

CORPORATE PARENTING SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP

Monday 10th January 2022

PRESENT – *Councillors: Pat McFall (In the Chair), Parwaiz Akhtar, Maureen Bateson, Stephanie Brookfield, Jim Casey, Samim Desai, Katrina Fielding, Jackie Floyd, Julie Gunn, Akhtar Hussain, Iftakhar Hussain, Mahfooz Hussain, Shaukat Hussain, Mohammed Irfan, Yusuf Jan-Virmani, Mohammed Khan, Zamir Khan, Suleman Khonat, Sylvia Liddle, Vicky McGurk, Jane Oates, Zainab Rawat, Salim Sidat, Brian Taylor and Ron Whittle.*

OFFICERS –

Jayne Ivory – Director Children’s Services & Education

Emma Ford – Deputy Director, Children’s Social Care

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

Joanne Siddle – Deputy Director, Schools & Education

Alison Hartley – Team Manager, Childrens

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

Charlotte Hesketh – LAC Virtual Head & Assessment Officer, Education

Julie Edmonson – Leaving Care Personal Advisor

Care Leaver - Vice Chair

Paula Quinn – FCA Committee

Sam Briggs – FCA Secretary

Susan Clarke - Head of Safeguarding / Designated Nurse (Children), NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG

Amelia Brummit - Specialist Safeguarding Practitioner, NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG

RESOLUTIONS

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair Cllr Pat McFall, welcomed all present to the virtual meeting.

Apologies were received from Martin Eden and from the following Councillors: Dave Smith, Damian Talbot, Abdul Patel, Jean Rigby, Lilian Salton, Kevin Connor, Mark Russell, John Slater, Jacqueline Slater, Jim Smith.

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 20th October 2021

RESOLVED – The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th October 2021 were approved as a correct record with no matters arising.

4. Participation Update

The Vice-Chair informed the Group that since the last update plenty of activities had been taking place and there was also lots planned for the near future.

The VOICE Groups were starting to meet again, starting from this Thursday and one of the topics for discussion would be 'what makes a good social worker'.

A recent trip to London had been very well received, with young people visiting the Supreme Court and the London Eye. Unfortunately the House of Commons was closed due to renovations which was disappointing, but the Group used that time for team building activities as well as learning some very important life skills. The Group enjoyed the independence and also the time spent learning and helping each other develop.

The Group heard that further to some recent upgrades at Kaleidoscope, young people would now feel more comfortable and motivated as they had assisted with how they would like it to look and feel.

Liz Clarkson informed the Group that Kaleidoscope was now being utilised more as a venue for various meetings and the Group agreed that it would be nice to have a CPSAG meeting there in the future.

The Group also heard that a group of leaving care young people would be discussing how to access information and how this could be improved. Young people felt this was very important to work on as not only would it help them but also younger people requesting access now and in the future.

Finally the Group were informed that the young people were also looking forward to re-establishing the Respect training. Liz was working hard behind the scenes to ensure that this happened so that young people with lived experience can provide training for social workers, foster carers and corporate parents.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

5. Corporate Parenting Dashboard

The Group was presented with an update from Judith Fennell on the latest monitoring report of Children in Our Care as of the 2nd December 2021, and heard that the total number of children in care was 393.

Of those, 46% were female and 54% were male. Members noted the age profiles of children in care with 108 children aged between 15 to 17 years old. 76 children were aged between 12 to 14 years, 48 children aged between 9 to 11 years, 49 children aged between 6 to 8 years, 45 children aged between 3 to 5 years and 67 children aged between 0 to 2 years. The Group then looked and the age range of children entering care between December 2020 and November 2021.

Judith informed the Group that 78% of children in our care were of white / UK ethnicity followed by 9% being Asian / Pakistani ethnicity.

Of the total number of Children in Our Care, Judith highlighted that a high proportion of children were placed in the following:- 118 were placed in in-house foster placements, 66 placed with parents, 63 placed with family and friends, 68 placed with agency foster placements. The total number of children entering care in 2021 was 108 and the number of children leaving care was

86. This figure was less than normal and this was possibly due to the delays in court proceedings caused by covid.

The Group then looked at the destinations of Care Leavers with 21% being placed on special guardianship, 6% had reached the age of 18, 23% had returned to parents, 7% had moved in with relatives and 19% had been adopted.

Judith highlighted our performance against the national, regional and comparator averages with the Group noting that the number of children in our care was higher than the national and regional averages.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

6. Oral Health Update

The Chair welcomed Amelia Brummitt, Acting Deputy Designated Nurse, to the meeting who provided an update on the current position to the Group.

The Group heard that information had been gathered from key people who were involved with dental and oral health for children in our care.

