

Time commenced – 1.02pm
Time finished – 3.13pm

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE
22 September 2015

Present: Councillor Bolton (Chair)
Councillors Jones, Russell, Whitby and Williams

08/15 Apologies

There were none.

09/15 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

10/15 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

11/15 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28 July 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12/15 Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for Looked After Children. The report was presented by the Service Director – Learning & Inclusion Services and the 14-19 SSIO.

It was reported that there had been concerns for some time over the PEP process and completion rates and more generally over the role, remit and function of the virtual school team.

Members noted that practices, systems and processes had been analysed and areas had been identified that required improvement. Members also noted that a series of actions have been initiated to address the areas which required improvement and that these were outlined in the report.

Members discussed PEPs for children placed out of area.

Members discussed how the pupil voice had been captured. It was reported that the new ePEP template included pupil voice questions at the top of each section, as appropriate. It was further reported that a consultation exercise had been undertaken

with pupils across the age range to ensure that the questions asked were appropriate. Members noted that there was also a paper based version of the questions. It was agreed that the questions would go to the Children in Care Council.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the concerns and agree the appropriateness of the actions taken to date; and**
- 2. to recommend through the upcoming IT procurement that a specific Looked After Child module is integrated within what is procured.**

13/15 Foster Carer Recruitment

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Foster Carer Recruitment. The report was presented by the Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption.

It was reported that as part of the corporate demand management initiative the fostering and adoption service embarked on a service wide project to further support the Council's ability to recruit more foster carers and attract adopters. It was further reported that this was a partnership with iMPower using their Family Values programme. Members noted that work started in late August 2014 and continued to date.

It was reported that the Family Values programme recognised the importance of involving foster carers at every stage of the recruitment process, including the design, delivery and evaluation of recruitment strategies.

It was further reported that national and local research indicated that this would lead to better recruitment outcomes and that the Council's foster carers had indicated that they were willing to contribute and work alongside staff from across the service in foster carer recruitment.

Members noted that working with iMpower, research was carried out that used the Values Modes approach and that this grouped individuals based on their values. Members also noted that by understanding the dominant groups, it allowed the service to tailor recruitment to appeal to them.

It was reported that in the case of Derby foster carers, the dominant group was the Pioneer group, who made up 91% of the cohort. It was also reported that this was in line with foster carer groups elsewhere, and was also in line with the proportion of staff that fitted into this group.

Members noted that the Inspiring Young People Board would be undertaking a Topic Review into the recruitment and retention of foster carers.

Resolved:

- 1. to welcome the report and await the outcome of the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers Topic Review from the Inspiring Young People Board; and**
- 2. to agree that the fostering and adoption service continues with the current marketing plan with an emphasis on word of mouth campaigns supported by Derby City Council foster carers.**

14/15 Inspection and Monitoring of Children's Homes

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Inspection and Monitoring of Children's Homes. The report was presented by the Head of Residential Care.

It was reported that children's homes were regulated and inspected by Ofsted as required by the Care Standards Act 2000. It was also reported that inspections were based on the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and Quality Standards. Members noted that every children's home was inspected at least twice a year, receiving one full and one interim inspection.

It was reported that the new framework for the inspection of children's homes had been published in April 2015.

It was also reported that Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 required 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. Members noted that some visits were carried out by an independent visitor from outside of the Council and that the rest were done by managers in the Children and Young People's Directorate who were completely independent of the Homes and had no involvement with young people placed in them. Members also noted that reports of the visits were sent to Homes Managers who responded to any recommendations and that the reports were also circulated to Ofsted, responsible managers and Democratic Services.

It was reported that Elected Members carried out periodic visits to children's homes to monitor the quality of care and the welfare of children and young people and that the visits fell within members' corporate parenting responsibilities. It was also reported that after each visit, Members reported on their observations and recommendations and that Members were informed of actions taken as a result.

The Chair reported that Councillors had visited Queensferry Gardens and Cricklewood Road since the report was written.

The Chair updated Members on available training in relation to Councillor visits to children's homes.

Resolved to note the report.

15/15 Exit from Care Team

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Exit from Care Team. The report was presented by the Training and Education Officer.

It was reported that the Exit from Care Team was created to assist in the reduction of the number of children in care to Derby City Local Authority and to reduce placement costs. It was also reported that the team became operational on 7th January 2013 and initially consisted of 3 full time social workers, a full time team manager and a team clerk (now Casework Support Officer). Members noted that an additional full time social worker post was created in September 2014 taking the team to 4 FTEs.

