of the County's Looked After children and young people and as such they had wished to have early sight of the provisional results. Performance remained a major area of concern to the Sub-Committee due to the impact of this on long-term outcomes, and performance at Early Years and Post 16 were critical.

The Deputy Manager of the Virtual School stated that provisional results showed 37.5% of Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children (LAC) had attained a Good Level of Development (GLD) at Early Years compared to 70.9% of all Cambridgeshire children. It was planned in part to address this through the use of phonics screening at the end of Year 1. At Key Stage 2, 18.6% of LAC had provisionally achieved a GLD in the combined scores for reading, writing and maths compared to 60.9% of all Cambridgeshire children and 64.3% of children nationally. A new Support Manager and Data Collection post had been created to strengthen data collection and analysis and work had begun to formalise arrangements for sharing good practice and learning with other Virtual Schools within the Eastern Region.

Arising from the report,

- The Chairman noted officers' comment that a change in assessment and curriculum in 2016 had impacted on the attainment levels in that year, but stated that all children had been affected by these changes, not just LAC;
- Noted that many LAC's performance was affected by their reduced exposure to wider life experiences and residual learning;
- Officers confirmed that they had comparative data from other Local Authorities which could be shared with Members;
(Action: Deputy Head of the Virtual School)
- A Member commented that they were not criticising the good work being done by officers and teachers, but the results being achieved by LAC remained a concern;
- Officers stated that some pupils had missed out on achieving higher grades by a small margin. An on-line teaching tool had been rolled out which could be

accessed by all children and young people, including those living out of county, but take up had been low. Similarly, additional holiday provision had been explored, but take up had again been low. Of the 12 pupils who had taken part, 11 had made expected progress;

- A Member questioned whether there was a correlation between performance and whether a child was placed in or out of county. Officers stated that there was no direct correlation and that every effort was made to provide parity of support to children, regardless of where they were placed. Where children were placed out of county the Cambridgeshire Virtual School would work with its local counterpart to try to identify the most appropriate school placement;
- Members welcomed news that officers contacted all Looked After Children personally when exam results were verified to congratulate them on their achievements.

Summing up, the Chairman stated that even if Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children were performing at the national average this meant that children in the care of other Local Authorities were performing better. Members' ambition on behalf of Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children exceeded their attaining average results. She asked that officers bring a report back to the Committee in six months' time providing an update on the issues explored. The report should also state whether full use was being made of Area Opportunity Funding in Huntingdonshire and Fenland in relation to Looked After Children; whether there was any correlation between number of school moves and attainment; and what had been done to reinstate the expectation that Looked After Children should be a priority area for School Governors.

(**Action:** Service Director for Education/ Head of the Virtual School)

It was resolved to:

- a) note and comment on the report.

6. CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES RELATING TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Chairman welcomed Dr Paul Millard, Clinical Director for Children at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, Pam Parker, Professional Lead for Psychology at Cambridgeshire County Council, and Kathryn Goose, Senior Child and Adolescent Mental Health Commissioner at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to the meeting. The Sub-Committee had been awaiting a report on this issue for some time and were glad to now have the opportunity to discuss this important issue. In the interim, Members had been reading the Departments for Health and Education's Green Paper on 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision' with great interest.

Dr Millard offered his apologies at the delay in providing the report requested by the Sub-Committee. This had been due to changes at senior management level within CPFT. CPFT was contracted to provide Tier 3 specialist services and Tier 4 in-patient services, so its work in relation to Looked After Children (LAC) was focused on specialist mental health services. It was funded solely to provide these services within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with the CCG being responsible for Tier 3 and 4 services for Cambridgeshire LAC placed out of county. Pam Parker stated that she worked alongside frontline social workers to deliver some direct interventions in addition to providing support to foster carers and some family work and support in residential settings. Kathryn Goose stated that the CPFT contract sat with the CCG. The process

for providing support to LAC was quite complicated and there was no single pathway to accessing services. Whilst there were not necessarily gaps in provision there could be delays in getting the right services in place. In previous years the Thrive model had been used, but work was underway to focus on the use of network meetings to inform quick action.

