

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE** held on 17 April 2018 at County Hall, Matlock

**PRESENT**

Councillor A Dale (in the Chair)

Councillors J Coyle and R Flatley.

Officers in attendance – M Barr, L Bennett, J Bloor, H Moxon, A Noble, J Parfrement, B Sharif, J Walker and M Wilton.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Lewis and J Patten; and J Murray and M Stafford-Wood.

**10/18      MINUTES    RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

**11/18      PERFORMANCE MEASURES – HEADLINE REPORT**

A report was received which provided details of how Derbyshire had performed in Key Performance Indicators for Children in Care at the end of February 2018. Indicators that were RAG rated as areas of concern or working well in the Corporate Parenting Board data tables had been included. Additional indicators were detailed in the Corporate Parenting Board data tables. A table providing details of the number of times children in care have received late visits in the previous 12 months was provided at the end of the briefing note.

Reference was made to the low outcome figures for care leavers in employment, education or training and an holistic approach was to be trialled in the Chesterfield area. County Council Chief Officers had over the last two years acted as champions for care leavers. The process was to be revised and re-allocated to include Deputy Chief Officers. It was noted that the County Council had pledged 44 work experience places for children in care.

The Committee acknowledged the immense achievement of staff on the outcomes for children in care reviews, in particular the percentage of children in care aged 5 to 16 with a completed SDQ.

**RESOLVED** to note the information contained in the report.

**12/18      BARNADO'S SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CARE LEAVERS**

The Leaving Care Service currently worked with young people from 17.5 – 21 or up to 25 if in education or training. The referral process has been reviewed and updated, and now included a detailed referral checklist and transition agreement. The final version was now being shared more widely with Children

in Care teams and other key professionals. There has been a steady improvement in the quality and timeliness of referrals into the service.

Every care leaver has an allocated Personal Adviser (PA) from the point of allocation and, wherever possible, the staff member remains with them. Staff turnover has been an issue, however this has been mitigated to some degree with the creation of 6 higher level Project Worker posts.

A part time Volunteer Co-ordinator and part time Participation Worker have been recruited and the service was now developing a team of volunteer befrienders, with significant input from care leavers. It was hoped that this would see an increase in resilience and a reduction in stress levels in young people receiving befriender support.

Barnardo's Time4U full time HCPC registered therapist delivered one to one counselling and telephone counselling. The service has a bespoke therapy room at the Chesterfield office and additional community resources were sourced across the County where this better met the needs of the young person.

The service continued to develop links and partnerships across and beyond Barnardo's to increase the range of opportunities available for care leavers who were NEET.

Whilst the areas of support have been highlighted, the most significant and challenging issue was that of the increasing number of young people presenting with high level multi-complex needs who did not appear to meet the criteria of one or more agencies. Many were repeatedly 'falling through the gap' of service provision, and this was an ongoing concern which required high level, multi-agency discussion, planning and regular review. There were a number of areas requiring development including staff training and development in relation to legislation, policy and procedural changes as well as increased partnership and multi-agency working and where necessary, escalation.

Barnardo's were encouraged to report any regular areas of concern to the County Council in order that action could be taken. The County Council needs to be kept up to date with any progress or vulnerabilities that occur within the Leaving Care service. The Care Leavers Improvement Board was a new initiative and Barnardo's Leaving Care Service Manager was involved with this.

**RESOLVED** to agree that the Action Plan should include:-

- up to date training needs analysis
- identify training provision
- arrange in-house training dates
- agree PW2 'specialist' areas of development
- ensure Barnardo's attendance at 16+transitions meetings

- ensure Barnardo's presence at CiC Team Meetings  
earlier homeless prevention referrals and communication

### **13/18      DERBYSHIRE YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

The Committee received an update on the work of the Derbyshire Youth Offending Service (YOS).

The YOS was a statutory multi-agency partnership with the Local Authority, Police, the Probation Service (now the National Probation Service NPS) and Health. Its work was overseen by a Board which was made up of the partners, the Community Safety Partnership and the PCC; and was subject to inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

The principle aims of the Youth Justice system were the subject of key performance indicator set by the Youth Justice Board and these were first time entrants; reducing re-offending and use of custody.

Derbyshire has a Joint Agency Protocol Regarding Offending by Children in Care. This protocol was primarily intended to assist social care staff (residential homes) and its purpose was detailed in the report. It also assisted the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Police in ensuring that children and young people in care were not unnecessarily criminalised. The current protocol was being updated and would cover Derby City.

