

CORPORATE PARENTING SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP

Wednesday 20th October 2021

PRESENT – Councillors: Maureen Bateson, Katrina Fielding, Jackie Floyd, Julie Gunn, Tony Humphrys, Akhtar Hussain, Mohammed Irfan, Sylvia Liddle, Jane Oates, Zainab Rawat Phil Riley, Dave Smith, Brian Taylor, and Ron Whittle.

OFFICERS –

Jayne Ivory – Director Children's Services & Education

Judith Fennell – Head of Service Permanence and Corporate Parenting, Children's Services

Karen Barrick – Adoption Now

Helen Kane – Service Leader Placements, Children's Services

Lisa Dunkerley – Team Manager Fostering, Children's Services

Janette Clark – Strategic Head of Social Care, Children's Services

Joanne Siddle – Deputy Director, Schools & Education

Paula Quinn – FCA Committee

Sam Briggs – FCA Secretary

Elizabeth Clarkson – Participation & Inclusion Manager, Children's Services

Care Leaver - Vice Chair

Paul Conlon – Democratic Services

RESOLUTIONS

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies were received from the following Councillors: Salim Sidat, Desai, Mark Russell, Jon Baldwin, Abdul Patel, Stephanie Brookfield, Ron Whittle, Vicky McGurk, James Shorrocks, Lillian Salton, Zamir Khan, Parwaiz Akhtar, Iftakhar Hussain, Shaikat Hussain, John Slater, McFall, Jean Rigby, Kevin Connor, Jim Smith, Jackie Slater, Yusuf Jan-Virmani, Suleman Khonat and Jim Casey. Caroline Waldron, Anna Howarth, Angela Allen and Martin Eden.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on this Agenda

RESOLVED - There were no Declarations of Interest received.

3. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 27th July 2021

RESOLVED – The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27th July were approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

4. Introduction From Emma Ford, Deputy Director, Children's Social Care

The Group welcomed Emma to the meeting and were appraised of her role within the department.

5. Children and Young People's Participation Update 2021-24

The Chair gave an update on the Children and Young People's Participation and Voice Strategy. A copy of the Executive Summary was circulated setting out

- What participation means to Children and Young people
- How children and young people wanted us to work with them
- The Value and Attitudes, Knowledge, Skills and processes and the doing of what young people feel and think.
- How we will know we are making a difference, and,
- The Participation Pathway

Members commented on the positive, professional and clear way that this had been presented. The committee discussed the key messages of the strategy which were 'to do with not to' and how the key message of the strategy would be disseminated. Members agreed that if we all owned the strategy the message would get out.

RESOLVED - That the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2021-24 be endorsed and all those involved in the production be thanks for their hard work and clear product.

6. Corporate Parenting Strategy

The group were updated on the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The strategy set out the way that the council as corporate parents would look after children in our care and how we would give them the same level of care and support that we want to live to our own children. The strategy set out how we would seek to deliver to looked after children the very best chances in life. This meant we would:-

- Act in children's best interests at all times
- Promote children's physical and mental health wellbeing
- Encourage children to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- Take those views and wishes and feelings into account
- Make sure they could access the services that they need
- Encourage children to aim high and help them to achieve their goals
- Try and secure the best end results for them at all times
- Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

The strategy set out how the council will work with partners and service providers and would not be acting alone.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

7. Corporate Parenting Dashboard

The Group was presented with an update on the latest monitoring report of Children in Our Care as of the 3rd September 2021 and heard that the total number of children in care was 384. Of those, 45% were female and 55% were male.

Members noted the age profiles of children in care with 90 children aged between 15 to 17 years old. The group were informed of the age profile of the

children and the performance of the authority compared with national, regional and comparator averages.

Judith informed the Group that 79% of children in our care were of white / UK ethnicity.

Of the total number of Children in Our Care, Judith highlighted that a high proportion of children were placed in the following:- 113 were placed in in-house foster placements, 68 placed with family and friends, 65 placed with agency foster placements.

The Group then looked at the destinations of Care Leavers with 25% being placed on special guardianship, 21% had reached the age of 18 and 21% had returned to parents.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

8. Cared for Children from other Local Authorities place within Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

The group received an update on cared for children in the borough from other local authorities.

The Group were informed of the legal framework and obligations that related to placements out of borough and within another borough. Local arrangements were agreed through the North West Help and Protection forum complimented by the Children's Safeguard Assurance Partnership Contextual Safeguarding Task and Finish Group. Partner agency were represented from health, police and children's services including Engage. Notifications were collated from other local authorities and recorded. There was also a duty to inform Health Authorities however there was a lack of consistency with police being notified of children coming into Lancashire. The group were updated on the numbers of children placed within the borough and by which authority and the types of placements.

The group were informed that the CSAP Board had identified 3 strands of work that they would now undertake these were:-

- Expectations on Local Authority's placing in the area
- Our own approach to children placed in our area
- Our approach to placing outside the area.

The next steps would also include:-

- A mapping exercise and open communication with regulated and unregulated private providers to build working relationships
- Develop a pack that can be shared with children's homes outlining expectations.
- Develop a provider forum and communication strategy for residential children's homes (information pack)
- Improve health notifications and information sharing
- Develop standard response to Local Authority making inappropriate placements in the area.

The group looked at the process and how children were received into the borough services and the way that services were accessed.

RESOLVED - That the work be noted and that the group be updated on progress at regular intervals.

9. Foster Carer's Update

Paula Quinn was invited by the Chair to provide an update to the Group.

Paula informed the Group of the success of the event held at the Tipis at Riley Green on Sunday 5th September.pm. Performers Without Borders had been present at the event, with lots of fun activities for children, young people and families to participate in.

The arrangements for attendance at the pantomime were outlined.

Paula expressed her thanks to Elizabeth Clarkson for putting her in touch with organisers of the recent fun fair in Blackburn, who kindly provided free tickets. This was greatly appreciated and positive feedback was received from those who managed to go.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

Vote of thanks for the Chair

The group thanked the Chair for the articulate and inclusive way that he had chaired the meeting.

RESOLVED- That the thanks of the group to the Chair be recorded

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed