

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE** held on 17 January 2017 at County Hall, Matlock

PRESENT

Councillor J A Coyle (in the Chair)

Councillors D Greenhalgh and J Street

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D W E Charles and A Western

1/17 MINUTES RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

2/17 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE Details of how Derbyshire had performed in Key Performance Indicators for Children in Care in October 2016 were presented. Reference was also made to the December performance analysis, which included the work in progress in all areas of the report, and indicators that were RAG rated as areas of concern or working well in the safeguarding performance improvement board data tables had been included.

The information had been presented in a new format, and included details of what the authority was worried about and what was working well – this was welcomed. In terms of concern, this included timeliness of visits to children in care: percentage of cases visited within timescale, percentage of children aged 5-16 with an SDQ completed, average SDQ score, numbers of adoptions of children in care, number of children who were placed for adoption, A1 average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, A2 average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family, and the percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training.

With regard to what was working well, this was percentage of individual visits to children placed more than 20 miles from home that took place within timescales, the number of children going missing from care, the percentage of children in care reviews where the child participated, and the percentage of care leavers living in suitable accommodation.

3/17 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN – CHILDREN'S SERVICES A national Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) transfer protocol had been created to enable the safe transfer of UASC from one UK local authority to another from 1 July 2016. The interim transfer protocol formed the basis of agreements made between

local authorities to ensure a fairer distribution of UASC across all local authorities and regions. The protocol set a 'ceiling' on the numbers of UASC any local authority would be expected to accept – this was 0.07% of the child population. There were currently 24 UASC young people in Derbyshire, and its cap would be 108.

As at 29 December 2016, Derbyshire had 9 UASC aged under 16 looked after (7 placed outside the local authority with IFAs and 2 placed inside the local authority with a DCC foster carer), 15 UASC aged 16+ looked after (4 placed inside the local authority with IFAs, 8 placed outside the local authority with IFAs, 2 placed inside the local authority with a DCC foster carer, and 1 placed outside the local authority in independent living), and 6 care leavers supported by Barnardos who had been UASC.

December had seen the first arrivals, with children coming via the 'Dubs Amendment' to be placed via the National Transfer Scheme or to be reunited with family under the Dublin Treaty. Derbyshire had received two young people who had been living in Calais under the 'Dubs Amendment'. The Home Office had indicated that in January/February, young people could be coming to the UK from Italy and Greece, and there was a planned transfer for one young person from Turkey.

Planning and coordination for UASC was taking place within existing East Midlands structures. The aim was to ensure that when young people arrived, the Council could place them in a suitable placement so that the young person's needs could be assessed. Following assessment, it was possible that a significant proportion could be placed in unregulated 'other arrangements' such as supported lodgings or independent accommodation with floating support. The potential commissioning of suitable move on accommodation with staffing support following assessment had commenced.

Children's Services had commenced work to explore whether any current carers were able/willing to be approved for UASC, review recruitment, and develop rent a room/supported lodgings for 16-17 year olds. Following a press release in September, there had been around 40 enquiries specifically for UASC. With regard to existing carers, there had been some positive interest, and training sessions had been provided. However, there was a broader challenge of capacity, particularly for intermediate and longer term placements. A new recruitment campaign had started in January, and this would include UASC, and there would be ongoing in-house training for foster carers. A specific campaign in the High Peak was planned due to the number of resignations in that area. Good links had been developed with the local Muslim community in Chesterfield, who were offering support and had engaged with fostering recruitment.

A new team had been established using the systemic practice model, and the first planned transfer would be managed by this team. An additional Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) had also been appointed, and it was anticipated that the UASC children would be distributed throughout the IRO service. There were currently four young people receiving ongoing support from an Independent Advocate and one young person benefiting from an Independent Visitor, and it was anticipated that the additional UASC would require significant support from these services; the Participation Team was currently looking at the best way to provide this.

The health needs of the group were unlikely to be just emotional and therapeutic. Experience elsewhere was that the emotional needs would need to be assessed once settled in placement, and there would also be young people with mental health problems and with a learning need or disability. There would need to be some work around a range of issues, and the young people admitted to the country from 1 July would also need an initial health assessment. UASC would also require a range of additional school and college places and educational support.

Any UASC had to be provided with the same support as for any care leaver. However, further statutory guidance was expected regarding the relationship between immigration and care leaver legislation. It was anticipated that since the change in the Immigration Act 2016, care leavers with limited leave up to 17.5 years or who required leave to remain at 18 but did not have it would be excluded from receiving a pathway plan, accommodation, financial support, a personal advisor, funding for education or training, or a Staying Put placement. This had not yet been implemented, but planning for any change would need to be in place.

Planning for the increase of UASC was being undertaken in conjunction with the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and the role of existing East Midlands structures. A task group had been established within Derbyshire to commence planning, and a joint communication strategy had been developed. Close working would be required across localities to ensure that planning took account of local cultural sensitivities. Work was currently underway to write a service specification for a new contract for interpretation provision.

Caring for UASC was likely to cost the Council a significant amount, above what the Government would fund on an ongoing basis. The rates from 1 July 2016, to coincide with the first phase of the national transfer, were detailed, but these were insufficient to meet the true cost of caring for the children unless they were placed with in-house foster carers. The overall pressure to the authority would depend on the type of support each young person required, and a related growth fund bid had been approved.