A full-time Social Worker would join the County Team and would be used to bolster the Divert programme (short term interventions based on referrals by the Police) and build upon the preventative aspect of reducing offending behaviour. It was intended for this post to further enhance work within residential settings and to promote the Joint Agency Protocol across the agencies.

Members felt that it was essential to require private children's residential care homes within Derbyshire to 'sign up' to the Joint Agency protocol.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

### **14/18      UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN**

The report updated the Committee on work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) in Derbyshire.

In January 2017, a small dedicated UASC social work team was set up, which comprised of a manager, three social workers and a team co-ordinator. In addition, virtual school workers were also recruited. The team was set up to be part of several schemes regarding UASC, in addition to Derbyshire's statutory responsibility for 'spontaneous arrivals'. The schemes were the Home Office National Transfer Scheme for which Derbyshire has successfully moved

24 children since the end of 2016; 'Dubs' Scheme which supported children to move to the UK direct from camps in Europe and Derbyshire has taken responsibility for four young people with a further child to be taken next month; and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme where children were assessed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in third-world countries as being so vulnerable they required humanitarian protection. Derbyshire has taken two children on this scheme and a further young person was due in May.

Since January 2017, there have been eight spontaneous arrivals of children who have been accommodated by Derbyshire. They have benefitted from having a UASC team, particularly in relation to support through their asylum claim which was both complex and time consuming. Derbyshire's practice in preparing young people to move on the National Transfer Scheme has been formalised in recently published National Guidance.

Derbyshire received set funding from the Government for each UASC child and received an additional £188,126 through the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) to develop capacity to care for UASC and UASC care leavers. As part of the East Midlands Consortium, it has been agreed that some funds would be pooled to create a regional Immigration Advisor Post to support the Local Authorities.

The key focus areas were as follows:-

- Accommodation provisions - continue working with partners and colleagues to achieve sustainable accommodation.
- Therapeutic Intervention – continue working with SV2 - Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence Counselling service to offer young people therapeutic intervention where they have been the victim of sexual abuse.
- Trafficked Children - UASC were a group at risk of being trafficked or exposed to modern day slavery, at a significant risk were Vietnamese children. Derbyshire would be part of a national task force to update practice policy regarding children at risk of being trafficked
- Meeting Cultural and Religious Needs – carefully matching new young people and trying to place clusters of nationalities in areas so that they have a support network. The social work team and virtual school work alongside the school to offer guidance and support.
- Asylum Claims – continue good working relationships with solicitors in Sheffield who undertake evidence work for young people to apply to the Home Office for Refugee or Humanitarian Protection. The UASC team has recently undertaken training in working with children affected by trauma and it was advised that the asylum process often needed to be resolved before underlying trauma can be addressed.

- Language Barriers - where possible, workers utilise technology apps to aid communication, however our young people developed their English very quickly.
- Physical Health - all young people have an Initial Health Assessment (IHA). Some UASC arrive with additional health needs and alongside carers, we ensure these needs are met by support to attend health appointments.

Councillor Coyle asked if the County Council would reach its figure of 106 UASC and it was noted that further UASC's would only be accepted when the service was in a position to provide appropriate care.

**RESOLVED** to note progress in practice and ongoing work to support unaccompanied children.

#### **15/18      CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) AND MISSING**

The Committee was updated on the developments in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children, with particular reference to children in care and care leavers.

Derbyshire continued to develop its strategic oversight and management in relation to the vulnerabilities and threats to children of being harmed and exploited, particularly in relation to CSE and Children going Missing. Over the last 12 months the CSE toolkit for assessing risk has been reviewed and re-launched; a vulnerable young people's panel has been developed within each Locality; procedures for missing children including return home interviews have been reviewed; and audits have been carried out to evaluate how well Derbyshire was doing to help and protect children at risk of CSE, some of which were then jointly evaluated with partner agencies.

The information taken from children's services data dashboard showed overall data for children open to the service not specifically Children in Care and the completed toolkit data for 1 October 2017 – 11 April 2018 was provided in the report. The Child Protection Manager (CPM) (Vulnerable Children) would be sampling completed toolkits and holding "clinics" in each Locality. The procedure for addressing any toolkit assessment showing high risk was detailed. The information regarding high level CSE and information on children repeatedly missing was reported to a well-established multi-agency Tasking Group which included Derby City, and was chaired by the police. The information was then cascaded back to localities by the CPM, however further work was being carried out in order to finesse this process involving partners.