Arising from the report,

- The Professional Lead for Psychology stated that in the social care clinical team requests were usually generated through LAC reviews or requests made by social workers or foster carers. The team would sign post services or conduct a visit/ assessment alongside a social worker, but did not themselves deliver a mental health service;
- The Clinical Director for Children at CPFT stated that when LAC were identified as requiring CPFT's specialist support services they would be seen a little more quickly;
- The Assistant Director stated that clinicians had been embedded in social work in Cambridgeshire since 2010. Their work had become more targeted since the appointment of the current Professional Lead the previous year, but this remained only one part of the support services available;
- A Co-opted Member asked whether similar types of mental health services were available to LAC placed out of county to those living in Cambridgeshire. The Professional Lead for Psychology stated that most areas had a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), although there was some variation in their service offer. Officers would visit out of county LAC to talk to them and assess the services purchased to ensure that they were right;
- A Co-opted Member commented that waiting times for access to mental health services could be long and asked what could be done to improve this. The Senior CAMH Commissioner, CCG stated that all stakeholders were acutely aware of this issue. The position was improving, with 80-90% of LAC now seen within 18 weeks. The Green Paper aimed to reduce this waiting time to around four weeks, but there would be workforce capacity issues involved nationally in delivering this;
- A Member expressed concern that long waiting times could act as a disincentive for those who might wish to seek support. The Assistant Director for Children's Services stated that officers would respond robustly if they felt that the waiting time for services was not acceptable;
- A Co-opted Member commented that support was sometimes offered which was not delivered and asked whether the necessary funds and resources were available. Given that around 45% of Looked After Children were described as experiencing some form of mental health issues funding was a big issue. The Senior CAMH Commissioner, CCG stated that the CCG's Transformation Plan had included five years of funding, but that it was not yet clear if the resources described in the Green Paper represented new or existing funding. The Chairman commented that it would be helpful to obtain greater clarity on this so that Members could take a view on whether they might wish to lobby for support; (**Action:** Professional Lead for Psychology)
- The Senior CAMH Commissioner, CCG described [Keep Your Head](#), a website designed to bring together reliable information and signposting on mental health and wellbeing for children, young people and adults across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. The Chairman suggested that officers might want to explore whether this could be linked with the Mind of my Own initiative; (**Action:** Quality Assurance and Audit Service Manager)

- A Member commented that the only way to judge whether improvements were being made with regards to service access and waiting times was from the young people concerned. The Chairman broadly concurred, but emphasised the need to ensure that this was sought in a sufficiently sensitive way. The Assistant Director suggested that the Professional Lead for Psychology could help ensure that this was the case.

Summing up, the Chairman expressed her thanks to the Clinical Director for Children at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust, the Professional Lead for Psychology at Cambridgeshire County Council and the Senior Child and Adolescent Mental Health Commissioner at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for attending and sharing their knowledge. Child and adolescent mental health issues for Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children would be added to the Forward Plan for alternate meetings going (**Action:** Democratic Services Officer). The Chairman suggested that a workshop/ training session should be set up for Sub-Committee members to look at what they would want covered in future reports relating to mental health (**Action:** Participation Service Managers) and that the Assistant Director for Children's Services, the Clinical Lead for Psychology, the Head of Looked After Children Countywide and the Co-opted Members might also meet to discuss the way forward (**Action:** Assistant Director for Children's Services)

It was resolved to:

- a) note the contents of the report.

7. FOSTER CARE RECRUITMENT UPDATE

The Residential and Placements Provisions Manager stated that one of the Local Authorities most important duties was ensuring high quality care for its Looked After Children. For most children and young people this meant living in a family. Additional Transformation funding had been obtained to support a strong recruitment campaign to attract more in-house foster carers. This amounted to an investment of around £300k over the next three years, compared to an annual recruitment budget of £16k previously. As of the end of June 2018 there were 140 households providing in-house foster care and 701 Looked After children. As a consequence many children and young people were placed with independent foster carers which often meant they were living further away and cost significantly more. The recruitment campaign had launched the previous week and 37 enquiries had been received so far in September which was very encouraging as on average 30 enquiries were received per month. Details had been included in the July newsletter sent to all schools and this had generated 62 enquiries, so this would be repeated in future. Nationally, one in ten enquiries progress to a new fostering household and figures in Cambridgeshire were in line with this. Officers were ensuring a prompt response to all enquiries and providing potential applicants a rounded picture of what it meant to be a foster carer, both the rewards and the challenges. They were also engaging with local and business communities to encourage them to support the initiative and join 'team Cambridgeshire'. This had included Cambridgeshire United Football Club offering the use of its stadium for the campaign launch.

