

**CORPORATE PARENTING
SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP
4TH JULY 2018**

PRESENT – Cllrs Gunn (Chair), Bateson, Casey, Holling, Liddle, A Patel, D Smith Surve, Taylor and Whittle

Also Present –

Jeanette Richards	Strategic Head of Social Care
Robert Arrowsmith	Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance (Children's Services)
Charlotte Hesketh	LAC Virtual Head and Assessment Officer
Dumindu Ratnaweera	Designated Medical Practitioner
Sharon Burns	Chair of Foster Carers Association
Samantha Briggs	Secretary of Foster Carers Association
Gavin Redhead	Children and Young People's Participation Officer
Rebecca McPartlan	Leaving Care Personal Advisor
Tracy Mosley	Fostering Support Officer
Lisa Middleton	Social Worker
Firoza Hafeji	Governance Officer

RESOLUTIONS

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group. Apologies were received from Cllrs Afzal and Harling. Apologies were also received from Joanne Siddle, Patricia Harrison and Linda Clegg.

RESOLVED –

That the apologies be noted.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on the 18th December 2017

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2017 be agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair subject to Item 2, 4th Paragraph to read Independent Reviewing Officer.

3. Gamechanger Conference

The Chair welcomed Gavin Redhead, Children and Young People's Participation Officer, and members of the Voice group to share an interactive presentation which was produced for the Gamechanger Conference held on 4th November 2017 at Blackpool Pleasure Beach.

Members heard that a pre-event online survey was carried out and the responses from the survey were shared. At the conference 180 young people and 24 practitioners attended.

Key messages from the survey were shared as:

- Contact with siblings helps with young people’s mental health, sense of identity and belonging
- Having a key trusted adult can help resolve problems and they can also become an advocate
- Safe and Free from bullying
- Being trusted and valued
- Staying at the same place where the young people are currently living in care is really important
- Keeping the same social worker as long as possible is important

Recommendations from the conference were shared as:

- Corporate Parents should discuss the top 4 themes locally
- A pledge should be created to address the 4 themes
- There should be local, regional and national responses to the report
- A follow up conference should take place in November 2018, to see what action had been taken

The key question from the young people was, *“What will you, our Corporate Parents, do in response to the feedback from the Gamechanger Conference?”*. A detailed discussion took place regarding the question from the young people and it was suggested that a survey be sent to young people to get their opinions on what their top issues were. It was agreed that an update report was to be brought back to a future meeting to highlight outcomes from the survey.

RESOLVED –

1. That the members of the Voice group and the Children and Young People’s Participation Officer be thanked for the detailed presentation.
2. An update report to be brought back to a future meeting.

4. Children Services Ofsted Report

The Chair welcomed Cllr Maureen Bateson, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, Robert Arrowsmith, Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance and Jeannette Richards, Strategic Head of Social Care to share a presentation on the Children’s Services Ofsted Report.

Members were informed that the Full Council had considered the Ofsted inspection review that had taken place in Autumn 2017. Members noted the presentation which highlighted that the Council had been rated overall ‘GOOD’. The overall judgements were shared as:

Children’s Services overall	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement
The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence	Good
- Adoption performance	Good

- The experience and progress of care leavers	Good
Leadership, management and governance	Good
Local Safeguarding Children Board	Good

Members were taken through the strengths that had been highlighted by the Ofsted inspection; alongside some of the key issues that the Council needed to address. It was noted that the Children's Services budget was a major concern and the Director of Children's Services had started a review to focus on how the department were able to work differently with the resources available.

Members were informed of the next steps for consideration of the review and heard that from the nine recommendations outlined in the Ofsted report, an action plan with realistic timescales had been produced which was shared with Members.

The Strategic Head of Social Care explained what life-story work and later-life letters involved and highlighted that delivering this action was challenging due to shortage of social workers and high workload. It was noted that due to the pressure of budgets the department were forced to choose between services which were essential but safeguarding children would always be a priority.

