

Time commenced 1.00pm
Time finished 2:50pm

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 21 February 2023

Present: Councillors Hezelgrave, Lind, Swan, Whitby (Chair) Roulstone and Williams

In attendance: Pervez Akhtar, Corporate Parenting Lead
Steve Atkinson, Independent Chair Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
Graeme Ferguson, Virtual School Headteacher
Joanne Groombridge, Children's Rights Service
Judy Levitt, DHOS Fostering & Permanence
Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care
Antony Mains, Personal Adviser
Heather Peet, Designated Nurse NHS
Lucy Stanway, Student Nurse
Steve Stockley, Interim Commissioning Manager
Andy Smith, Strategic Director of Peoples Services

21/22 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from, Omar Aslam, Youth Mayor, Pauline Anderson, Director Learning, Inclusion and Skills, Johanne Barker, Deputy Head of Service for Children in Care, Laura Bradley, CiC Council Participation Officer, Kelly Buswell, Children's Rights Service, Marlene Upchurch, Chair of Parent Foster Carers.

22/22 Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were none.

23/22 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Whitby declared he was a Foster Carer for Derby City Council and a member of the Adoption East Midlands Panel.

24/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

Item 17/22 - A councillor asked whether the Youth Wellbeing Worker post had been saved. The recommendation had stated that if the post was not saved as a fallback could some of the £300k funding moved to the Youth Service be used to fund this post. The officer confirmed that additional funding had been received from the Home Office which will enable the Youth Wellbeing Worker post to continue.

25/22 Children in Care Council (CiCC) Update

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

26/22 Annual Report of the Virtual Headteacher

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services. The report was presented by the Headteacher of the Virtual School. The report provided an update on the academic outcomes of pupils in the Virtual School for the school year 2021-22.

The officer highlighted that the education outcomes in 2022 were the first published since the Pandemic. Although the outcomes should be celebrated the cohort variation factors must be understood as well as the impact of the Pandemic on learning.

The key points to note were:

- Reception Good Level of Development above national
- Year 1 Phonics outcomes above national
- Key Stage 1 outcomes well below national (impact of SEND on results)
- Key Stage 2 attainment in combined reading, writing and maths in line with national
- Key Stage 2 progress above national, significantly in maths.
- Key Stage 4 GCSE Attainment 8 score in line with national
- Key Stage 4 GCSE Progress 8 score above national

The results of Y2 KS1 in 2022 were highlighted, the Committee noted that 69% of pupils within the cohort have identified SEND, 10 out of 17 pupils. A councillor asked if the number of SEND for KS2 was lower. The officer stated it was generally 60 to 65%, but there was quite a lot of cohort variation. The councillor asked if there had been a spike in SEND numbers in the last 3 years, the officer stated there was not but in this particular year group there was a high proportion.

The officer described some case studies for the Committee. The Committee were interested in one case which they discussed. A councillor had concerns about the school's admissions policy and asked if there could be a recommendation for the Chair to write to the school asking why a LAC was refused admission. The Chair queried how much jurisdiction the Committee had to do this and was advised that the school was an Academy Trust. Another councillor explained that generally if a pupil missed half of a GCSE course, the expectation for any school would be that the whole course should be followed for the best results. The Chair suggested that he write to the school to request an explanation for their decision.

The officer spotlighted the improved outcomes at KS4. The work undertaken by the service was described. At one school with several LAC pupils the Virtual School pooled pupil premium plus funding to appoint a teaching assistant to work with Y11 pupils to achieve grade 4 passes in English and Maths. Also, one to one tuition was provided to pupils via the School Led Tutoring programme and locally produced English and Maths resources were made available as revision material to all Y11 pupils.

The committee heard about the Attendance and Exclusions of pupils in the Virtual School 2021-22 and noted the key points:

- Overall absence, authorised absence, unauthorised absence and persistent absentees are all better than national figures.
- Fixed term exclusions (suspensions) are lower than national figures
- There were no permanent exclusions

Regarding Personal Education Plans for Pupils (PEPS) the committee heard that it was a statutory duty of the local authority to maintain PEPs for every LAC up to the age of 18. A LAC must have a PEP written within 20 school days of coming into care and a PEP must be reviewed 3 times a year. In Derby the completion rate was approximately 18 days for a fully signed off PEP. Ofsted had commented in an Inspection in 2022 that Derby's PEPs are detailed, of a high quality and are reviewed regularly.

