

## **ACTION NOTES**

### **Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**Attendance:** Cllr Imtiaz Ali, Cllr Frank Connor, Cllr Julie Daley, Cllr Roy Davies, Cllr David Foster, Cllr Julie Gunn, Cllr Yusuf Jan-Virmani, Cllr Andy Kay, Cllr Hanif Khonat Cllr Suleman Khonat, Cllr Sylvia Liddle, Cllr Pat McFall, Cllr Ron O’Keeffe, Cllr Naushad Surve, Linda Clegg, Sammy Partington, Gavin Redhead, Karen Barrick, Jessica Byrne, Sara Barr-Frost, Sharon Burns, Samantha Briggs, Sheila Morris, Christy Walsh, Patricia Harrison, Jo Siddle, Abdul Ghiwala, Ben Aspinall, Firoza Hafeji.

**Apologies:** Cllr Denise Gee, Cllr Farhad Hussain, Cllr Shaukat Hussain, Cllr Zamir Khan, Cllr Don McKinlay, Cllr Julie Slater, Cllr Brian Taylor, Aldo Staffa, Susan Clarke

ITEM NO	ITEM	ACTION
1.	<p>1.1 Action points from the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>1.2 Action points from meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were also agreed as a correct record.</p>	
2.	<p>Sammy, Voice representative, gave a verbal update on the Corporate Parenting event which was held on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at Blackburn Central High School.</p> <p>Gavin Redhead, Children and Young People’s Participation Officer, informed the group that a report had been produced which highlighted the progress of the event.</p> <p>Sammy informed the group that the event was well attended by Members and Officers and had a shared ownership with partner agencies which was a much greater improvement than in previous years.</p> <p>It was reported that due to prior engagements not all Members were able to attend the event. It was suggested that the date of the next Corporate Parenting Event be included in the 2016-17 municipal year planner to avoid conflicting with other engagements.</p> <p>Sammy informed Members that at the event, young people shared their personal experience of living in Foster Care and their experience of leaving Care at the age of 16+. Members were informed that this highlighted the difficulties young people experienced when they left Care to live on their own.</p> <p>The group were informed that the event had been a success receiving positive feedback, and the photos from the event were shared within the group.</p>	<p>Gavin to bring report to next meeting</p> <p>Date of the next Corporate Parenting Event be included in the 2016-17 municipal year planner</p> <p>Copies of the photos be placed in Members</p>

It was identified that Care leavers were not ready to leave Care at the age of 16 and some Care leavers needed extra support and guidance on the journey through to adulthood.

Members expressed concerns that whilst listening to Care leavers share their personal experiences of leaving Care it emphasised that once a 16+ young person decided to leave Care, there was no option for them to return to their Foster Carer if they faced difficulties.

The group were informed that Care leavers were allocated a Personal Advisor who engaged with them until they reached the age of 21 years old. It was noted that a Specialist Care Leaving Nurse had recently started her post, and supported Care leavers with health issues.

Sheila Morris, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children, explained that there had been a shortage of Foster Carers and once a child left Care an alternative child was placed within the Foster home as soon as possible, which meant there was no longer a place available for the Care leaver.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised the group that not all Care leavers wanted to return to Foster Care as some of the young people had pre-arranged to share a flat with their friends.

It was emphasised that corporate parenting remained everyone's responsibility and the Leaving Care team worked hard to support Care leavers with budgeting skills, accommodation, employment etc.

Members heard that a training flat in the Borough would have been a great asset as it would give Care leavers an opportunity to experience living on their own prior to leaving Care.

The group were informed that the Blackburn with Darwen Foyer provided a similar service where young people received support for a short period of time before they actually moved into a flat or rented accommodation. It was suggested that as the Foyer had been over occupied it would be good practice to look at building another Foyer to support young people.

Cllr Jan-Virmani informed the group that he would take this suggestion to a future Licensing Committee for Members information.

Ben Aspinall informed the Members that he would undertake a research exercise across the Council to establish what services were available for Care leavers to access support and bring back the information to a future Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group.

	<p>Members heard that as outstanding education was key for young people, Blackburn College had invited UCLAN to attend Youth Action Plus to discuss further education with children in Care.</p> <p>3. Sara Barr-Frost, Senior Operating Officer, Children and Young People's Commissioning, gave a verbal update on the progress of GP's completing the Initial Health Assessments.</p> <p>The group were informed that an Initial Health Assessment had been carried out once a child came into Care.</p> <p>Sara explained that the Initial Health Assessment was usually completed by a doctor but sometimes it had been overlooked. The group were informed that there had been a robust agreement with East Lancashire Health Trust that if the doctors were unable to complete the assessment the ELHT would complete the assessment. This ensured that all children in Care had an Initial Health Assessment.</p> <p>Members noted that the Initial Health Assessment identified any underlying health issues that children in Care had.</p> <p>4. The Chair invited Abdul Ghiwala, Safeguarding Development Manager, to present the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report.</p> <p>The group held a detailed discussion and felt that the report gave good examples of multi agencies working together to obtain positive outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Members were informed that the LSCB would have 2 separate Ofsted inspections and as from November 2013 LSCBs would also be inspected by Ofsted, as part of the Local Authority inspection, to ensure they fulfilled their statutory objectives.</p> <p>It was noted that the LSCB had been preparing for a forthcoming inspection in which it would be inspected independently of the Local Authority.</p> <p>Members requested that the LSCB be invited to a future meeting to give an update on the Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>Karen Barrick informed the group that they had been invited to present the holistic strategy for LAC at the next regional summit for Looked After Children. This was in recognition to the positive data produced in relation to Looked After Children.</p> <p>Jo Siddle, Headteacher at St Thomas' Centre, suggested that an event be hosted at St Thomas' Centre where Care workers and Care leavers attended to emphasise the difficulties young people faced when they left Care.</p>	<p>A copy of the LSCB Annual Report be placed in Members Group rooms.</p> <p>Representative from LSCB be invited to a future meeting to present an update on the Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>Karen to be invited to a future meeting for update.</p>
--	---	--

Gavin informed the group that Foster Carers Association were holding a Christmas party for children in Care and it would be an ideal opportunity to meet children in Care.