

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE** held on 19 June 2018 at County Hall, Matlock

PRESENT

Councillor A Dale (in the Chair)

Councillors J Coyle, R Flatley and J Patten.

Officers in attendance – J Bacon, J Bloor, S Hunter, P Lambert, R Mawbey, H Moxon, J Murray, N Pape, J Parfremment, A Raine, A Reynolds, G Roe and M Stafford-Wood.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Lewis and A Noble.

18/18 **MINUTES** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

19/18 **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 April 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.

Concern was expressed about the number of care leavers Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). It was noted that work was being undertaken with Barnardo's to identify why the figures were high, there could be a number of reasons including mental health and being a single parent. Certain types of activity could not be recorded and this included volunteering. It was also noted that the current data was based on those young people with a completed 'Care Leavers Statistical Data Record' on Frameworki, however a new data collection process was being trialled.

RESOLVED to note the information contained in the report.

MAIN THEME – CHILDREN IN CARE PROVISION

20/18 **QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - RESIDENTIAL**

A report was received on the Children's Homes Regulation 44 visits.

The standard of care planning was consistently recorded and commitment of staff was clearly demonstrated. The staff were reported to know

the children well and few complaints have been received. Transition support for children moving on was often highlighted as positive and Regulation 44 visitors have observed children returning to the home years after they have left.

Reports also show an improvement in the practice around the administration of medication. All homes have now adopted a new way of recording and the same standard files. Regular audits of practice was also taking place.

Areas identified as requiring addressing were consistency of challenge from home staff on behalf of children resident in the home; mainstream homes have difficulty ensuring children in their care were accessing appropriate education; and referencing the equality and purpose of the care. Regulation 44 visitors would focus on these areas in future visits.

The report contained the most up to date Ofsted judgement for overall effectiveness inspection information for 2017 and 2018 as of 4 June 2018 for each home.

Currently 29 children in care with an allocated independent advocate were being supported on a number of requests, including the right to be in a school, their legal status and requests to move or stay.

The 'Our Voice' children in care agenda in April included completion of the Fostering Review feedback questions; Healthwatch colleagues discussed the 'Art Therapy' project and received feedback; and an update on the 'county wide' pocket money scale merger. The May meetings finalised the presentation for the visit to the Regional Participation Working Group Conference in Nottingham. The Children in Care Council (CiCC) have been invited to give a presentation to Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner. The CiCC membership has risen from 10 to 22 and the 10% target representative membership has been met. The use of technology to enable more children in care to become involved from a distance was also being explored.

A working group has been convened including senior staff from across Children's Services to develop and embed appropriate mechanisms for service user feedback.

A newly appointed Ambassador has been recruited for children in care. He is 17 and currently a child in care. He has excellent aspirations for the future and feels passionately about the quality of services for children in care. The aim is to work with him and other children to design and appoint young ambassadors to focus on area including Health and Wellbeing, Children's Rights, Children in Care and Care leavers. It was also hoped to develop a young inspector's programme for services provision.

It was noted that the advocates used by the County Council were members of the British Advocacy Register, supervised and trained by the County Council.

RESOLVED to note the report.

21/18 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HOME (RESIDENTIAL)

Ryan Mawbey, Manager at Hopewell presented a report on the progress of the new residential children's home.

It was decided that a smaller 'therapeutically informed' residential children's home was needed; focussing on up to two children at a time but with well-designed and individualised plans to support those children to recover and become more resilient to their circumstance, whilst facilitating a transition to another setting.

Developing the collaborative placement matching process was crucial to the success of the home. The location of the home it was not appropriate for children that were, at the time of referral, deemed to be involved with or susceptible to child sexual exploitation (CSE) or have substance misuse issues.

The manager of Evergreen House (Ilkeston) was leading the Hopewell team and has undertaken a part-time secondment to the CAMHS RISE team. A rigorous appointment process, including young people, has ensured that the residential staff team would be made up of highly skilled and experienced people. In addition to the statutory and mandatory training for Residential Childrens Workers, the Hopewell team would also benefit from complementary mental health training. Collaboration with health colleagues and partner agencies would be key in creating a robust network of pathways so that advice, support, intervention could be sought and provided effectively.

The objective was to open this summer once the service has been registered with Ofsted, the staff team was fully recruited and suitable children have been identified and assessed.

RESOLVED to note the report.

22/18 GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES (RESIDENTIAL)

(a) Glenholme Nick Pape, Registered manager presented a report on an example of care for a young person (B) with complex needs.

Pre matching planning meetings took place between key staff from the home and B's social worker, to gain information about her history, likes and dislikes, and to ensure that the home was able to provide the right support and care plan. In assessing the risks it was also noted that the young person felt overwhelmed by the supervision levels in the previous placement.

