

Time commenced 1.05pm
Time finished 2.25pm

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

Thursday 29th March 2022

Present: Councillors Williams, Carr, Hezelgrave, Hussain and Pandey

In attendance: Pervez Akhtar, Corporate Parenting Lead
Laura Bradley, Participation Officer
Graeme Ferguson, Virtual School Head Teacher
Antony Mains, Team Manager, Leaving Care Team
Jasmine Nembhard-Francis, Head of Service Quality Assurance
Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
Heather Peet, Designated Nurse

23/21 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lind

Apologies were also received from Mandy MacDonald CRE Lead

24/21 Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

25/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

26/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2021 were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising from the minutes.

27/21 Children in Care Council – Update

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Integrated Commissioning Services (CYP) which was presented by the Participation Officer. The report highlighted some of the work that the Children in Care Council (CiCC) had been involved in over the last quarter and gave them an overview of some of the key participation activities the CiCC had attended. The Participation Officer informed the Committee that the CiCC had met in October, November and December 2021 and gave the Committee an overview of the topics discussed, key points made by the CiCC members and actions taken.

The Participation Officer confirmed that they were now aiming to visit residential homes bi-monthly, in order to try and engage, and build relationships, with children in these homes who were unable to attend at the CiCC meetings. The Participation Officer confirmed this was working well.

The Committee were informed that young people who were members of the CiCC had been invited to be part of a focus group to discuss their experience of being in care along with any barriers they faced as being a child in care. This information was put together in a

PowerPoint presentation which was shown at the newly qualified social worker induction training in order to help shape the service and aid the newly qualified social workers understanding of what the young people's experiences were and what they want from social workers. A presentation to promote the CiCC was also given at this event. The Committee were informed that these two presentations will be shown at future newly qualified social worker induction training.

The Participation Officer informed the Committee that she had attended at a cookery event and a sewing workshop, facilitated by the Virtual School Head Teacher which was a virtual school enrichment event, giving her opportunity to meet and engage with CYP on a personal level, to promote the CiCC. The Participation Officer confirmed that a lot of the focus in the last quarter had been on getting to meet and engage with young people rather than expecting the young people to come to them.

The Participation Officer stated there had been some Local Authority collaborative working, in order to gain knowledge of how other authorities work confirming that there was going to be a regional CiCC where they would meet for a day. The Participation Officer confirmed she had contacted secondary schools to establish consultation sessions termly to enable students who are looked after children to take part in topics cover at the CiCC meetings.

The Committee were updated on the findings and key themes that had been received for the Care Leavers Poll with housing being the main area of concern for children who were leaving care.

The Chair expressed her apologies for having to have this meeting in term time hence making it impossible for any of the CiCC to be able to attend. She expressed that wherever possible the Corporate Parenting Committee meetings would be schedule to be in school holidays so that young people who are members of the CiCC would be able to attend. The Committee expressed their thanks and noted the good work being done and in particular the way in which the CiCC were reaching out to other young people in care rather than waiting for them to come to them.

Discussion was then held on the support children in care receive in seeking employment and career guidance and it was confirmed that the children did get allocated a personal advisor from Connexions to aid them with their educational choices at the appropriate age. The Committee then asked for further clarity on what help care leavers received in seeking good quality housing, in a good area, adding what a big concern this must be for someone leaving care. It was confirmed that there was a Care Leavers Pathway programme and that work was done in conjunction with Derby Homes along with other additional pathways, into other types of accommodations which provide a robust response to the housing options available to the children in care leavers who are prioritised.

It was suggested that the presentations given to the newly qualified social workers also be presented to GPs in the yearly briefings (October) given to them by various health professionals. Discussion was also held on empowering health professional PAs with more knowledge to be able to signpost young people in care, or leaving care with any health care issues they may have.

Resolved to consider the content of the report and feedback from CiCC

28/21 Annual Report of the Virtual Head – Education outcomes of children looked after, attendance, PEP's & SEN

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Education and Skills which was presented by the Virtual School Head Teacher. The Virtual School Head Teacher stated that he had sent through a PowerPoint presentation to support his report, which Committee Members all had sight of but unfortunately, due to technical issues, this wasn't able to be displayed. It was agreed that these slides be circulated after the meeting to anyone that hadn't had sight of them. The Virtual School Head Teacher stated that he also wanted to update the Committee on the work that had been extended by the DfE.

The Committee were briefed on the attendance figures of looked after children (LAC), at school, over the last four years and throughout the pandemic. Discussion was held over the breakdown of figures relating to exclusion figures of LAC during 2020-21. It was noted that these figures had decreased with no permanent exclusions. The Virtual School Head Teacher paid credit to his team informing the Committee that this was due to hard work of his colleagues. It was noted that there were no national exclusion figures to compare these to for the year 2020-21. The board were informed that the exclusion figures were normally around 10%, but they were down to 6.15% for the last year.