RESOLVED to note the report.

4/17 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN – VIRTUAL SCHOOL An update was provided on the numbers and support undertaken by the Virtual School with UASC. As at 5 January 2017, there were 24 UASC that the Virtual School had responsibility for – 10 were in the secondary age range, 11 were Post 16, and 3 were care leavers. 22 of the 24 were male, all UASC were in Key Stage 3 and four had school places. An overview was given in which local authorities the UASC received their education, and there were 2 UASC awaiting appropriate age related placements who had recently come into care.

It was likely that UASC would have little or no English, either verbal or written, and intensive packages of language tuition would be required. Based on current experiences, 50% of UASC were illiterate in their own language and had required pre ESOL support. The Virtual School had liaised with colleges to create language tuition packages as there was currently no provision in place for students under 16 within Derbyshire. The Virtual School had also liaised with schools through the Advisory Service to support the schools admission process for school aged UASC.

The challenges the Virtual School had experienced to date were highlighted, along with the achievements. In terms of next steps, further ESO's were currently being advertised and would be appointed as soon as possible. Pre ESOL courses were being identified across the county, along with the development of ESOL courses with Further Education colleges. It was the intention to develop a Cultural Engagement Programme to help young people integrate into Derbyshire and the wider society, and it would be necessary to ensure the status of UASC was recorded correctly in the service user group on FWi. An induction pack would be developed for use in schools and with foster carers.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5/17 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN – HEALTH It was reported that no additional funds had been made available for health services for UASC, and the Home Office view was that the health needs of these children would be met within available resources. There would be an increase in the current LAC population, and a business case had been delivered to the Children's Joint Commissioning Group for additional resources. The Group had agreed, in principle, to the funding of a Specialist Nurse who would be part of the Children in Care Health Team. At present, consideration was being given as to how this post could be funded. The role would work directly with UASC to ensure the Health Plan was met and support young people and their carers to access other health services.

UASC had significant physical, psychological and mental health needs. Most of the physical conditions that children presented were non-urgent. In terms of psychological and mental health issues, it had been referenced that most of the concerns had a delayed presentation, and this would need to be taken into account when assessing children's needs and the provision of services. A range of safeguarding issues would also need to be considered at the time of an initial Health Assessment or at any other health contact.

It was likely that UASC would have no or very little command of English, and this would be taken into account for their placement, and interpreters would be needed for every health contact. Health was currently able to provide enhanced support due to the small numbers, but it was anticipated that this would become a challenge when numbers increased. UASC would benefit from the new emotional wellbeing project, and the aim was that all children in care would have their emotional and mental health assessed within an appropriate timescale and that they would receive a service to meet identified need. Review health assessments and follow up of health needs would be as for any other child in care, but with the increased numbers and no additional resource, there was likely to be a negative impact on the timeliness of assessments for all children in care.

6/17 ACHIEVING EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING FOR ALL CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS The County Council aimed to improve the current levels of children in care and care leavers who were not in education, employment and training (NEET) by committing to achieve 100% participation by 2018. Details had previously been outlined around the opportunities available to children in care and care leavers. Information was provided on the current cohort of children in care and care leavers in order to further understand the current status, needs, barriers and challenges moving forward, and what future actions would be put in place to improve outcomes.

It was reported that 20% of the 16/17 year old children in care cohort were NEET, and 80% of young people had been identified as being in positive destinations from the 2015/16 school leaving group. There were currently 59 16 year olds, 76% of which were in positive destinations. 20% were NEET and of these, 50% were NEET with additional needs. This compared with 17 year olds, where 80% were in positive destinations and 15% were NEET. Of the young people who were NEET, 8% was due to illness, 5 due to mental health and 3 were ready to engage in EET with additional support.

There were 376 young people in the 16-21 care leaver cohort, and 216 were EET. Details were provided of how this was broken down, along with the NEET cohort. 21% were NEET due to mental health issues, 12% had a custodial sentence, and 11% were parents or pregnant. 8% of young people who were NEET had additional needs, and 4% who were NEET would never be economically active.

Under Keep on Caring, there was a new requirement to track 22-25 year old care leavers. This would be a challenge, and there would be a need to identify appropriate resources to meet the duty. There were 330 young people in the 22-25 care leavers cohort - 154 were EET and 176 were NEET. 40% were available to the labour market and were seeking either employment or training opportunities, 8% were NEET due to mental health issues, 14% were parents or pregnant, 6% were serving a custodial sentence, 14% did not have information available on Profile, 3% had additional needs, and 2% were never economically active.

Information was presented on what was being done to improve outcomes, along with work around identification, the allocation process, presenting needs and shortfalls. In order to ensure a coordinated approach to performance management, a range of activities had been established, including a Countywide NEET Task Group, locality based EET groups, chief officer allocation work, and after care services. An action plan had been developed to focus on the needs of the cohort – this was work in progress and had not yet been finalised. The improvements identified were under the five headings of case load management, workforce development, partnership development, performance management, and data recording. A further update would be presented to a future meeting.

RESOLVED (1) to note the report; and

(2) that the action plan to improve outcomes is approved.

7/17 PROPOSED KEY THEMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS A list of proposed key themes for future meetings was circulated. The Committee agreed this up to June, and the new Committee would have to agree future themes after this date.