

# **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**PRESENT** – **Councillors**, Julie Gunn, Sylvia Liddle, Anthony Shaw, Vicky McGurk, Matthew Jackson,

## **OFFICERS –**

Imran Akuji – Head of Partnerships, Intensive Support, Policy & Performance

Mark Warren – Strategic Director, Adults & Health

Joanne Siddle – Strategic Director, Children Services

Emma Ford – Deputy Director, Children’s Social Care (Deputy DCS)

Michelle Holt – Deputy Director, Education & Schools (Deputy DCS)

Suzanne Kinder – Head of Corporate Parenting & Performance

Andrew Bradbury – Service Lead CIOC, BwD,

Clare Bibby – Service Lead- Adolescent Services and Intensive Support

Simon Ross – Head of Services Finance, Place and Corporate

Roisa McCusker – YPS Care Leavers

Paula Quinn – FCA Vice Chair

Leon Crosby – Operational Director - Blackburn Youth Zone

Nicola Hulme – Assistant Headteacher - St Thomas' Centre (PRU)

Caroline Waldron – Designated Nurse for Children in Care and Care leavers

Clair Richardson – Designated Nurse for Children in Care and Care leavers

Shelly Sarwar – Governance Support Officer

## **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair, Cllr Julie Gunn (Executive Member, Children’s, Young People & Education) welcomed all present in the meeting and introduced herself.

Apologies were received from Cllr Shaukat Hussain, Cllr Mustafa Desai, Cllr Elaine Whittingham, Cllr Brian Taylor and Cllr Jackie Floyd, Apologies were also received from Andrea Sturgess, Charlotte Hesketh, Corinne McMillan, Louise Hartley, Stephanie Armes, Kirsty Cleary, and Hannah Allen.

The Chair explained to the members that the main purpose for choosing Kaleidoscope Youth Centre as the venue was to encourage participation from young people, see the young people’s workshop and showcase the good services, we are delivering at Kaleidoscope Youth Centre.

Cllr Gunn advised the members that there was going to be a role play activity planned for the members, so they fully understand, relate, and see the impact.

**RESOLVED** – The update be noted.

**2. Minutes of Previous meeting:**

**RESOLVED** – The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved as a correct record.

**3. Declarations of interest:**

Cllr Vicky McGurk declared a permanent interest for this committee as a Borough Foster Carer

**RESOLVED** – The Declaration be noted.

**4. Young People's Led Session Supported by YPS**

Roisa McCusker and other Young People from YPS introduced themselves to the group. Roisa explained to the group that YPS had arranged two activities for members to have a better insight. Consent for photographs was taken prior to the activity.

The first activity was called "I believe" in which all the CPP members were asked their opinion on whether they strongly agreed, strongly disagreed or neither with a statement from looked after children and young people when they were consulted by the children's rights alliance for England when developing the total respect training pack.

During the activity there were conversations between the members regarding the statements, there were discussions around different point of views and various professionals learned from each other's prospectus which had raised everybody's awareness and understanding. Members expressed that they really enjoyed the activity and gave positive feedback.

The second activity was Molly's story (The role was played by a Young Person) All the members of CPP were given name tags and allocated a role of a person from Molly's story that were working with Molly in the story. The role play was planned for members so they could have a better understanding and experience. The story highlighted the different transitions and difficulties that children in care can go through and the lack of decision making or consultations they have.

There were also discussions around how these adverse childhood experiences were going to have a long-term impact on Molly's later life. That she would find it difficult to trust people, professionals and find it difficult to manage relationships.

At the end of the activity all members highlighted that they felt affected by the story and discussed how they could avoid certain aspects and what support could have been given to children in Molly's situation.

At the end of the session, it was summarised by the YP representatives what they believe corporate parents should do to support them.

Young People don't expect or want their corporate parents to replace their real parents/families, but they should provide the same level of care and support to allow every young person to have a comfortable upbringing as possible whilst given the same opportunities as any other child. Below are some of the quotes from Young People:

"My Social worker keeps changing, I've had about ten social workers and I don't like how they keep changing".

"I like to be given an explanation as to why things happen or why things don't happen".

"I think corporate parents should provide basic necessities for their kids like accommodation, education & provide an engaging environment".

"I want to feel like I am heard and given support where I need it".

"I want my Corporate Parents to respect my wishes, now to be treated as a number on a spreadsheet as I don't have the same needs as another young person in care. I think sometimes some of my Corporate Parents focus too much on me being a so-called child in care and not simply as a child with a difficult upbringing".

"My corporate parents should be nice, approachable, respectful and get to know me, so they know what I do and don't like."

"My corporate parents should respect my wishes and have my best interest at heart."

Cllr Sylvia Liddle commented that the key thing was for us corporate parents to ensure that it is good enough for our own children only than it would be for children in our care.