Amelia informed the Group that the poor state of dental health for our looked after children and care leavers was discussed at a BwD Dental Looked After Children Performance meeting. In that meeting, it was discussed that a significant number of looked after children did not appear to have attended a dental appointment within the last 6 months. It was queried if this was a recording or a reporting issue, given that the Government required an annual dental check and that this could be a possible explanation as to why BwD had lower figures than their neighbouring authorities regarding dental dates.

Amelia confirmed that the requirement was for an annual dental health assessment only for those children who had been looked after children for 12 months or more.

It was noted that BwD was one of the more deprived local authorities in England with the highest rate of dental decay and that the BwD Oral Health Improvement Partnership Strategy 2021-2026 which was shared by Shane Morgan (Dental Surgeon / Education Supervisor for Education North West / Chair of the Local Dental Network Lancashire and South Cumbria) was very much welcomed. Shirley Goodhew (Consultant in Public Health) had also shared the Oral Health Improvement training for frontline workers to the Corporate Parenting Executive Board.

The Group heard that the role of the Enhanced LAC Nurse Team in addressing any dental issues, was:-

- To support School Nurses and Health Visitors in ensuring that all looked after children are registered with a dentist, including the Specialist Dental Service if this is required and an awareness of accessing emergency dental treatment for looked after children and care leavers and;
- To ensure that oral health promotion is discussed as part of the statutory health assessment process, this is audited as part of the quality assurance process undertaken by the Enhanced LAC Nurses.

Amelia informed the Group that NHS England were responsible for commissioning all primary, specialist, and hospital preventative and clinical care for oral conditions. This included general dental practices and community dental services and both hospital inpatient and outpatient care. The Group heard that the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene for looked after children was incorporated into the bespoke training package devised and facilitated by the Enhanced LAC Nurses, this was available to all health practitioners who were responsible for undertaking statutory health assessments for looked after children.

Amelia highlighted some of the dental data collated in December 2021 and it was noted that the data was based on one day and whilst it did not evidence data for a comparative figure with other Local Authorities it did provide an overall recorded picture.

From the data the 6 month figure was:

Out of 376 children, 225 had out of time checks. Of these 29 were highlighted as having covid impact. As a percentage (including the one year olds) this was 57% out of time or 43 % in time.

The 12 month data was:

Out of 392 children (including under ones) 109 were recorded as out of date of the 12 months (28%) which would mean that 283 or 72% were within the year.

A follow up meeting was planned to further discuss the figures and recording but also to discuss the best way of following up those children and young people who had been highlighted as out of date for a dental check.

Following on from the data that was received, information was sought from NHS England who were the lead commissioners for dental, enquiring what was the current dental offer and expectation for dentists to be seeing Looked after Children. The response received back was that ordinarily (non-covid), the frequency of which a child should see a dentist (often referred to as 'recall interval') was determined by their oral health risk score. Dental teams were following the national guidance 'Delivering Better Oral Health' which would help support decision making for a clinically appropriate recall interval, with normal recall intervals being from 3-12 months. However, currently (during COVID) dental teams were following interim guidance which accommodated the reduction in capacity due to COVID that the teams were working through. This interim guidance meant that routine recalls were deferred or stretched to longer periods to enable a clinical prioritisation of patients who were in more urgent need of care.

It was also noted that there was a network of urgent care centres across the ICS to ensure all patients had access to urgent care and pain relief within 24 hours of first contact, and there was a pilot up and running for stabilisation of children's oral health who needed follow up care having had an urgent intervention but did not have dentists.

Amelia then informed the Group of the next steps going forward:

- Oral health to be added into the health section of the Corporate Parenting Strategy following the workshop held at the end of the last Corporate Parenting Executive Board

- An update has been requested from the children's commissioners at the CCG in relation to elements of the oral health strategy for an update on their involvement
- To add oral health to the Health Sub-Group as an action and to continue to monitor and consider who is best placed from Public Health to attend if this is going to be added
- To liaise with Public Health and NHS England as required as they are lead commissioners for Dental and Public Health
- To have a follow up meeting regarding the data following review and to discuss how to follow up those who have been identified as out of time dental checks
- The Rossendale Dental Pilot was ongoing which both NHS England commissioners and lead dentist for the ICS were involved in. The hope was that following the pilot this would be rolled out support and prioritise our children in our care dental needs. (for information it commenced in Rossendale due to the dentist coming forward and identifying the need and therefore commenced in his area).

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

7. Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2020-21

Further to the detailed report that was circulated with the agenda, Charlotte Hesketh provided an overview of the Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report for 2020-21.

The Group was informed of the background and the purpose of the report with the key responsibilities being highlighted.

