

Time commenced 1.00pm
Time finished 3.05pm

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

Tuesday 18th February 2020

Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors Pattison, Hezelgrave and A Pegg

In attendance: One representative of the Children in Care Council
Patrick Aherne, Participation Officer
Pervez Akhtar, Corporate Parenting Lead
Graeme Ferguson, Virtual School Headteacher
Jonie Centro, Connexions Manager
Annemarie Johanneson, Chair of Foster Care Association
Andrew Kaiser, Head of Specialist Services
Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care
Anthony Mains, Team Manger, Leaving Care
Heather Peet, Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Andy Smith, Strategic Director of People Services

22/19 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hussain, Stephen Johnson, Derbyshire Police, Abdul Siddique, Youth Mayor, Gagandeep Kaur, Deputy Youth Mayor.

23/19 Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were none.

24/19 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

25/19 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

26/19 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 a representative of the CICC and the Participation Officer.

Councillors noted that since the last report there have been three meetings of the CICC, in November, December and January, details of the meeting are outlined in the report.

At the January meeting, the CICC had a visit from the Named Nurse Children in Care/Operation Lead to get the CICC opinions on the new Health Review Forms that Looked After Children nurses will now be using. There was also a consultation about Public Protection Orders and specifically the issue of dog fouling. The Board noted the suggestions highlighted in the report from the CICC, which included using fines to provide free dog waste bags and increase the number of bins. The CICC decided that future meetings would have themes which would coincide with those of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

The Committee were informed about the intention to facilitate a self-organised Care Leavers Group (CLG). A meeting was planned for 25 February 2020, with no formal agenda. In future it was planned to organise the meetings around themes or specific identified issues. The Committee noted that a formal CLF was very difficult to maintain given staff resources, and it was suggested that ownership could lie with care leavers themselves; it was difficult to engage care leavers who have their own lives to lead. They queried whether the CICC could help to increase numbers. Officers confirmed that it was hoped to build up numbers in future as CICC members could feed into the Care Leavers Group (CLG). Councillors suggested that contact could be made with the YMCA, who have Youth Workers who engage with care leavers. It was noted that the Derby Community Trust had also been contacted.

A councillor suggested using other methods to facilitate. Can new technology such as "Whats App Groups" or "Snapshot" be used instead of meetings which was not always what young people want. Officers confirmed that Derby City Council technology was being upgraded so these options could be explored and used subject to safeguarding risks being covered. The Councillors felt that these options should be utilised as many young people have access to and know how to use modern technology.

The Committee discussed how community support could be used to engage with Care Leavers. A young person in care has an allocated social worker until they are eighteen; there was wider support available than just the Participation Officer to engage young people leaving care. The Committee queried whether contacts and support should be put in place before young people leave care. It was noted that once a child leaves care the link with the Foster Carer was automatically broken; perhaps there was a need to be less prescriptive about breaking relationships at the end of care. The officer confirmed that they would research the suggestion, and that there did not seem to be any issues culturally about allowing care leavers to stay in touch with their former Foster Carers after leaving care.

The Committee discussed the recent Takeover Day which was a success; one young person spent the day with Derby County Football Club and another with the East Midlands Regional Partnership Group. The Committee were informed that the option to take part had been widened to a larger group of young people so opportunities for LAC could be reduced. The Committee discussed and agreed that rather than limiting the takeover day to a single week each year, it should be expanded for the whole year to increase the availability of options for Looked After Children (LAC). The Committee were also informed of the success of a care leaver who had recently won an Apprenticeship Award. It was agreed that the young person should be invited to a future meeting of Corporate Parenting Committee to talk about the journey to obtaining work with Derby Homes.

The Committee were informed of recent funding for CIC from Derby Community Trust, who had requested that the funding be specifically spent on holidays or activity days for children in residential care. Officers confirmed they had been in contact with the head of service with responsibility for Derby residential homes to progress this request.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. To consider the content of the report and feedback from CICC and engagement with care leavers**
- 2. To pass their thanks to all Council Directorates for their help both with the Takeover Day and Apprenticeships for LAC young people**

27/19 Annual Report of the head teacher of the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) 2018/19

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services. The report was presented by the Virtual School Head Teacher. The report gave an update on the academic outcomes of pupils for the school year 2018-19.

The Committee noted that there are no significant areas for challenge but there are areas for improvement, which are highlighted in the report. The areas where there was statistical significance in terms of strengths and challenges are identified in the report as; six significant strengths in Absence, five significant strengths in Key Stage 2 and five significant strengths in Key Stage 4

The Committee also noted that the primary outcomes in 2019 are the best ever and are above national LAC outcomes in many areas. The Officer informed the Committee that the main reasons for the improved outcomes was because targeted work with specific identified pupils was taking place. There are fewer pupils with SEND in the Year 6 Group. There was a focus on quality academic targets in Pupil Education Plans (PEPs) and the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+). There was also strong partnership working and increased capacity within the Virtual School Team.

There were no strengths or challenges identified in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), Phonics and Key Stage 1. This is due to the small number of pupils in those groups which means the outcomes do not have statistical significance.