The Committee were presented with the outcome of grades, noting that there were no primary national assessments for the 2020-21 academic year and the GCSE outcomes were teacher assessed outcomes. The report detailed the English and Maths outcomes at GCSE teacher assessment levels. The Committee noted that the marks had changed from A* - G grading to 1-9 grades, 4 being a scrape through at the old C grade and 5 being a good C grade. It was also noted that the number of people in the LAC cohort had increased by 27.5% in 2020-21. The Virtual School Head Teacher updated the Committee on the SEND and EHCP figures stating that although there was a large number of children with special needs the English results were quite pleasing, but no actual progress figures were available.

The Virtual School Head Teacher then reported on the allocation of pupil premium plus funding to schools detailing how this was allocated and what activities would be supported. It was noted that supporting academic outcomes was where the largest proportion of the money was spent. The Committee were briefed on the review status of the PEP figures noting that Osted were pleased with these figures when they were presented with them. It was also noted that significant sums of the Pupil Premium Plus funding go to supporting reception and younger aged children settle into school. The Virtual School Head Teacher stated that it had been noted that the pandemic had impacted on younger children who haven't been able to develop social skills and have missed the learning through play-based settings.

Personal Education Plans were then discussed, and the Virtual School Head Teacher explained how each plan was quality assured and given a Gold/Green/Amber/Red rating and informed that this process was working well and was driving up the quality of PEPs. The Committee were updated on the additional activities and provisions, that were available to LAC, through the Virtual School, which were funded by the PP+ funding. New provisions were the Cromarty model and an online diagnostic tool for maths and English called BKSB. The Virtual School Head Teacher explained how these worked and relayed how two young people in particular had really excelled and benefited from a sewing workshop and construction project.

The Virtual School Head Teacher then confirmed that the DfE had extended the duties of the Virtual School to have a strategic role looking at Children in Need and Child Protection Young People. The three main aims were:

- To make visible the disadvantages children with a social worker can experience. To enhance partnerships between education settings and Local Authorities and to hold high aspirations for these children.
- To promote practice that supports children's engagement in education recognising that education at an education setting is really important.
- To level up children's outcomes and narrow up the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential.

Initially the Virtual School Team were given six month's funding to do this, but the Government had now provided at least a year's funding for these three aims. Work was now being done to create a three-tiered approach to this work, comprising of a universal offer, a targeted offer and a specialist offer. What staff training needed was being considered. Thought was being given to how attendance of LAC, at school, may be improved and exclusions reduced. Talks between education staff (incorporating Governors' support and accountability) and care staff were being initiated to attain how they see the partnership working and what improvements can be made. A draft eight module trauma and attachment e-learning course had been written and thought was being given to linking in with the inclusion work being done through the opportunity area funding. It was confirmed that in May an inclusion charter was due to be launched and any school signing up to this charter would be expected to allow staff to undertake this eight-module e-learning course. An information management system was due to be implemented, to track the completion of the course so the Local Authority may state they are a trauma and attachment city and be able to show how many staff in schools and social care have completed this course.

The Virtual School Head Teacher briefed the Committee on work in progress which included a pupil voice film, stating that this was just waiting sign-off and then he would be able to share more broadly. A self-evaluation tool for schools was being developed along with a reporting template to Governors which refers to children with social worker support enabling their progress to be tracked. It was acknowledged that broader exclusion work was being undertaken and a transitions portal was being developed. Alongside all of this the team were also working on part time timetables and undertaking mentoring work.

The Virtual School Head Teacher reported to Committee that back in January 2019, 19 unaccompanied asylum seekers arrived in the city. The New Communities Achievement Team were commissioned to do some education work with these young unaccompanied people and Community and Health Care partners were also involved. A doctor at the University of Derby wrote a piece up on this programme stating what good work had been done to make Derby a city of sanctuary, welcoming young people. The doctor then put this article forward to be published and the Virtual School Head Teacher was please to inform the Committee that this piece of work was now an ammonised article within the international Journal of Inclusive Education.

The Committee expressed their thanks for all the good work done by the Virtual School Team and noted how they were thinking 'outside the box'. Clarity was sought on the allocation of PP+ funding and the Virtual School Head Teacher confirmed that they were allocated £2345 per pupil but if the school didn't think the child needed the much support the funding would be allocated to another child who required more support, in some cases they were able to fund a dedicated TA to support a child. It was also noted that additional funding had been awarded by the DfE (recovery funding) to put additional support in with year 1 children with phonics as test results were shockingly low as a result of the pandemic. The Virtual School Head Teacher reported how they were putting a package together to support these children both at home and in schools get the vital phonics learning delivered.