Foster Carers explained that the young people in care had requested that the life story work be carried out by foster carers. It was proposed that relevant training be provided to foster carers who would then be able to deliver the life story work. It was noted that this would help alleviate some of the pressure from the social workers. A discussion took place and it was agreed that the Executive Member of Children, Young People and Education would discuss this further with the relevant department.

RESOLVED –

That the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance and the Strategic Head of Social Care be thanked for their presentation.

5. Virtual Headteacher update

The Chair welcomed Charlotte Hesketh, Looked After Children's Virtual Head and Assessment Officer to present an update on Children in Our Care and their attainment data.

Members were provided with a presentation which gave an insight into the attainment data for BwD Children in Our Care (CIOC) compared to national results.

Members heard that there were 16 young children in care who formed the KS1 cohort in 2017, 11 (69%) attended primary schools in Blackburn with Darwen. 1 child in the group (6%) had an Education, Health and Care Plan and 2 (13%) children were recorded as SEN Support, this was reflected in the outcomes achieved. Writing was shown to be the strongest area for BwD CIOC and Maths the weakest when compared to all children in BwD and those nationally. It was noted that overall performance was relatively strong for Key Stage 1.

There were 22 children in care who formed the KS2 cohort in 2017, 17 of these sat the end of Key Stage tests with 5 children being dis-applied or not eligible to take the tests. 15 (68%) of the cohort were educated in BwD primary schools at the time of taking the tests. 8 children in the group (36%) had either a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 6 (27%) are recorded as SEN support, this was reflected in the outcomes achieved. Writing was shown to be the weakest subject area for BwD CIOC when compared to all children in BwD and Maths was the strongest area.

In 2017, BwD had 33 CIOC eligible to take GCSE and other public examinations. 64% of these young people received their education within the Borough. Of the Year 11 cohort, 6 (18%) who had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In addition a further 10 (30%) were recorded as SEN Support. It was noted that 64% (21) of the cohort came into care during secondary school.

At the time of taking their GCSE examinations, 3 (10%) young people in care achieved at least 5 A*- C GCSEs, including Maths and English. One of these young people achieved 10 GCSEs at Grade 4/C and above, another achieved 8 and a third achieved 7 GCSEs. 7 young people regularly attended GCSE revision sessions run by the Virtual School at the Kip McGrath centre. 3 achieved grade 4 or above in English and /or Maths. 17.39% (4) met the new GCSE threshold measure for GCSE in English and Maths at Grade C or above. 24% (8) young people achieved a Grade 4 or higher in English and 30% (10) achieved this in Maths. 15% (5) young people achieved the new measure of Grade 4 or higher in both English and Maths

Members heard that all CIOC from reception to Year 11 received pupil premium plus funding at the full £2300 per pupil rate regardless of where they live or were educated. This was distributed by the Virtual School on a termly basis on receipt of a fully completed Personal Education Plan (PEP). It was noted that PEP's were completed on a termly basis.

The Group heard that the next step was to find a method of categorising and recording the individual pupil level use of pupil premium plus against attainment and progress data which was recorded in SIMS so that the impact was evidenced more clearly for individuals and groups. It was noted that mandatory training was provided to all designated teachers and social workers to help support pupils obtain their SMART targets.

RESOLVED –

That the Looked After Children's Virtual Head and Assessment Officer be thanked for the presentation.

6. Monitoring Report: Children in Our Care

The Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance provided a presentation on the latest monitoring report for Children in Our Care.

The presentation identified that the number of Children in Care had decreased since the last report from 398 to 350 with more males (59%) than females (41%) in care, 79% of whom were defined as White British.

It was noted that there were 85 children in care within the age range of 15 to 17 years old. A small proportion of children leaving care received support from adult social care.

RESOLVED –

That the Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance be thanked for the detailed presentation.

Signed.....

Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed

Date.....