The report gave a detailed analysis of the outcomes for Derby Looked After Children (LAC) from the Early Years Foundation Stage, Phonics in Year 1 and Year 2 and Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4. The Committee noted the Year 6 Attainment figure; 11 pupils from a group of 23 (47.8%) achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at the end of KS2, so performance has doubled since last year, when it was at 23.5%

The Committee were informed that attendance of pupils in the virtual school has shown significant improvements in the last year; national data shows that out of the eight key attendance indicators, the Virtual School has made significant improvements in six. Reducing exclusions has also been a focus for the team this

year. The committee noted that it has fallen for the third year in a row to 370 half days lost.

The officer highlighted a number of Virtual School workstreams to support improved outcomes that had been put in place, which include the following:

- "YipiYap" a company that offers class support for LAC using Gap Year Students. The support was extended to a couple of secondary schools but this was not successful so, for next year support for primary schools will only be given.
- Targeted Y6 pupil support – Year 5 pupils who are not working at the national standard are identified; schools are then offered one to one teaching time each week for these pupils during Y6 from Virtual school staff. This initiative made a significant impact on the attainment and progress for the 5 pupils identified. Councillors were impressed with the linear progress for pupils and queried whether this could be shared with all schools. The officer confirmed that it just involved the availability of extra teaching time on a one to one basis. Two more members of staff had been appointed to the Virtual School, and they visit the school and meet children to establish their needs and teach to any gaps.

The officer outlined the priorities for the Virtual School for 2019/20 which are listed in the report on page 34.

The officer was congratulated on the work done by all of the team to improve the outcomes for the Virtual School and its pupils, and in terms of the good practice which had been noted at a recent National Conference attended by the Lead Member for Children's Services, Derby City Council

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. To recognise the achievement of Derby's children who are looked after.**
- 2. To support the areas for development as highlighted within the report.**

28/19 Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-21

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services. The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out Derby City Council's vision and priorities for meeting the needs of children and young people in our care and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting lead attended the meeting to present the report.

The Committee noted that the Corporate Parenting Strategy aims to ensure that the best outcomes for Derby children in care are delivered. The Council is committed to ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life, will be given help to achieve their potential and has a safe and positive experience, with Derby City as their Corporate Parent. Derby City Council wants its children and young people to be happy, healthy, both physically and emotionally, to be safe and protected from harm and exploitation, and to be supported each step of the way to successful independent life as adults.

The Committee were informed that Members of the CICC had been involved in the design and content of the Strategy and had suggested the heading of "Our Bright Future Plan".

The Officer reported that the Corporate Parenting Strategy prioritises five key areas, detailed in the report where the Council wants to make a difference for Derby's children in care and care leavers.

The Committee noted that the Strategy also included pledges made from each of the Council Directorates to children in care and care leavers. Councillors discussed the pledges and asked if they could be returned to the Directorates to be made more specific for the next publication. A member of the Committee also asked if anecdotes from Foster Carers could be included, in the same style as the anecdotes from children in care on the penultimate page of the strategy.

The Committee liked and supported the new slim version of the strategy document; it was easy to read and understand. Overall they felt it was a good working document.

The Committee gave their support and endorsement to the new Corporate Parenting Strategy and requested that it be taken to full Council for their endorsement and support.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. to accept, support and endorse the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-21 "Our Bright Future Plan"**
- 2. that the Strategy be returned to the respective Directorate leads with the request that more specific pledges be added.**
- 3. that the Strategy be sent to full Council in May for their support and endorsement**

29/19 Children in Care and Leaving Care Apprenticeship Scheme

The Committee received a report of the Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care. The report was in relation to the Children in Care and Leaving Care Apprenticeship Scheme and provided an overview of the Care Leavers Education, Employment and training (EET) performance as requested by the Corporate Parenting Committee.

The Committee were informed that Derby City Council, as a corporate parent, wants the best for children in care and those leaving care and that a pledge has been made by the Council to give them the opportunity to apply for apprenticeships within Derby City Council. Councillors felt it was appropriate that Derby City Council should be leading the way in work experience and apprenticeships, given that it was one of the largest employers in Derby.

The Committee were also informed that managers of the Leaving Care Service and the Connexions Service had met with different council departments to request opportunities be offered to Derby City CIC and young people leaving care. Support had been given to the young people by workers in Connexions to prepare them for apprenticeships, work experience and interviews. Care leavers have been placed

with Adult Social Care, Derby Homes and Street Pride and at the Arena in City Council apprenticeships, traineeship and work experience.

The Committee noted that national data highlights that care leavers are one of a number of groups more likely to be at the risk of being not in education or training (NEET) or to be over represented in this group. The Committee were informed that the predicted average lifetime cost to public finance for each young person who is NEET was £65,116. The total associated loss to the economy, individuals and their families is approximately £23 billion.

- The percentage of care leavers in EET outside of Derby was 59% this was an increase and improvement on last year.
- 55% of care leavers in Derby were recorded as in EET in quarter 3 2019/20 (*this was an increase of 2.1% from quarter two*)
- Children in LAC not in education, employment or training (NEET) were 25% which was moving in the right direction.