**RESOLVED** – The update be noted.

## **5. Terms of Reference (TOR)**

**A report was submitted by Imran Akuji, Head of Partnerships, Intensive Support, Policy and Performance, regarding the Terms of Reference for Corporate Parenting Partnership.**

**Vision:** Every child and young person to have opportunities to fulfil their potential

TOR was put forward to the partnership group. Julie Gunn given opportunity to all the members for their feedback or if they would like to change /improve anything.

It was suggested that the review of performance date should be mentioned.it was also suggested that there should be some info around all ethnicities involvement and full disability inclusion. It should be noted that how it links in supporting and safeguarding children.

It was highlighted by Cllr Sylvia Liddle that just a few bits are still red need sorting and finalizing by putting in relevant data.

It was also brought into attention that there should be some representation from Foster Carers.

**RESOLVED** – The update be noted.

## **6. Service and Performance Update – Leaving Care, CIOC**

Andrew Bradbury, Service Lead presented a presentation on service and performance update. It was highlighted that:

### **Children In Our Care and Care Leavers:**

- We have several key data points in relation to our looked after children/ young people which we use to inform service delivery, including future planning. This is the second time we have presented our information in this format.
- In order to give meaning to this data it is vital we consider this data in context. Primarily we do this through considering the progress we have made in relation to our own historical data and through considering how we compare to our statistical neighbors.

### **Rate per 10k of CLA (Children Looked After):**

- March 22 – 97
- July 23 – 85
- February 24 – 84
- Statistical Neighbour Average – 92
- There are currently **352** children/ young people in our care which has increased from **337** in July 2023.
- **220** of these children and young people a current plan of permanence to remain in the care of the Local Authority.

### **Number of children living in children's homes:**

- March 22 – 35
- July 23 – 19
- March 24 – 31
- **15** young people have been placed into residential homes since July 2023.

- 7 of which are newly looked after young people subject to Interim Care Orders, 8 were existing looked after young people, 2 are children with severe or profound disabilities.
- 3 have stepped up from foster care due to increased level of need.

**Percentage of children in foster care:**

- March 22 – 66%
- July 23 – 66%
- February 24 – 70%
- Statistical Neighbour Average, 69%

**Number of children in Foster Care (includes Family & Friends & Reg 24 and excludes those in Independent Fostering Agency, Foster Care):**

- March 22 – 186
- July 23 – 159
- January 24 – 116

**Number of children in care placed in Independent Fostering Agency, Foster Care (includes Private, Other LA, and Voluntary/Third Sector Provision):**

- March 22 – 71
- July 23 – 63
- Jan 24 – 64

**Number of children in care placed at home with parents:**

- March 22 – 50
- July 23 – 35
- March 24 – 27
- With only 18 children (12 families) placed with parents subject to full Care Orders). Three of these have stepped down from foster care.

**The experiences and progress of children in care**

- Making good decisions for children
- Participation and direct work with children in care
- Helping and protecting
- Health
- Learning and enjoyment
- Stability and permanence

Clare Bibby, Service Lead- Adolescent Services and Intensive Support presented leaving care Service presented a presentation on leaving care.

**What does the Leaving Care team do?**

- We are 'corporate parents' which means, it is our responsibility to be good parents to all young people/ adults in our care up to the age of 25.
- Being a good parent means keeping all our children, young people / adults safe and providing them with the highest possible level of support to meet their individual needs.

- The Leaving Care service support, advise and guide young people/ adults 15 ¾ to 25 to access housing, education and training, work experience and health services by the way of a pathway plan.
- We give advice, encouragement, and financial advice to help young people / adults make the most of their journey through the care system.
- Inform our young people/ adults of their rights and entitlements.
- Create stability and support to enable young people / adults to progress; and help them to access new opportunities and experiences that inspire them to set ambitious goals for themselves

### **Leaving Care ILACS**

- Ofsted introduced their new, separate judgement to the framework for inspecting local authority children's services (ILACS) specifically about the experiences and progress of care leavers in January 2023. The new judgement focuses on the things that matter most to care leavers' lives. The evaluation criteria can be broken down into the following main areas:
  - relationships and participation
  - health and emotional well-being
  - local offer
  - good decisions
  - helping and protecting
  - employment, education, and training
  - support into adulthood.

### **Service Updates**

- University for care leavers we currently have 17 young people attending university, with 1 young person successfully securing a year abroad on his studies in Oklahoma USA in accountancy.
- The leaving care service has had a full review since the last Ofsted Inspection in Jan 22.
- We continue to be on our improvement journey, we know our narrative, and we know our journey.
- We have a dedicated Virtual College to support our most vulnerable young people / adults into EET up to the age of 25 years.
- The most recent weekly data from 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024, tells us we have 343 care leavers aged 16-25 open to the leaving care team either as an allocated PA under 18 years or as the Allocated worker post 18 years.
- The number of young people open to the service has increased over the past 6 months, however, to note within the past 6-month period there have been 51 young adults who have chosen to 'step away' from the service. These Young adults are aware that they can return to the service at any point they chose for support up to the age of 25 years.

### **Data**

- 94% of 17–18-year-old care leavers live in suitable accommodation; we are actively working alongside the 6% which equates to 2 young people.
- 87% of 19-21 yr. olds live in suitable accommodation again we are working alongside the 13% which equates to 8 young people.