Arising from the report:

- A Member asked if fostering households were paid more by independent agencies than by the Council. Officers stated that between 45-55% of the fees paid to independent foster care agencies were passed on to the fostering households so the sums they received would be similar to those received by in-house foster carers;
- A Member asked why potential foster carers might choose to work for an agency rather than the Council. Officers stated that anecdotal feedback suggested a lack of awareness of the Local Authority offer in some cases;
- The Assistant Director for Children's Services emphasised the Council's unique selling point as the corporate parent of the children whom they were placing. As such, the Council's commitment to supporting the children and their foster carers was unrivalled;
- A Co-opted Member asked whether foster carers working for independent agencies had more choice in the type of child or young person they cared for. Officers stated that this was not the case. Some agencies focused on providing foster carers for particular groups such as older children, but the carers views would always be an important part of the matching process. Unfortunately it tended to be more difficult to place children with the most complex needs which often meant that these were the children who were placed furthest away;
- The Chairman stated that it would be important to involve foster carers in the Sub-Committee's work and asked officers to reflect on ways in which this could best be done (**Action:** Residential and Placements Provisions Manager) and asked that date should be arranged for the Sub-Committee's planned work shop on fostering (**Action:** Residential and Placements Provisions Manager).

It was resolved to:

- a) note the report.

8. CORAM CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

The Chairman welcomed Sarah Byatt, Managing Director of the Adoption and Permanence Service for Cambridgeshire and London, to the meeting and thanked her for her report, which was a very useful document.

Ms Byatt stated that 2017-18 had been a good year for the Service in Cambridgeshire as it had placed 39 children. Six months into the 2018-19 year 26 children had already been placed. Families were currently being actively sought for a further 17 children. None of these children had been waiting for a placement for more than 12 months, but it was acknowledged that this was still too long. The demand for post-adoption services had increased during the period, but this should not necessarily be considered a negative development as families were encouraged to seek support if needed. Satisfaction rates with the service provided were high.

Arising from the report:

- Ms Byatt stated that the use of digital and social media had proved most effective in attracting new applicants. Adoption was a life-long commitment and during the past four years only two significant disruptions had occurred;

- A Co-opted Member asked for clarification of the distinction between fostering and adoption. Ms Byatt stated that with adoption the legal rights of a child's birth parents were usually severed and their adopter/s became their legal parent/s;
- A Member asked about uinding for post-adoption support services. Ms Byatt stated that central Government funding was guaranteed to May 2020 and that details of what would follow that period were awaited. The Chairman stated that the Sub-Committee would want to be kept in touch with developments on this issue (**Action:** Head of Countywide and Looked After Children);
- A Member asked about fostering to adopt. Ms Byatt stated that the Service did seek to establish early permanence when possible and this included carers fostering with a view to adoption.

It was resolved to:

- a) note the content of the report.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Head of Corporate Parenting stated that the report before the Sub-Committee covered the period from April to June 2018. As of 30 June 2018 there were 701 Looked After Children in the Council's care. 53% of these children and young people were placed within the county and 47% were placed outside of the county borders. 35% were placed more than 20 miles beyond the county border. Currently the figure stood at 723, with the increase relating mainly to the spontaneous arrival of a large number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children during the summer. Cambridgeshire was still looking after less children than the national average, but the rate of increase in the period was significant. The number of incidents of Looked After Children reported as going missing had dropped in June 2018 to 22 events involving 10 children, but each event continued to be treated with the utmost care.