Working together as a multi-agency with CAMHS, Horizons, and the social worker has been invaluable. The report contained details of the staffing arrangements and the advice and support provided.

The Individual Placement Care Plan and Safe Care Plan was written in conjunction with CAMHS, Horizons and B, which enabled the staff to think about how to keep her safe and gain an understanding of what made her feel safe, and what made her feel unsafe. Strategies and triggers were also discussed. Counselling sessions were made available for staff.

Staff and managers at Glenholme made considerable efforts to keep B safe and happy during her time at the home. The home also worked closely with adult services and the leaving care team to ensure her views, wishes and feelings were heard in terms of her requesting to live a normal life in the community. B moved out in January 2018 into a Shared Life's partnership, with and an outreach support package from Glenholme was put into place to support her until she was settled.

This was a difficult but uplifting report and the expertise of staff was applauded. Nick Pape was asked to convey a personal message of thanks to all staff involved.

(b) Hillview

Simon Hunter, Registered Manager at Hillview presented a report on a case study showing excellent practice at the home.

E was a 12 year old female with ASD, significant learning disabilities and exhibiting a high degree of self-harm, which manifested itself by hard head slapping and head hitting. E wore a padded helmet and the Hillview key team worked closely with colleagues at Peak School, CAMHS; social care and family to work out the likelihood of getting E both not to have to wear the padded helmet, and to decrease or stop the self-injurious behaviour.

After consultation with involved professionals and family, and after settling into the routines at Hillview, and getting to know each other, the team decided that they would begin to replace the padded helmet with a swimming headband during the day. The team considered that this head hitting could be behavioural and the decision was taken to let E hit her head for short periods of time, monitor but not to respond. Over a period of about four months the head hitting stopped almost altogether.

The team worked tirelessly and consistently with this, and acknowledge that the outcome was achieved with little 'science', although using the staff's collective vast experience, a lot of optimism, common sense and our ongoing

care for E. A positive comment was made by the Ofsted Inspector, in his July 2017 report.

It was agreed that ways of sharing this staff experience and skills should be explored.

23/18 ADOPTION REVISED STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Statement of Purpose fulfilled the requirements of Standard 18 of the Adoption Services Minimum Standards 2014 (Care Standards Act, 2000) and regulations 2, 3 and 4 of the Local Authority Service (England) Regulations 2003. Regulations 3 and 24B and Regulation 4 of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2000 and Regulation 5 of the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 and the Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendment) Regulations 2011/2012 required an Adoption Agency to produce a Statement of Purpose, which contains a range of detailed information.

The Statement of Purpose would provide a source of information to all areas of the Children's Services Department, partner agencies, adopters and prospective adopters, children who may be adopted and their parents or guardians and adopted people, their parents, birth family and former guardians.

It was noted that some sections of the Statement of Purpose would change with the introduction of regionalisation.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Adoption Statement of Purpose.

24/18 FOSTERING QUARTERLY REPORT

The purpose of the report was to fulfil obligations as laid down in the Fostering National Minimum Standards (April 2011), to present comparative performance data on the service to Cabinet, to present written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the fostering service every 3 months and to monitor the management and outcomes of the services in order to ensure that the service was effective and was achieving good outcomes for children.

At the end of Quarter 4, 2017-18, there were 716 children in care, looked after by Derbyshire County Council, which was an increase of 4 children since the end of the last quarter and an increase of 85 over the last twelve months.

Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) in-house foster carers looked after 68% of the fostered population, an increase of 3% from the previous quarter.

Although the number of resignations rose to 53 (a resignation rate of 13%, in line with the Fostering Network U.K. national average), the actual number of approvals not only reached the target figure of 45, but, if including the rapid increase in Supported Lodging's provider approvals, gained an additional 6 approvals. This target has been achieved with only a slight increase in enquiries but a significant rise in the number of conversions of applications to assessments. There has been increasing Regulation 24 assessment activity and there were 10 more kinship carer households this year, caring for an additional 18 children under these arrangement. The services approval rate for the last financial year was 9% (from enquiry to approval) compared to 7% in the financial year 2016/17.

Over the course of the financial year 2017/18, there was a continued increase in the number of inquiries to become foster carers compared to the same period last year; 601 compared to 583 previously. Furthermore, this year has seen a substantial increase in the number of Initial Visits undertaken; 126 in total, compared to 112 in the previous year, with a similar number of deferrals (4 in 2017/18 and 5 in 2017/18). A new campaign, focussing on information events and drop in sessions, has helped increase the number of applications received by Derbyshire County Council, particularly noticeable in both Chesterfield and the High Peak.

