

ITEM 4

Time commenced 12.00pm

Time finished 13.25pm

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 28th July 2020

Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors A Pegg, Lind, Hussain, Hezelgrave, McCristal

In attendance: Patrick Aherne, Participation Officer
Pervez Akhtar, Corporate Parenting Lead
Kelly Buswell, Programme Manager - Children's Rights Services
Katie Evans, CiC Commissioning and Placements Manager |
Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care
Heather Peet, Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Andy Smith, Strategic Director of People Services
Priya Gill, Deputy Youth Mayor
Stephen Johnson, Derbyshire Police

01/20 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Annemarie Johansson, Chair of Foster Care Association

02/20 Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were none.

03/20 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

04/20 Minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

05/20 Children in Care Council – Update

The Committee received a report of the Director of Integrated Commissioning which provided an update on recent activity by the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The report was presented to members by the Participation Officer.

Councillors noted that since the last report there have been three meetings of the CiCC, which were in February, March and June, details of the meetings are outlined in the report. The Committee noted that the meetings in April and May were cancelled due to COVID 19, however the Participation Officer had contacted members of CiCC by phone and the meeting in June of CiCC members was held

virtually. At the meeting the CiCC discussed how they were coping with the lockdown. It was noted that some CiCC members had missed out on important school events such as Leavers Day and a "School Prom". A similar event took place in July using "Zoom" which is the preferred package for CiCC members.

The Participation Officer described the difficulties in engaging Care Leavers. It was noted that some CiCC Councils have members up to the age of 24, which enables a better connection and more young care leavers remain involved. A recruitment drive had taken place and a number of care leavers were due to join the cancelled April event, but the Participation Officer would contact them again to check if they were still interested in joining the CiCC event in September.

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of increasing the age range of CiCC to 24. It was felt that this was too wide an age range of young people, from 11 years to 24 years, and there was a risk of safeguarding issues, especially if it was a young adult just joining the group, not all CiCC members would feel safe. However, this would be less of an issue if it was a continuation of membership. An officer highlighted that East and West Midlands do extend the age range of membership, but they are careful about how they meet; the CiCC members tend to meet in smaller groups/pockets of a similar age range.

A councillor asked if Care Leavers can have access to technology to help them participate in these meetings. An officer suggested that phones can be a medium for connectivity and that these are provided for Care Leavers together with top-up schemes.

The Committee noted that it was a struggle to engage Care Leavers but that the CiC Council has improved over the years. They also felt that young people approaching 17-18 years need to facilitate the continuation of the CiCC. It would be possible to set up small groups of young care leavers, but safeguarding issues would need to be explored. The issues of extending the age range were noted by the Committee and it was suggested that lessons could be learnt from other authorities and that it could be managed locally in Derby.

The Committee asked that the Corporate Parenting Lead, Participation Officer and the Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care research the possibility of setting up meetings of small groups of care leavers, taking into account any safeguarding issues and bring back a report to this Committee.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. That the Corporate Parenting Lead, Participation Officer and the Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care research the possibility of setting up meetings of small groups of care leavers, taking into account any safeguarding issues. An update report be brought to the Committee at a future meeting.**
- 2. To consider the content of the report and feedback from CiCC and engagement with care leavers**
- 3. To consider the implications of increasing the age range of the Children in Care Council from 18 years to 24 years of age, to incorporate Care Leavers.**

06/20 Annual Health Report for Derby City Looked After Children Provision 2018/19

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services. The report was presented by the Designated Nurse Looked After Children (LAC). The report provided an overview of the progress; challenges, opportunities and future plans to support and improve the health and wellbeing of looked after children by Derby City Council.

The Committee noted the achievements of the service in 2018/19 which included:

- A greater focus on the most vulnerable children (CRE, CSE and missing)
- The redesign of Health History booklets with engagement of LAC
- The improved administration processes
- Initial Health Assessment Compliance
- A review/renewal of Service Specification
- Training of foster carers, residential workers

The Committee also noted the feedback from foster carers and the children and young people who felt that the Sinfin Health Centre was a much better venue as it was child friendly and convenient. Sessions were held on relevant topics such as emotional wellbeing.

A Councillor was interested to know if the Health Team all had Mental Health Specialisms. The Designated Nurse confirmed that they all had general Adult/child training at degree level plus additional top up training. They also had additional training at 0-19 Public Health Service. They all have good skills and are really experienced at working with children in these circumstances.

The Committee noted the health data and performance for year 2018-19 at paragraph 9.1 of the report. The "Immunisations up to date" was the only one with a downward trend from 93.9% in 2017/18 to 92.8% in 2018/19. They asked if these figures had improved in 2020-21. The Designated Nurse confirmed that the figure had increased to 92% however the pandemic had caused issues with teenage inoculations taking place which will have an impact on 2021. The Committee noted the good improvement and that COVID 19 had caused issues. A councillor asked if there was an option to bring LAC children into the drive through immunisation programmes. The Designated Nurse was not aware of these programmes and asked if the councillor could send her details so that she could investigate the possibility.

A councillor asked if there were any other delays in service provision. The Designated Nurse informed the Committee that Dental Health was also an issue. Most dentists are not seeing NHS children, some children are not even registered at dental practices. From mid-March dentists have only been seeing emergency cases. It was hoped that routine check ups would begin again in August 2020.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

1. To consider the content of the report and make appropriate recommendations.

07/20 Audit of Health Outcomes for a Cohort of Children in Care 2005-2020

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services. The report was presented by the Designated Nurse Looked After Children. The report provided an Audit of the health outcomes for a sample of children in care (of Derby City Local Authority) over a time period of six to fifteen years.