Nationally agreed protocols were implemented regarding out of county children (CiC) placed within Derbyshire who were a known risk of CSE or going missing. 41 episodes were reported between 1 October 2017 and 11 April 2018. 40 individual Derbyshire CiC children were reported as missing in the 12

months to February 2018. Return interviews were offered however the timeliness of these continued to be an area requiring improvement with 64.4% being achieved in 72 hours. If a child goes missing three or more times in a 30 day period a CSE toolkit should be completed and support explored. The number of children currently at high risk was 2, medium risk 17 and low risk 15.

Material was now available to promote the participation of parents and children within the CSE Strategy meetings.

Strategic arrangements for CSE and vulnerable children continued to be strengthened and improved. A particular focus would be how the Child Protection Manager (Vulnerable Children) supports and works with Localities. It was intended to analyse the quality and themes from return home interviews, and how effectively the information gained through return interviews was used to review and reduce future risks for individual children.

To ensure robust links with Adult Services, a meeting has been set up with After Care Services (Barnardo's) and the Adult Safeguarding Board to ensure transition into adulthood pathways were seamless for children at risk of CSE.

Although there had been a number of national campaigns on CSE it was important that the general public were made aware of the warning signs. The CSE leaflet guide for children and young people produced by the Derbyshire Safeguarding Board was available for members at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

**16/18**      **VIRTUAL SCHOOL MONTHLY DATABOOK**      One of the key tasks of the Virtual School was to monitor all children in care from birth to Year 13, and the monthly databook, produced by the Virtual School, provided information on a range of statistics. The headlines for children in care as at 31 March 2018 were reported and the full version of the data book was attached to the report.

There were 718 children and young people aged 0-18 in care, and 437 attended school in 29 different local authorities. 156 children in care were within early years and 185 were within the primary age range – 130 were within county schools and 55 in out of county schools. Primary children attended a total of 135 schools, 86 of which were Derbyshire schools and 49 were out of county schools. 252 children in care were within the secondary age range, and 164 were in county schools, 86 in out of county schools and 2 had no school place. Secondary children attended a total of 128 schools, 54 of which were Derbyshire schools and 74 out of county schools. 125 children in care were post 16. 225 attended good or better Derbyshire schools and settings, and 121 attended good or better out of county schools and settings. Of the 28 eligible

two year olds as at Spring term 2018, 22/28 were accessing provision 14/22 in Derbyshire settings and 8/22 in out of county settings, and of the 38 three and four year old cohort, 36/38 were accessing provision – 22/36 in Derbyshire settings and 14/36 in out of county settings. There was a high level of SEN, with 64/185 of the primary aged children, 144/252 of the secondary aged children and 56/125 Post 16 having an EHCP or SEN. 32 children in care were unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

The information has improved access to data enabling the Virtual School Team to identify issues and implement actions and strategies before they escalate. The Virtual School has begun Challenge meetings with Schools where required and these were proving beneficial to both parties.

As a result of regular Virtual School Heads meetings, a new Virtual School Data Manager meeting schedule was being established to discuss and share data and good practice.

It was noted that that more children in care were staying in school for sixth form and those who have no qualifications was close to nil. Holidays taken in term time has decreased.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

**17/18      FOSTERING STOCKTAKE**      The independent review, published in February 2018, commissioned by the Department for Education and conducted by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, looked at the purpose of foster care and what it meant to those closely involved in the system.

The review made 36 recommendations for government, local authorities and independent fostering agencies including ensuring foster carers were supported and included in decision-making; improving foster placement commissioning, and matching; greater stability and permanence for children and young people in foster care. The Government would respond to the report and the recommendations in Spring 2018, setting out the future programme of work for the fostering system.

Some of the recommendations resonate with work already underway in Derbyshire and the Fostering Service Plan 2018 -19, which was in development, would take account both of the report and any subsequent statutory guidance, alongside direct feedback from Derbyshire foster carers.

There has been some significant criticism of the Fostering Stocktake. The Fostering Network has commented that ‘the report was a huge opportunity wasted’ and have written to the Children’s Minister accordingly. The recommendation allowing local authorities to dispense with the role of Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) was contentious. Derbyshire valued

the input of the IROs and sought to strengthen the independent scrutiny they provided to care planning and outcomes for children.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.