The officer described the Pupil Premium Plus funding and how it was allocated to schools on an individual basis. Schools cost out targets within the PEP and these are considered in the PEP Quality Audit process before money was allocated to schools. Examples of use of the funding were highlighted and included One to One tuition, Phonics, Language, Arts, Summer School.

There are also Virtual School work streams supporting improved outcomes. These included bespoke provision for LAC in children's homes, creative mentoring, cookery school. One new provision in 2021-22 was a sewing club.

In June 2021 the DfE gave Virtual Schools a strategic responsibility to improve attendance and outcomes for all children with a social worker. The Virtual School has undertaken work with the Inclusion Partnership in the City to raise the profile of all children with a social worker, they also worked with Education Welfare to encourage the attendance of Children in Need or on Child Protection Plans and encouraged schools to look at having relational behavioural management approaches.

The Priorities for 2022-23 were described and included, continuing with targeted support activity for pupils to improve educational outcomes and to re-introduce the 7-day attachment and trauma course for staff and teaching assistants.

The Ofsted comment on the Virtual School as part of the ILACS Inspection 2022 was highlighted. Comments included:

- Children in care make good educational progress from their starting points.
- The Virtual School works in close partnership with schools to ensure that children in care receive tailored provision and children are achieving well
- Additional funds are used wisely to support children in care to help accelerate their progress
- Leaders have taken effective action to promote good attendance and keep the number of exclusions from school for children in care as low as possible.

The Committee resolved

- 1. To recognise the educational achievement of Derby's children who are looked after.**
- 2. To support the areas for development as highlighted within the report.**
- 3. To write to the school from the case study above to request an explanation of their decision regarding a Derby LAC pupil**
- 4. To note the OFSTED comment on Virtual School as part of the ILACS Inspection 2022 and congratulated the Virtual Head and his team for the work and support they had provided to LAC children.**

27/22 STARS Project Update Report

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Integrated Commissioning. The report was presented by the Interim Commissioning Manager and provided an update to the Committee of progress and outcomes achieved through the programme to date. It also outlined the current position, priorities, and emerging themes.

The officer explained that Derby City Council works in partnership with Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils. They have established the use of Social Impact Bonds which are a form of social investment. The STARS Programme will help Derby City Children over a four-year period during which period individual cases can be referred to receive interventions and support. Outcomes are tracked for 2 years.

From October 2020 services were contracted with Outcomes for Children (The Polaris Group), the delivery agent and Futures Limited, the private investor. The interventions delivered by Outcomes for Children support children and young people on the edge of care. The outcome wanted is to achieve better social outcomes by creating stable family-type placements and where possible for children and young people to remain at home with their families. The interventions are holistic, wrap-around tailored packages of flexible support. They support young people in the following groups:

- A. Currently living in residential care, supporting the to step down to foster care
- B. Currently living in foster care and at a high risk of placement breakdown or at risk of entering residential care, supporting them to remain in stable foster care
- C. Are currently looked after by the local authority but whom the LA is seeking to re-unify with their birth family or primary carers
- D. Are currently defined as being on the edge of care and supported to remain safely with their families/primary carers

The STARS Programme has achieved year 1 targets but was running behind slightly on year 2 targets. Year 1. The number of referrals for year 3 is behind target.

The problems encountered were highlighted and included a lack of fostering placements, independent foster carers not willing to take children and young people with complex needs.

The officer described the next steps planned to increase ways of identifying correct referrals and communication with social care, also to reduce notification time to professionals meeting.

- Attendance at residential panel monthly
- Meetings with placements team every 2 weeks
- Support for internal fostering with specialist foster carer programme
- Matching event and IFA Newsletter every 2 months
- Animated children's profiles to support placement referrals
- Workshop planning for Q2 to engage further with social care

The benefits of the programme can be seen, and it informs for the future, it was hoped to support children with more tailored support. The officer described some successful case studies.