The Committee noted that the report details health needs of children when they come into care. From a health point of view, it could be seen that the health of all of the group had improved overall through the years. Dental, optician and immunisation uptake had improved. The relevant health professionals such as Children's Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Speech and Hearing Services, had been involved in the children's journey through care. The professional's quality of work had been better and the timeliness of assessments of children had improved. The committee were informed of the focus now of hearing the voices of children in the process.

An officer asked if the data presented related only to Derby City Children and this was confirmed by the Designated Nurse.

The Committee extended their thanks to the Designated Nurse and her Team and hoped that the upward trend would continue.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved to note the Audit.

08/20 Update report on the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service "The Keep"

The Committee received a report of the Director of Integrated Commissioning Children and Young People (CYP). The report was presented by the Children in Care Commissioning and Placements Manager and provided an update on the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service, "The Keep".

The Committee were informed that "The Keep" was currently being delivered under an "Interim Offer", which has been in place since 1 July 2019 and was contracted since October 2019. A consultation for a new service was undertaken by Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and NHS Derby and Derbyshire CCG from August to October 2019.

A joint service specification had been drafted and a new service was procured for Derby City. "Action for Children" were provisionally awarded the contract in January 2020. The contract should have started on 1 May 2020 but has been delayed until 1 September 2020 due to COVID-19.

The Committee were also informed that the current interim service had received a total of 38 new referrals between 1st January and 30 June 2020, and 34 cases were accepted during this time, which demonstrated a good "reach" to children in care.

The Committee noted the outcomes for children and young people, which are detailed at 4.8 in the report and would be delivered as part of the new service. These outcomes included supporting placement stability and permanence.

A councillor asked if the TUPE arrangements for staff would create a risk of discontinuity of care. The officer confirmed that it would be an opportunity to enhance the team; as there would be a continued overlap of the offer there would be no gap between the new and old services. The Committee were informed that “Action for Children” were already recruiting staff despite the delay of start date for the contract.

A councillor was interested in the large proportion of referrals in specific age groups, which were detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report, and asked if there was a trigger in each case. It was suggested that perhaps services could be adapted around the two age groups. The officer confirmed that there was a real mix of children and needs; there was no particular catalyst, just the individual needs of each child. The Committee were informed that the fact that children were willing to have their issues looked at was good as any intervention was positive, and the earlier the better.

The Committee requested an update report return to Corporate Parenting in February 2021 outlining how the contract is progressing in terms of the commissioning arrangement and an update on the outcomes

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. To note the contents of the report.**
- 2. Requested an update report return to the Committee in February 2021 to give an update on:**
 - (a) how the contract is progressing in terms of the commissioning arrangement**
 - (b) an update on the outcomes**

09/20 The Children’s Rights Service – Annual Report 2019/20

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services. The report was presented by the Programme Manager - Children's Rights Services. The Committee noted that there was a statutory requirement to provide a Children's Rights Service for children in care. The annual report outlined service provision, take up and any other relevant issues for consideration by the members of Corporate Parenting Committee.

The Committee noted that The Children’s Rights Service in Derby is made up of three services, and from the 1st April 2017 it has been delivered by the Society of Voluntary Associates (SOVA), which is now Change, Grow and Live (CGL). The Committee noted that the 2 organisations merged in March 2019.

The services delivered by CGL include:

- **The Independent Visitor Service** – A young person and their independent visitor (IV) meet monthly. An IV provides support on a monthly basis with a telephone call or correspondence between visits. An IV could be matched with a child or young person up to 18 years or beyond if the young person has

additional needs. The CQL role is to support the relationship between a young person and their IV. Every 6 to 8 months a review is undertaken to explore how the relationship is developing, establish the outcomes and if any further support can be given. The Committee were informed that the longest ongoing match was in its fifth year. The programme manager described how during the pandemic contact had been maintained by using Zoom or Skype calls and letter writing, activities had also continued, so relationships had kept going and had been supported.

A committee member asked if there could be any connection with high frequency missing episodes of children, an officer confirmed that the IV Service was specific to young people in care and was a be-friending and supporting role and was not about addressing missing episodes.

- **The Independent Advocacy Service for all children in care** – CQL provide monthly clinics in 3 local authority children's residential homes in Derby. Advocates arrange with staff a convenient time to call, young people are encouraged to engage with the advocate, giving them a chance to speak to someone who is independent.
- **Independent Advocacy at Child Protection Conferences** – For families involved in initial child protection proceedings with children aged over 4 years, a referral could be made to the CGL advocacy team. Advocates meet with the child/young person with the consent of the main carer. The Advocate meets with them at their school in order to seek their wishes and feelings, which are then shared with the Child Protection Manager. The committee were informed that advocacy in Child Protection conferences has continued to be provided and during 2019-20, 63 young people were helped to participate in over 34 separate conferences

The Committee congratulated the programme manager and the team for continuing to provide the service through COVID 19 situation. The Committee felt that if the young people liked some of the adaptations to the service during the pandemic then these should be continued going forward.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

1. **To consider content of the report and make appropriate recommendations.**

MINUTES END