- 99% of 22–25-year-old care leavers live in suitable accommodation the 1% which equates to 2 young adults that are in unsuitable we continue to support them with plans to secure suitable accommodation.

### **Education, Employment and Training**

- The most recent data from the end of February 24 shows care leavers aged 17-18 in Education, Employment and Training (EET) has risen to 67% since over the past 6 months from 49%.
- Care leavers aged 19-21 in Education, Employment and Training has also increased over the past 6 months from 36% to 44%.

**RESOLVED** – The update be noted.

## **7. Corporate Parenting Strategy**

Suzanne Kinder presented the corporate parenting strategy and highlighted the following key points and 5 priorities to the members.

### **Co – Producing our strategy:**

We have collaborated with children in our care, young people, and care leavers to develop our Corporate Parenting Strategy, which they have re-branded. We are grateful for the time they have spent reflecting on the themes to bring this strategy to life. It is admirable how our young people want to support others coming up through the care system and help make their experiences better.

We know that our children, young adults, and care leavers want to see the results of this work, because it is actions not words that matter. They will be involved and invited along to our Corporate Parenting Partnership and hold us to our commitments.

### **Blackburn with Darwen Mission Statement**

#### **Our core missions.**

- A more prosperous borough where no one is left behind.
- Every child and young person to have opportunities to fulfil their potential.
- Deliver our climate emergency action plan.
- Build happier, healthier and safer communities.

## **Our Values - Proud to be BwD.**

- Trust: We believe in and can rely on each other.
- Respect: We embrace diversity and value our differences.
- Ambition: We have the courage to try new things and strive to be better.
- Collaboration: We achieve more by working together.
- Kindness: We are self-aware and considerate in all that we do

## **Our outcomes**

- If we are making progress on our missions, we will see:
- Fewer people living in deprivation.
- Increased life expectancy
- Borough closer to carbon neutral
- Higher educational attainment
- More people who need help or support continuing to live in their own homes.

**To help achieve our missions, the Council will be innovative forward thinking and tackle the budget challenge.**

## **Our children and Education Priorities**

### **Stable homes built on love:**

We will deliver a transformation programme over the next 12 months to support the delivery of services in line with Working Together and the mapped needs of our communities.

### **Right Support, Right Time**

We will review and redesign our pathways to services to enable better aligned approach to service delivery.

### **Transitions for all ages and needs**

By prioritising transitions, we can support children in navigating changes effectively and setting them up for success in their educational and personal journeys.

### **Reaching full potential**

Delivery involves providing children and young people with the necessary resources, opportunities, and support to develop their skills, talents, and abilities.



### **We are Systemic**

Delivering systemic practice in children's services is crucial for promoting holistic and effective support for children and their families.

### **Best Start in Life**

Delivering the best start in life is crucial for setting children on a path of healthy development and well-being.

### **Our Priorities to our Children, Young People and Care Leavers**

We have obtained feedback from children, young people and care leavers gathered through several focussed groups. With children who are currently in our care, care leavers as well as members of the 'voice group':

#### **Priority 1 – Identity – “We all have different realities, identities and relationships which impact our lives.”**

We will celebrate individuality, champion diversity, and inclusion. We will help them to understand why they came to be looked after and celebrate the differences that make everyone unique and develop self-esteem.

#### **Priority 2: Health & Wellbeing for our Children and Young people**

We will support improvements in the physical, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing, by promoting access to local health services, to support healthy choices and develop skills to manage their own health.

#### **Priority 3 – Stable Homes – “I feel safe, I feel at home when I’m living with you”.**

We will provide a range of positive, safe, stable homes that adequately meets need.

#### **Priority 4 – Learning - “I need a good education so that I can have a good career.”**

We will ensure learning takes place, be ambitious and have high aspirations so that potential is achieved in school, college, university, training, and employment.

#### **Priority 5 – Independence – “I want the right support from the right people, to make sure that by the time I am twenty - five, I have the awareness and understanding to live independently.”**

We will ensure that preparation for adulthood and independence is successful with young adults who feel confident to succeed in life.

**Young People thoughts on the corporate parenting strategy:**

The Young People thought that the strategy was over complicated and too long. Suggested there being a shorter (around 2 pages) strategy that more “Young People” friendly. The majority if not all the young people agreed with the priorities and the pledges but felt that there could be improvements. Following are some of the quotes from young people.

“I think the strategy should be reviewed more often, especially the statistics”.

“there’s too much information some of which I don t understand, we should design our own summary”.

“I liked the colours, photos and quotes”.

“In the pledges I appreciate that I will be listened to able to talk freely but I would also like to be promised more guidance and support for day-to-day situations so I am comfortable that when I am over 25, I will be able to live independently”.

**RESOLVED** – The update be noted.

**8. Any Other Business**

The Chair confirmed the date for the next meeting as 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and thanked everyone for attending.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
at which the minutes were confirmed