

ITEM 4

Time commenced – 6.00pm
Time finished – 7.26pm

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB BOARD 2 December 2014

Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors Care, Hezelgrave, Nawaz and Whitby

In Attendance: Councillor Hussain

22/14 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors' Eldret and Keith.

23/14 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

24/14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

25/14 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26/14 Forward Plan

The Board considered the Forward Plan published on 11 November 2014. Members wanted an opportunity to consider and comment upon the following items:

39/14 adding to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Board's work programme or included under the existing item on the update on planning obligations in relation to building of schools through housing need.

27/14 Children in Care Participation and Engagement

The board received a report presented on behalf of the Strategic Director for Children and Young People by the Head of Children's Quality Assurance. Sally Groves the Project Co-ordinator for CSV Derby was present, as the author of the report, along with Leah Fisher who is the nominated Children in Care Council's representative.

The report informed Members that Derby City Council commissions Community Service Volunteers (CSV) in Derby to deliver its Children's Rights Service. This encompasses:

- The Children in Care Council (including Care Leavers)

- Advocacy service for children in care
- Independent visitor service for children in care
- Advocacy service for children at child protection conferences

The CSV Annual Report 2013/2014 was attached (appendix 2) and gave evidence of a vibrant and responsive service which was well used by children and staff. It is proposed that this report should be published on the Derby City Council website.

The report stated that children in care have the opportunity to contribute to their own care planning and express their views, wishes and feelings at their statutory reviews. Participation rates are very high at 97.4%. Half-year summary attached (appendix 4)

The Quality Assurance service has recently refreshed their strategy to promote participation, both for children in care and their parents where appropriate, but also for children subject to child protection or child in need plans, and their families. A copy is attached (appendix 5).

Members discussed the Children in Care Pledge, which was launched in 2012. The pledge is a promise made by Derby City Council to all Derby children and young people in care and leaving care. A full explanation of the pledge can be found at paragraph 4 on page 13 of the report. Members sought clarification on how the Children in Care Pledge is promoted and service users are made aware of it, they were informed that it is circulated in the quarterly newsletter sent to all children in care.

Barriers to accessing the Children in Care Council meetings, the advocacy and visitor services were also discussed at length by Members. Members were told that all available means of communication were in the process of being made available to children in care, making internet access more like that in an individual households whilst maintaining internet safety safeguarding policies, rotating meeting venues, using SKYPE and promoting internet safety through the Children in Care Council meetings.

Resolved to note the report and recommended:

- 1) The Children in Care Pledge is revisited and recirculated to ensure it is current and relevant**
- 2) Due to the relocation of the children in care services to the Council House, ensure that staff employed in reception are trained to greet and sign post the children visiting on their own, in a manner relevant to the child.**
- 3) Equipment and toys are made available to provide a more welcoming and child friendly environment.**
- 4) That foster carers are informed of the Children in Care Pledge on a regular basis.**

The Interim Head of Children in Care Regulated Services presented a report on behalf of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People which was entitled Inspection and Monitoring of Children's Homes.

The report informed Members that Children's Homes are regulated and inspected by Ofsted as required by the Care Standards Act 2000. Inspections are based on the Children's Homes Regulations 2011, Children's Homes: National Minimum Standards and the Children Act 1989, Regulations and Guidance, Volume 5. Every children's home is inspected at least twice a year, receiving one full and one interim inspection.

The report went onto explain what happens at a full inspection, that inspectors make judgements on overall effectiveness, outcomes for children, quality of care, safeguarding and leadership and management. The home is judged according to a four point scale: an inadequate service does not meet minimum requirements; an adequate service only meets minimum requirements; a good service is of high quality and exceeds minimum requirements; an outstanding service is of exceptional quality and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.

Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 requires each home to be visited by an employee of the organisation not directly concerned with the conduct of the home and a report to be written. New regulations introduced this year require more independence and impartiality on the part of the visitor than previously. As a result some visits are now carried out by an independent regulation 33 visitor. The rest are still done by managers in the CYP Directorate who are completely independent of the Homes and have no involvement with young people placed in them. Reports of the visits are sent to Homes Managers who respond to any recommendations. The reports are circulated to Ofsted, the Head of Service, Service Director and Democratic Services.

The report also stated that elected members carry out periodic visits to children's homes to monitor the quality of care and the welfare of children and young people. Visits fall within members' corporate parenting responsibilities.

The Members questioned the Interim Head of Children in Care Regulated Services regarding how persons visiting the home under Regulation 33 were trained and how reports of their visits were compiled. Members were informed that new government guidelines have ruled out persons who were previously eligible to undertake these visits so new people were trained and the quality of reports had improved; the service were using the reports in a more challenging way, as tool to recommend improvements.

The Interim Head of Children in Care Regulated Services relayed to the Board how well Members' visits to children's homes were received by the staff and the children who live there and that the Members' reports are a valuable link between the children's homes and the boards/committees on which the members sit.

Resolved to recommend and note the report.

29/14 Annual Report –Private Fostering

A report of the Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Annual – Private Fostering 2013-14 was received by the Board this was presented by the Head of Children's Quality Assurance. The report provided details of the number of Private Fostering arrangements to the Local Authority and how they were statutorily responded to.

The report stated that there is a statutory duty for Local Authorities to report to the DfE upon their Private Fostering numbers on an annual basis. Whilst numbers were low in Derby, there have been activities that are hoped to promote awareness amongst professionals and increase the numbers identified.

The tables in the report listed:

- the number of private fostering arrangements in Derby
- a breakdown of these by gender, age and ethnicity
- visiting frequency and reviews

The Members discussed the possible situations surrounding informal private fostering and sought clarification about what were the incentives for members of the general public to report private fostering arrangements. The Head of Children's Quality Assurance responded by saying that there weren't any incentives for individuals to inform the authorities and notifications of the majority of private fostering arrangements were made by schools.

Resolved to note the report and supported the following further recommendations at point 4.7 in the report:

- 1) Improve means of effective self evaluation by collecting the correct types of information. Whilst this information can be collected manually by Eastmead (through recording information within CiN Reports) and integrating data into the existing database, support from IT systems to self generate this information is required.**
- 2) There is an expanding population of Eastern European communities within certain parts of Derby and it is possible that children are arriving in the area due to economic reasons but remain hidden; further work is needed to improve engagement.**
- 3) There is existing information contained on Derby.gov.uk for the general public about private fostering. The Derby Safeguarding Board also has some information on their website and both sites would benefit from being updated**
- 4) An e-learning training resource has been developed by the County and whilst professionals are directed to this resource within multi agency training events a far greater audience will be reached if a link is added to the DSCB website and the resource is circulated to CYPD Staff and key partner agencies.**

30/14 Work Programme and Topic Review

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Board that Children and Young People Performance Surgery dates were in the process of being set and they would be available at a future meeting.

MINUTES END