Arising from the report:

- A Co-opted Member welcomed the increase in the proportion Looked After Children being visited with statutory timescales and improved performance in relation to the number of newly Looked After Children having their health assessment within 20 days of becoming Looked After. The Chairman asked that officers should continue to keep these figures under review and include them in every Performance Report (**Action:** Head of Corporate Parenting)
- A Co-opted Member commented that they found the number of Looked After Children reported as going missing shocking. They asked whether this was the same children and whether it might be linked to mental health issues. Officers stated that it did tend to be the same group of children involved. Senior officers were informed of every incident straight away and each was followed up by a visit from a specialist team to work with the young people on the reasons for them going missing. Officers worked closely with the police on this. The Chairman stated that Councillors were acutely aware of this issue and the potential vulnerability of the young people involved and examined these figures at every meeting;
- A Member questioned the amount of social worker time spent travelling to visit Cambridgeshire children accommodated out of county and asked whether reciprocal visiting arrangements had been explored with other Local Authorities to reduce this. The Assistant Director for Children's Services stated that her

judgement was that Cambridgeshire children should be visited by Cambridgeshire social workers irrespective of where they were placed geographically to ensure that the Council had direct contact with each child and was able to fully oversee their experience.

The Chairman thanked officers for their report and for the additional information provided in response to questions. Taking the Performance Report as a standing item at each meeting was enabling members of the Sub-Committee to develop a greater understanding of the performance data and to more easily identify the trends and anomalies which occurred.

It was resolved to:

- a) review performance for Looked after Children and comment on the themes and trends identified in the report.

10. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Assistant Director for Children's Services reported that arrangements for the organisational restructure described at previous meetings were going well. It was hoped to introduce the new structure from 1 November 2018 and it was anticipated that there would be only three vacancies at that time. A big recruitment drive had attracted a good number of social workers including some newly qualified practitioners and some from overseas. Use was also being made of apprenticeships to attract new workers and there would be a greater emphasis on retaining existing workers. The changes included the establishment of a dedicated Corporate Parenting Service which was what both professionals and carers had asked for. The Principal Social Worker stated that training was needed to support these changes and work was in hand to ensure that this targeted the skills needed and was delivered without disrupting services to young people and carers. There was a clear focus on allowing sufficient time to ensure a smooth transition where support for a young person would be transferred from one social worker to another.

Arising from the report:

- A Co-opted Member commented that there had been lots of restructures recently and that in their case this had led to multiple changes of social worker in a short space of time and confusion over who their social worker was. The Assistant Director for Children's Services acknowledged this, but expressed the hope that the new arrangements would address this. Officers would be working closely with the Voices Matter Panel to make sure that the right structures were put in place and to make sure that lessons were learned from the past. Some changes made in previous restructures were working well and these would be retained;
- A Member asked whether it was hoped that the restructure would address retention issues. Officers stated that the County Council offer was now more closely aligned with neighbouring Authorities. All social workers leaving the Council were offered an exit interview with either the Assistant Director or Principal Social Worker. It was encouraging that three social workers who had left the Council during the previous restructure were returning as they liked the refinements which were being made.

Summing up, the Chairman thanked officers for their update on the restructuring which was taking place and asked that the Sub-Committee should be kept informed of how this progressed over time (**Action:** Assistant Director for Children's Services).

It was resolved to:

- a) note and comment on the report.

11. SUB-COMMITTEE WORKSHOP/ TRAINING PLAN

The Chairman stated that Co-opted Members were very welcome to attend any Sub-Committee training sessions if they were available or to let officers know if there was any training which they would like to be arranged separately for them. It was now almost a year since the Sub-Committee had been established and it had been a steep learning curve for all involved. It would now be timely to arrange a generic workshop for all members and substitute members to consider how best to upskill themselves so that they were best equipped to fulfil their roles. It would be important to ensure a good turnout for this event to develop an agreed approach and to make full use of the wide variety of skills, experience and expertise of all involved (**Action:** Participation Managers).

It was resolved to:

- a) note and comment on the Sub-Committee workshop and training plan.

12. FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

The Committee reviewed the Forward Agenda Plan and agreed that an item on the Local Offer would be added, provisionally to the November meeting.
(**Action:** Democratic Services Officer)

It was resolved to:

- a) note the Sub-Committee agenda plan.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee will meet next on Wednesday 21 November 2018 at 4.15pm in Meeting Room 2, Huntingdon Library, Princes Street, Huntingdon PE29 3PA.

Chairman
(date)