The Committee question that as certificates of education would be awarded this academic year, would the Virtual Schools Team be having an award giving celebration event of some description for the LAC. The Virtual Schools Head Teach stated no plans had been made yet but thought that it would be possible to be able to return to doing so this year.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. to recognise and understand the outcomes, role and range of activities which are undertaken by the Virtual School in supporting improved outcomes**
- 2. to note the effect of the Covid 19 pandemic on the outcomes and work of the children in the Virtual School.**
- 3. To receive, at a future meeting, a report and example of the Cromarty Model to show how it has worked through the year**

29/21 Update report on Education, Employment and Training – Leaving Care Service

The Committee received a report of the Director Early Help and Children's Social Care. The report was presented by the Team Manager – Leaving Care Team who reported a clear, although gradual improvement in terms of the outcomes in regard to education employment and training (EET) for care leavers. The Team Manager – Leaving Care Team reported that against national data and data of neighbouring authorities Derby City Council's figures were favourable.

The Committee were informed that the EET Development Board had continued to meet throughout the pandemic with the aim of targeting the EET cohort of young people, some with multiple barriers and problems, to meet together regularly, in order to progress chase and offer more opportunities. The Committee were told that a triage system had been developed which went through the Derby Adult Services so that they would pick up the referral, along with as much information as possible about that young person. However, it was reported that the EET Development Board wanted to bring on much more innovative approaches and were looking to broaden its membership to encompass representatives from Derby Theatre and University.

The Team Manager – Leaving Care Team reported that they had now implemented a recording system which would track referrals, allowing the team to update on the system. The Committee heard that as this is now in place the team would now start to analyse the data as young people are working their way through the system. The main concern with EET – was the motivation, participation and engagement of some of the hard to reach and difficult to engage young people. Because these young people are adults' consent had to be sought before their data could be recorded which meant there was a large gap in the information being recorded making it difficult to analyse the data. The Committee heard that this was going to be fed back to the EET Development Board in order that work could be done to find why these young people were afraid of sharing the data, disperse any myths and encourage engagement.

The Team Manager – Leaving Care Team reported that the next large piece of work the EET Development Team would be undertaking was the relaunch of the Derby City Council apprenticeship scheme, which pre Covid had been really successful. Meetings had started taking place, outside of the EET Development Board with the Apprenticeship scheme manager and the EET Board would be contacting departments within Derby City Council to see what opportunities that may be able to offer apprentices or work experience.

It was acknowledged that the Board now had a member from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) who was a single point of contact for the Leaving Care Service and it was recorded that the DWP were much more supportive in getting young people into education, training or employment that they had been in previous years.

The Team Manager – Leaving Care Team stated that overall, there was really positive statistics and data with a lot happening.

The Committee wanted their thanks noting on the good work being done by the EET team and confirmed they were really pleased to learn of the apprenticeship scheme relaunch questioning if the Council's HR team could be involved and maybe guarantee a child leaving care an interview if they met the criteria. Discussion was also held on work that could be done with young people (13/14 year olds) to give guidance on when it is safe to share data (maybe building something into their pathways programme) to give them more confidence in being able to recognise when it is safe to do so and hopefully encourage them to allow the EET Board to be able to collect the data they need to track the progress of these care leavers into adulthood.

The Committee resolved:

- 1. To ensure senior managers and Corporate Parenting Board members were aware of the ongoing performance of the Leaving Care Service with regards to EET outcomes and to note the developments of the EET Board and progress of the apprenticeship scheme.**
- 2. To receive further information on the tracking system data, showing the progress of young people on the EET scheme, at a future Committee Meeting.**
- 3. To receive statistics, at a future meeting, on numbers of young people leaving care aged 21 (and over if possible) that are in employment / full time education.**

30/21 Children in Care – Children at Risk of Exploitation.

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director for Peoples' Services CYP and was presented by the Head of Service – Early Help and Children's Social Care who confirmed that Children in Care and Children at Risk of Exploitation (CRE) remain to be a priority for the Local Authority. The report being presented to the Committee highlighted some of the work done over the last few months to show that remained the case.

The Head of Service informed the Committee that a review of their risk assessment tool had been undertaken and that the Children in Care have work done with them from Partnership Teams because of their vulnerabilities, confirming that the team have to be very sharp and aware of the threats as perpetrators are very clever and exploitation was coming from many different guises.

It was confirmed that work was continuing with the Commission Services (Safe and Sound and Catch 22) along with education to ensure that children in care were safeguarded. The Committee were informed what work was being done, (and the process now embedded in the service) with children who regularly go missing, ensuring that they have a return interview conducted very quickly to try and establish where they have been. Assurance was given that multi-agency meetings were held and children in care, not living in the city, were still a priority, with the local authorities linking in with agencies to ensure the young people had the right services supporting them.

The Head of Service referred to the CRE LAC data detailed in the report acknowledging that this number did increase but was now deducing, confirming that work was being done with these young people. It was confirmed that all children at risk have allocated workers who they meet with regularly and work was being done on place-based risk assessments to protect the young males who were more at risk of child criminal exploitation.

The Committee expressed how pleased they were to learn that the return interviews with children who have been missing are now embedded in the system and asked for clarification and confirmation that staff within partner agencies receive regular training in line with the local authority staff. The Head of Service confirmed that the training, for these partners was in place for at least twice per year and that this topic was also on all the partners' agendas for training.

The Committee resolved to note the work being undertaken in relation to CRE

MINUTES END