Derbyshire County Council has continued to see a high number of young people choosing to remain with their Staying Put carer, 33% of the young people were aged 20 or over, an increase of 5%. Further work was underway to define the details of Derbyshire's Care Leaver Offer for 21 to 25 year olds as required by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It was anticipated that a stronger offer would be developed for 18-21 year olds than 21 to 25; and the role of Staying Put would need to be considered.

At the end of the financial year 2017/18 the number of children placed with an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) has remained stable. In the previous financial year, the average number of children placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers was 126 as, of year end, as placements rose from 113 as of 1 April 2016 to 132 (31 March 2017). In the current financial year, the number of children placed with an Independent Fostering Agency rose from 131 (1 April 2017) to 167(31 March 2018) – the average number of children living with agency carers, for the current financial year, was 135 per month.

The work on Phase II of the review of fostering payments and allowances was almost complete. A number of recommendations have been made by the Fostering Payment Review Implementation Group, which included foster and these have been considered by the Senior Management Team, who have agreed that a report can be presented to the Lead Elected

Member for Children's Services in June for formal approval. It was hoped that these changes would be implemented in July 2018.

RESOLVED to note the report.

25/18 FOSTERING REVISED STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Statement of Purpose fulfilled the requirements of Standard 16 of the Fostering Services Minimum Standards 2011 (Care Standards Act, 2000) and regulations 3 and 4 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2011. Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 required a fostering agency to produce a Statement of Purpose, which contained a range of detailed information as set out in Standard 1 (14).

The Statement of Purpose would provide a source of information to all areas of Children's Services, partner agencies, foster carers and prospective carers.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Fostering Statement of Purpose.

26/18 GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES (FOSTERING AND ADOPTION)

A number of improved activity offers have been negotiated for Children in Care and Fostering Families.

Amber Valley Borough Council has offered 20 free swimming lessons and other District and Borough Council in Derbyshire were being contacted to match this offer. The aim was to acquire free swimming lessons for all children in care. Gym passes were also available but were District/Borough specific. It was noted that 'Foster Talk' the not for profit support for foster carers in the UK offered discount for various activities.

In September 2018 Public Health provided funding of £15,000 to enhance physical activity. The Countryside Service had been approached to offer cycling, free parking and discounted entry.

It was reported that a Get Creative event had been arranged for Saturday 14 July 2018 at Lea Green Learning and Development Centre. The event was free for all Derbyshire Children in Care and Foster Families. This was a drop in event. 150 people have booked on to the event to date and it was hoped to attract foster carers.

The DVD on the impact of foster care entitled 'You can be what you want to be', was shown at the end of the meeting and was well received. It would be launched in September 2018.

27/18 CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE – REVIEW DISCUSSION

It was suggested that the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Committee be updated in line with best practice. The procedure adopted by neighbouring authorities would be researched together with the possible inclusion of other Directorates and organisations.

Members suggested that to inform elected members it would be appropriate for training sessions to be arranged following approval of the revised Terms of Reference.

It was noted that the revised Terms of Reference would require approval of Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Committee be revised.

28/18 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 May 2018 were reported and the full version of the data book was attached to the report.

There were 728 children and young people aged 0-18 in care, and 452 attended school in 32 different local authorities. 158 children in care were within early years and 188 were within the primary age range – 135 were within county schools and 53 in out of county schools. Primary children attended a total of 134 schools, 89 of which were Derbyshire schools and 45 were out of county schools. 264 children in care were within the secondary age range, and 171 were in county schools, 90 in out of county schools and 3 had no school place. Secondary children attended a total of 133 schools, 54 of which were Derbyshire schools and 79 out of county schools. 118 children in care were post 16. 224 attended good or better Derbyshire schools and settings, and 122 attended good or better out of county schools and settings. Of the 32 eligible two year olds as at Summer term 2018, 25/32 were accessing provision 16/25 in Derbyshire settings and 9/25 in out of county settings, and of the 45 three and four year old cohort, 43/45 were accessing provision – 28/43 in Derbyshire settings and 15/43 in out of county settings. There was a high level of SEN, with 68/188 of the primary aged children, 148/264 of the secondary aged children and 51/118 Post 16 having an EHCP or SEN. 35 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 the up to date figure of children and young people aged 0-18 in care was now 738.

Holidays taken in term time had decreased, however had been an increase around the May Spring Bank holiday break. Continuous monitoring would still be needed.

It was also noted that persistent absences were increasing in both primary and secondary schools, especially in the hard to reach KS4 area. Exclusions had begun to rise again especially in Primary schools.

RESOLVED to note the report.

29/18 **COUNCIL TAX** It was noted that the County Council had approached Derbyshire Borough and District Councils regarding Council Tax discounts for Young people leaving care, however, currently they were reluctant to engage with the idea.

Councillor Dale agreed to discuss this further with District elected members.