Charlotte drew the Group's attention to next steps and areas for development as highlighted below:

1. *Ensure that CIOC attendance is closely monitored following the disruption due to the Covid 19 pandemic with a clear plan for those where issues arise*
2. *Implement systems to monitor and promote educational attainment and achievements of CIOC and care leavers to improve outcomes, which include reviewing the 'recovery' support in place in their schools*
3. *Develop and implement specific systems and process for monitoring VS SEND pupils with/or potentially in need of an EHCP, wherever they live or are educated*
4. *To improve practice and outcomes through high quality PEPs, effectively delivered and monitored*
5. *Pupil Premium Plus policy is implemented to ensure its use has clear impact on the outcomes for our CIOC*
6. *CIOC and PLAC make good progress through supported, trained and developed Virtual School staff/governors, designated teachers, social workers and parents/carers.*
7. *Give priority support to CIOC and care leavers aged 14-18 to increase education, employment and training (EET) activity*

8. *Ensure Virtual School staff have a safe working environment and opportunities for professional development*
9. *Implement a new service offer for our previously looked after children*
10. *Further develop our understanding of the specific educational needs of BwD children with a social worker and implement a response to the new duties for Virtual Schools.*

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

8. Overview of Celebration of Achievement 2021

Charlotte Hesketh provided an update to the Group on the annual Celebration of Achievement for Children in our Care and Care Leavers, which took place on 1st December 2021.

It was great to return to a face to face event at Ewood Park, after an online celebration last year. Children and young people in care and care leavers who attended were nominated for awards by their carers, schools, Children's Services and Education staff in the categories of, academic achievement / progress, attendance, behaviour, sport, music/the arts and making a positive contribution. In addition, there were a number of special awards for those who had particularly excelled in these areas.

Those who were now University students and those who had gained apprenticeships – 2 within the council, were also celebrated.

Although the event was smaller this year in terms of numbers due to maintaining a Covid safety there were 120 people comprising of children and young people in care and care leavers, foster carers, parents, Mayor and Mayoress, Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and a range of officers from Children's Services Department. Those who were not able to attend were able to join via a secure livestream.

The special guest for the evening and presenting the awards was comedian and actor Ted Robbins and there was a visit from Santa. At the end of the evening, a special performance from one of our young people was provided. The event was proudly sponsored by OSMIS Education Limited and the John Bury Trust. As well as receiving a certificate and gift voucher, children and young people were also provided with a gift from Santa.

The event had been very well received and the next one was already being planned.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

9. Care Leaver's Update

The Chair welcomed Alison Hartley to the Group who provided an update on care leavers who attended university and the support they received whilst at university.

Alison informed the Group that currently, there were 19 young people at University, all at various stages. 7 young people were new starters, 7 young

people were in the second year, 5 young people were in the last year and one young person had an internship.

Young people were allocated a Personal Advisor until they finished their degree. They received a £2000 bursary at the start of the degree, how this is spent is discussed with the young person and the detailed spend is documented in their Pathway Plan.

Alison further informed the Group that the care leaver's accommodation costs are also paid for, and that this can range from the Halls of Residence to staying put to Shared Accommodation or Independent living. It was noted that young people are still be able to access their Leaving Care grant if needed.

The Group was informed that Personal Advisors support the young people with the move to University and holiday returns. They continue to have a pathway plan throughout their degree period and once the degree is completed, the PA will support with accommodation and support in to work.

Following the update provided by Alison, Julie Edmonson (Personal Advisor) joined the meeting and provided the Group with a detailed case study on one young person's academic journey. Alison and Julie were thanked by the Group for their presentation.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

10. Foster Carer's Update

Paula and Sam were invited by the Chair to provide an update from Foster Carers.

Paula informed the Group that 204 children had been taken to the Christmas panto and everyone that attended had an amazing time. Local shops had donated selection boxes for the children which had been very well received.

The Group heard that the Christmas Party had also been a successful event, held at the Legends Lounge at Ewood Park, with approximately 200 attending. The evening was packed with lots of entertainment including a DJ, Tim Perkins, Santa, Circus, and an outside fire display.

It was hoped that a similar event would be able to take place in Spring 2022 with a focus on fundraising and also using the event as a recruitment opportunity too.

Paula highlighted that the Celebration of Achievement was a great event, especially as it was held in person. Paula expressed her thanks to Charlotte and also Liz for securing Kaleidoscope as the venue.

The Group were informed that Foster Carers were concerned about the lack of out of hours support that could be tapped into. Jayne informed Paula and Sam that Judith and Helen would look into this. The Chair asked that an update on this be brought back to the next meeting.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted and that an update of out of hours contacts for foster carers, be provided at the next meeting.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed