

Time Commenced: - 6.00 pm
Time Finished: - 7.15 pm

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMISSION WEDNESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2005

Present: Councillor Hussain (in the Chair)
Councillors Jones, MacDonald, Turner, Webb and Winter

In attendance: Councillor E Berry

11/04 Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

12/04 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

13/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

14/04 Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Joint Sub-Commission

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15/04 Children Missing from Care

The Sub-Commission considered a report from the Director of Social Services that looked at the progress of partner agencies in working with children and young people who go missing from care.

It was reported that in 1997 Sir William Utting's Report 'People Like Us – The Review of the Safeguards for Children Living Away from Home' – highlighted the need to be concerned about children who go missing. The Government's (1998) response included a commitment to develop guidance on the action to be taken when this happens. In line with the Department of Health's guidance Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council developed a 'Joint Protocol for Children Missing from Care in Derbyshire'. This protocol combined aspects of police and Local authority procedures in respect of young missing persons, and was the foundation of Derby's response to Derby children missing from care.

It was reported that since the introduction of the Joint Protocol there had

been a general decrease in the number of young people who go missing from care. Some of this has been attributed to greater training for Social Services staff, which has resulted in social care staff taking a greater degree of responsibility for assessing risk and affecting the safe return of children who go missing from care.

Councillor Webb asked what policies were in place to stop people visiting the home uninvited or the young people going out.

Elene Constantinou responded that strategies were in place to prevent problems from arising.

It was noted that Social Services tried to work with agencies, provide training for staff and foster carers and were using a screening process within some homes to address drug problems. Programmes for Children Looked After – CLA's – with drug problems would be developed.

Rod Jones reported that before the implementation of the protocol 150 young people were reported missing every month, compared to 20-30 currently reported.

Resolved to note the progress of partner agencies in working with children and young people who go missing from care. (statistical info?)

16/04 Councillors' Visits to Children's Homes

The Sub-Commission considered a report from the Director of Social Services that set out recommendations for children's homes to host an open event once a year for all Councillors in a group.

It was reported that there were currently no statutory requirements for Councillors to visit children's homes. It was proposed to make a change from Councillors attending a home twice a year to each home holding an open day annually to which all Councillors could attend. It was hoped that this change would allow the young people to speak more freely and highlight any problems with the Councillors.

It was proposed that the events would be co-ordinated by the project Manager for Quality and Customer Care. In order to prepare Councillors for open events at the homes it was proposed that an introductory session would be held, facilitated by Planning and Partnerships.

Resolved

- 1. to note the report**
- 2. to agree that each children's home would host an open event once a year for all Councillors in a group in place of the current system of Member visits, to be co-ordinated by the**

Project Manager for Quality and Customer Care

- 3. to provide an introductory session for Councillors in preparation for open events at the homes, facilitated by Planning and Partnerships.**

17/04 Statistical Information on Children Looked After

The Sub-Commission considered a report from the Director of Social Services that provided statistical information on children looked after.

The statistical evidence presented in the report supported the Councils priorities of improving children and young people's prospects and improving the life chances for vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities.

Resolved to note the report

18/04 Inspection of Children's Homes

The Sub-Commission considered a report from the Director of Social Services that set out the results of the twice yearly inspection of seven children's homes in the Derby. Of these one is a full, announced inspection, and one is a shorter unannounced visit.

It was reported that Moorfield Children's Centre, Cricklewood Road Children's Home and Queensferry Gardens Children's Home all scored higher in the 'standards met' category than 'standards not met'. The worst was Coronation Avenue Children's Home, which was rated with seven 'standards met', 'nine standards almost met' and 18 'not met'. The poor results were attributed to staff sickness and a high use of temporary staff, and were being addressed by the Registered Manager.

Resolved to note the report and monitor future inspection reports.

19/04 Management Visits to Children's Homes

The Sub-Commission considered a report from the Director of Social Services that outlined the results of visits between April and December 2004. Regulations require Children's Homes to be visited once a month by a representative of the Registered Provider. It was reported that 63 out of 69 visits were completed, an improvement on previous years due to tighter monitoring.

MINUTES END