A Committee member stated it was a great programme but said that going forward savings would be critical and asked if the Committee could be assured that the focus will remain on the child or young person rather than savings. The officer explained that an assessment was undertaken to create a bespoke placement for children and young people. The aim was to create a stable environment which was important for children and young people so that they can thrive.

A councillor noted that only children and young people were being referred who could achieve things like "stepping down from residential care" and asked if the cost would be more if nothing was done. The officer explained that children on the "edge of care" (Group D) have been referred and their status has not progressed to a professional meeting and children in residential care (Group A) have been stepped down to a lower group level.

The councillor asked if any foster carers had left due to the programme, the officer confirmed that several foster carers had returned through the programme. Another officer explained that a placement can breakdown despite good carers, there was a need to try and restabilise these placements and the STARS Programme can be used to help.

The Committee noted the performance of the STARS Social Impact Bond Programme to date

28/22 Fostering Friendly in Derby

The Committee received a report of the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care which was presented by the Deputy Head of Service Fostering and Permanence.

The officer explained that Fostering Friendly was a nationally recognized programme coordinated by the Fostering Network. The programme encouraged and supported any employer through minor changes to their personnel policy to recognise the roles foster carers have in the lives of children and to be a source of potential recruitment and retention of existing Foster Carers.

Derby City Council gained official Fostering Friendly status in March 2022. This meant any council employee could have enhanced paid leave if they become a Foster Carer. This report seeks to support and develop take up for Fostering Friendly status by other services, companies, and organisations in Derby City.

A committee member asked what the emerging impact was for Derby City Council becoming a Fostering Friendly organization. The officer explained that one member of staff had been approved to foster, two other employees are already Foster Carers and there was one member of staff who was a Supported Lodgings Carer. A committee member who was an Integrated Care Systems Lead suggested taking an item to the Integrated Partnership Board, both officers agreed to meet to discuss further.

Another committee member suggested contacting the Regeneration and Development Team who had contact with new organisations moving into the city and could encourage them to become fostering friendly companies. Marketing Derby was suggested as a possible contact. The Chamber of Commerce could also provide opportunities as long as a contact name could be provided.

The Committee endorsed the recommendation to request that the Corporate Parenting Committee's "relevant partners" consider for their own organisation and where appropriate, encourage other services and companies and organisations in Derby City to be accredited as Foster Friendly

29/22 Update Report on Education, Employment, and Training in the Council (Leaving Care Service)

The Committee received a report and presentation of Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care and was presented by the Leaving Care Team Manager. The report provided an update for the Committee on Education, Employment and Training (EET) outcomes for Care Experienced young people and updated the Committee on the work of the EET Development Board.

The officer highlighted the most EET recent data for Care Leavers in Derby City. At the end of December 2022 (Q3) the percentage of care experienced young people living in Derby in EET was 59.4%, the national figure was 76.6%.

In Derby there were 80 Care Leavers aged 17 to 18 on 31st March 2022 and of these 50 were in EET. This was a percentage of 62.5% which was a decrease from 69.2% in 2020-21.

The officer explained that the recent outcomes for Derby's 17 to 18 years old had dipped and the underlying causes needed to be examined. However, there was an increase in the numbers of young people in that age group coming into care. A Committee member suggested there might be a link to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

A recent snapshot undertaken of the current levels for EET for 17-18 care experienced young people showed that the percentage had risen to 66%. This was close to the national average in March of 66.5%

The EET Development Board have designed and delivered additional activities including an EET Event at the Derby Museum in the summer of 2022 aimed at care experienced young people. 20 services and employers attended, about 20 care experienced young people who were all NEET attended.

The Development Board has been consulted on changing its terms of reference (TOR) to play a more operational and active role rather than a strategic role, to overcome barriers and challenges that young people face. The whole Board agreed to this amendment and the TOR was currently being amended and will be ratified at the next meeting in March.

The officer highlighted the monitoring and tracking process, there was now a process to record the number of referrals made by Personal Advisers. The aim was to provide reports on the number of referrals made and record what outcomes and destinations were achieved where support was provided. At the moment there are some capacity issues with the Derby Adult Learning Service (DALs) but referral and outcome data has been captured manually.