The officer highlighted that in order to create a wider offer in different vocational areas for young people; they have started to link up with external providers and business and also the local Chamber of Commerce. Councillors were concerned that the health and safety aspects around placements are examined when young people are placed in external organisations. A councillor also suggested that links are made with the Derby Employment Hub, who offer help with Job interviews, CV's and housing.

There was joined up work (around supporting care leavers into EET) with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) which will make a good impact on reducing NEET. Because Learning Care and Connexions staff now share the same location, support can be offered to NEET care leavers quickly. A councillor commented positively on the service time and energy put into EETs and NEETs in spite of the current lack of resources.

The officers also highlighted the pledges obtained from various Derby City Council teams, who together with Derby Homes and Bemrose school have committed to giving Care Leavers a guaranteed interview for apprenticeship opportunities. The Committee queried how many care leavers were being awarded apprenticeships from these interviews. It was agreed that officers should circulate figures for conversion rates from interview to apprenticeship placement.

The Committee were pleased to see the wide range of opportunities available now available for CIC and care leavers. There was a clear pathway to show how CIC young people have progressed through the system to apprenticeships, which could be used as a recruitment tool in future.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. To note the current position and the progress made of the Apprenticeship scheme and current EET performance.**

30/19 Update Report on Reducing Criminalisation by Children in Care CONCORDAT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care. The report was presented by the Head of Specialist Services. The Committee noted that the CONCORDAT was an agreement across the children and young people's partnership in Derby City to work together under one vision to avoid the unnecessary criminalisation of young people in care. The report gave an overview of progress made since April 2019 and recommendations for next steps.

The officer reported that the partnership in Derby agreed to work together to agree a vision, and a protocol to act as a framework to deliver CONCORDAT. An Action Plan had been created to support the scheme in the city across Derby City Council's children's residential care homes. The protocol was launched in November 2018 and following a pilot programme at the Sinfin residential care home, it was widened to all city based care homes.

The Committee were informed that the pilot scheme was successful in reducing poor outcomes for children in DCC residential care, and this was evidenced at paragraph 4.3 of the report. The action plan was delivered by the CONCORDAT operational group which was led by the Residential and Youth Offending Services; progress was also outlined in paragraph 4.3 and includes:

- Training of residential staff in Sinfin Homes on restorative parenting
- Development of a multi-agency training podcast

The Committee noted the challenges in phase two of the implementation, which include staffing challenges such as recruitment and sickness in residential homes, which has made it difficult to consistently apply the CONCORDAT and its supporting principles. Less experienced staff are more likely to contact the police sooner when they think a young person has gone missing or committed an offence. This situation was being addressed.

The committee were informed there were no funding attached to CONCORDAT, or any costs. The resources of the partnership are used to upskill staff, develop the action plan and ensure appropriate training and review progress. The only cost has been for Restorative Parenting training for residential staff and young people. This has been taken from the Youth Offending Service funds. Requests have been made for support from partner agencies to contribute but none has been received so far. The Chair offered to write to all partner organisations in support of this request as all agencies benefitted from the training. This was agreed by the committee. A member of the committee also asked if the training could be made available to foster carers and officers agreed to look into this.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 2. That they should be kept abreast of developments, progress and the impact of the CONCORDAT Programme.**

- 3. That the Chair of the committee write to all the partner organisations of CONCORDAT with a request that they look into their budgets to try and locate further funding for the Restorative Parenting training.**

31/19 Exit from Care – September to December 2019 Progress Report

The Committee received a report of the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care. The report was presented by the Team Manager, Children's Permanence Team. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the Children's Permanence Team activities. The Board noted that the team has had a significant effect on safely reducing numbers of children in care over the year and in doing so provides year on year financial savings for the local authority.

The Board noted that the Exit from Care team was set up in 2013 to help children and young people safely return to the care of their immediate or extended family or live permanently with foster carers.

The Exit from Care team was integrated into a wider Children's Permanence Team in 2019 which brought together the exit from care work and the statutory adoption assessment work into a single team. The Committee were informed that:

- Between April 2017 and March 2018, five children exited care giving a total saving of £81,553.
- Between April 2018 and March 2019, ten children exited care giving a total saving of £215,833.83
- Between April 2019 and December 2019 twelve children exited care giving a total saving of £582,598.49.

The current target for the team was to safely exit 15 young people from care by April 2020. There are two more children scheduled to exit from care between January and March 2020 and a further four carers being assessed as Special Guardianship carers.

The committee considered that the savings made were impressive and asked whether there was a case for invest to save. If there were more social workers in the team would they be able to make a bigger impact on savings. The Committee asked officers to scope the benefits for putting in place more social workers in the team.

A request was also made to establish the age level of children exiting care; are they younger or older. The committee asked for this information to be included in the next report.

The Corporate Parenting Committee resolved:

- 1. That a scoping document be prepared to establish whether more social workers on the Exit from Care Team would enable a bigger impact on savings be made.**

2. That a breakdown of the ages of children exiting care to be provided in the next report
3. To note the contents of the report and make suggestions as necessary.

MINUTES END