It was reported that the primary purpose of the team's existence was to support the successful transition of children from the care system to the care of their parents, carers or connected persons. It was also reported that this could be achieved in three ways:

- Placement of a voluntarily accommodated child (S.20) with his/her parent or relative.
- Placement of a looked after child with his/her parent under the 'Placement with Parent Regulations'.
- Supporting a long term foster carer gaining a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order for the child.

Members noted that since starting in January 2013 the team had received a total of 112 referrals (individual children). It was reported that 10 referrals were inappropriate, 14 referrals were assessed and deemed not viable for rehabilitation or discharge of carer order, 20 referrals had seen foster carers informed of the SGO process but resulted in them not wishing to proceed and 68 referrals had moved through the assessment phase and had resulted in differing outcomes for children and young people, or were currently continuing to be assessed.

It was reported that at the end of year one, 31st March 2014, the team achieved savings for the Local Authority for placement costs of £636,333.05 (total of 15 months savings). It was also reported that at the end of year two, 31st March 2015, the team achieved savings for the Local Authority for placement costs of £349,898.20 (total of 12 months savings). Members noted that the total placement saving up until 31st March 2015 was £986,231.25.

Resolved to note and endorse the work of the Exit team to safely reduce the number of Looked After Children and to reduce placement costs.

16/15 Annual Health Report for Looked After Children 2014/15

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Annual Health Report for Looked After Children 2014/15. The report was presented by the Dedicated Nurse for Looked After Children.

Members noted that the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2015) stated that looked after children and young people had greater mental health problems, along with developmental and physical health concerns such as speech and language problems, bedwetting, coordination difficulties and sight problems.

It was reported that the Department of Health (2015) argued that almost half of children in care had a diagnosable mental health disorder and two thirds had special educational needs. It was further reported that when there were delays in identifying or meeting the emotional and mental health needs this could have a detrimental effect on all aspects of their lives.

Members noted that priority Actions for the Looked After Children Team and Provider Organisation were:

- To continue to work hard within the multiagency arena to ensure best outcomes for the children and young people in our care.
- Timeliness of health assessments. Continue to work with our Social Care partners to ensure there is a robust system in place to ensure data is recorded in a timely and accurate method for both health and social care systems.
- Make effective use of the multi-agency task and finish group to ensure there is a clear and timely process for SDQ's to help inform the review health assessment.
- Regularly monitor performance through quarterly assurance reports (including RHA's for under 5's).
- Consideration of a job description, role, given to a dedicated CAMHS team or secondment of a CAMHS professional into the looked after children multiagency team. To expand and further develop the psychological wellbeing service offer.
- Consideration given to the recommended minimum guide to the recourses required for these roles.
- Recommendations for the provider organisation and commissioners as part of business planning and service development.
- The commissioning group and the Trust Safeguarding Committee were asked to note the changes in minimum specifications for service design, and review how they would like to mitigate this risk and give guidance and recommendations on this issue.

Resolved to note the report.

17/15 Update on Leaving Care Service

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Update on Leaving Care Service. The report was presented by the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People.

It was reported that local authorities were required to provide support services to young people leaving the care system under the Children Act, 1989 Guidance and Regulations- Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care leaver (revised January, 2015).

It was further reported that in April, 2015 an internal audit/assessment was carried out on the service, led by the Acting Director of Children and Young People. Members noted that the purpose of the audit was to evaluate the experience and progress of care leavers in Derby through auditing pathway plans, tracking cases with personal advisors and talking directly to care leavers.

It was reported that in response to the audit/assessment, an improvement plan was drawn up and an improvement board was established to drive the changes. It was also reported that the board consisted of staff from various services such as Connexions, DWP, Housing, Commissioning as well as representation from the leaving care service. Members noted that most importantly, the board had representation from Care Leavers themselves. Members also noted that the board would also invite other services to attend that had a direct effect and input into the lives of Care Leavers such as Sexual health services or Drug and alcohol services as and when particular issues come to the fore.

Resolved:

- 1. to note and endorse the progress against the improvement plan; and**
- 2. to request that an update report be brought to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee.**

18/15 Looked After Children Placed Outside of Derby City – Annual Update 2014/15

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People on Looked After Children Placed Outside of Derby City – Annual Update 2014/15. The report was presented by the Policy and Improvement Manager.

It was reported that at the end of March 2015 there were a total of 470 looked after children within Derby City, which equated to a rate of 81.3 per 10,000 children and young people under 18 years of age.

It was also reported that of the 470 looked after children, 54% of these were living in placements outside of the City boundary.

Members considered where Looked After Children were placed and for how long. Members also considered completion rates for health checks, dental checks and immunisations.

Resolved to note the report and presentation.

MINUTES END