The officer updated the Committee on the DCC Apprenticeship Scheme and Social Value Clauses, he explained that some progress had been made with the DCC apprenticeship scheme, but they were not as far advanced as they had hoped to be. There was still more work needed to broaden the options available to care experienced young people to undertake work placements or taster days. Currently there are no apprentices in DCC. The Committee were asked if they could use their influence over any department head or manager who may be more open to the scheme after April 2023.

A Councillor stated that the 60% EETS figure was good and asked how it compared with the global figure for Derby. The officer confirmed the figure for NEETs was 40%.

A committee member expressed concern that there were no care leavers either working or on apprenticeships in DCC, there were more prior to COVID. There was a need for a recommendation for DCC to promote the development of apprenticeships for care leavers. A councillor seconded the idea of a recommendation and confirmed that if care leavers applied for a job in DCC they were guaranteed an interview. It was noted that there were still apprenticeships being undertaken at Derby Homes. The committee agreed there should be a recommendation and discussed the wording they agreed "to strongly recommend that the Derby City Council Leadership, the Corporate Leadership Team, and Partner Organisations undertake a new push to develop opportunities of all sorts for care leavers to include apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience and work shadowing".

The Committee resolved

- 1. To note the report and the ongoing performance of the Leaving Care Service regarding EET outcomes.**
- 2. Noted the developments of the EET Board and progress of developments such as the apprenticeship scheme**
- 3. To strongly recommend that the Derby City Council Leadership, the Corporate Leadership Team, and Partner Organisations undertake a new push to develop opportunities of all sorts for care leavers to include apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience and work shadowing**

30/22 Children's Rights Service Annual Report

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care which was presented by an officer from the Children's Rights Service, Change Grow Live (CGL). The annual report was a statutory requirement and outlined service provision, take up and relevant issues for consideration by the Committee.

The CGL Children's Rights Service was a partnership between CGL and DCC Children's Services. The project has been funded by DCC since 2017, CGL is based in Derby but has nationwide reach. During 2021-22 the project provided Independent Visitors, Independent Advocacy to LAC and Care Leavers, Independent Advocacy at Child Protection Conferences, and monthly Independent Advocacy Support at Derby City Residential Homes. However, during the Pandemic advocate access to residential homes had been restricted, some meetings were held virtually or outside but over the last 8 months physical visits have increased.

Over the year CGL have provided help and support for 85 issue-based referrals, a rise of 3% on the previous year when there were 82.33 (39%) from children and young people placed outside the area

The officer highlighted that in 2021- 22: 43 children and young people were supported at Child Protection Conferences. There were 55 referrals to the Issue Based Advocacy Service. The matters raised by children for discussion included, home living arrangements, support during a review, education, support with leaving care. Other matters raised included signposting to services, health, legal, support to get a passport or change a family name, requests to change a placement or how to access financial advice.

The officer explained the work of the Independent Visitor Service which helps to integrate children and young people into their local community. Visitors from the local area helps to build relationships and improves community cohesion. During the Pandemic volunteer numbers dropped, however new marketing materials are due to be launched shortly.

The types of activities and visits undertaken by young people are varied and include Ice Skating, Rugby Matches, Visits to Calke Abbey, going to the Cinema or visiting the local park. There was always good feedback from the young people, Carers and Social Workers. Local companies often make donations of goods. The Pandemic did cause issues, but volunteer training was adapted to take place virtually.

A Councillor noted that the number of referrals was up by 3%, the officer confirmed that the service would keep up with the numbers. Another Councillor asked if LAC living away from Derby could access services provided in their local area. The officer explained this was not possible, but co-ordinators would be asked to see what volunteers were available in the area as CGL have other projects across the country. A committee member highlighted that of the issues raised by LAC home living arrangements was the highest, it was explained that distance was an issue, but CGL still offer a service. It was also asked if there were things that could be done to prevent issues in the first place and were advised that specific issues could be raised the DCC officer who manages the contract.

The Committee noted the report

MINUTES END