

CORPORATE PARENTING SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP

Wednesday, 10 October 2018

PRESENT – Councillors Gunn (Chair), Afzal, Bateson, Davies, Fazal, Jan-Virmani, Kay, Khan, Liddle, McGurk, Oates, Riley, Smith, Surve, Taylor and Whittle.

OFFICERS –

Jayne Ivory Director of Children Services & Education
Robert Arrowsmith Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance - Children Services,
Janette Clarke Head of Permanence
Imran Akuji Head of Adolescent Services
Stefanie Baron HR Manager
Rebecca McPartlan Leaving Care Personal Advisory
Matthew LC Young Person
Caroline Waldron Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children & LAC
Samantha Briggs Secretary of Foster Carers Association
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 Khonat, McFall, Casey, Floyd, Julie Slater and J Rigby. Apologies were also received from Sharon Burns.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2018

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair subject to removal of Cllr Holling from the attendance list.

3 Introduction of the new Director of Children's Services and Head of Permanence

The Chair welcomed Jayne Ivory, Director of Children's Services and Jeanette Clarke, Head of Permanence to introduce themselves whilst providing an insight into their professional background. Members noted that the Corporate Parenting Strategy was currently being revised and once the key documents were co-produced they would be brought to the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group for reviewing.

4 Focus Update on Children Services Ofsted Report with regard to improving work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for Care Leavers

The Chair welcomed Stephanie Baron, HR Manager, Rebecca McPartlan, Leaving Care Personal Advisor and Matthew, young person from Care Leavers to share a presentation on Apprenticeship for Care Leavers.

Members were reminded that they were Corporate Parents to approximately 380 children and young people. Following the Ofsted inspection in September/October 2017 one of the recommendations highlighted was to “Improve work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for care leavers” a group of 110 young people aged 18-21.

The Council’s vision was shared as “Care Leavers having the support they need to be able to obtain meaningful employment that matches their aspirations with employers who understand their needs”. To achieve the vision a strategy was created with included five commitments as:

1. Guarantee all our Care Leavers an interview for our Corporate Apprenticeship scheme
2. Support young people to identify their aspirations and ensure opportunities match with what they want
3. Safeguard a number of Corporate Apprentice positions just for our Care Leavers
4. Deliver a 6 week Traineeship to help all identified Care Leavers gain as much knowledge, skills and experience to help them with their interview and assessment for an Apprenticeship position
5. Offer effective work experience placements that are meaningful, supportive and accommodating whilst acknowledging some of the challenges that will be faced along the way

The steps taken to ensure this was achieved were shared with Members. It was noted that in May 2018 14 young people were selected as being work ready and willing which included 11 male and 3 females. Out of the 14 who started the Traineeship 9 completed it and went onto receive their Certificate in Employability and have now progressed into work or study.

Matthew shared his story as a Care Leaver and elaborated on how it had a positive impact on his life.

Next steps were shared as:

- 12 week Traineeship being developed with Blackburn Rovers Trust for ages 16 – 17 to start end of October – then Feb 2019 for over 18s
- Employment and Skills Board – action for them to look now for opportunities with local employers
- BwD Council piloting a new approach to work experience which is more topic based and want to trial with Care Leavers
- Opportunity to run the 6 week scheme with T2000 again in May/June 2019

RESOLVED – That Members thanked Stephanie Baron, HR Manager, Rebecca McPartlan, Leaving Care Personal Advisor and Matthew for the comprehensive presentation, which was noted.

5 Update on the Residential Review

The Chair welcomed Imran Akuji, Head of Adolescent Services to share a presentation on the review of residential services.

Members were taken through the adolescent strategic aims and objectives and the key issues and challenges were shared as:

- Substance misuse
- Mental Health and Emotional Well-being
- Youth Homelessness
- ASB / Youth Nuisance and crime
- Child Sexual Exploitation / grooming
- C&YP social time and space
- Gangs / violence and associated issues
- Budget pressures

The Head of Adolescent Services highlighted that the number of young people in residential care had risen from previously having 12-15, to currently 28 young people in external placements. The Group heard that there had been an increase in out of area placements due to the rise of complexity of adolescents. Transferring young people to a different Borough was implemented as a last resort to support the young people, particularly young girls.

Young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour had also increased. Members noted that the number of young people aged 10-18 years old open to Children's Social Care was increasing year by year as in 2013 there were 37%, 2016: 41% and 2018: 44%.

Members were informed that prior to the residential review the Borough had two Children's Homes, one Adolescent Support Unit and one Specialist Unit. In consultation with young people and partner agencies the revised provision will now consist of one Children's Home and two Adolescent Support Units, which will be implemented by end of 2018.

The Head of Adolescent Services summarised his presentation as:

- Outcomes for young people entering the care system in adolescence, particularly between the ages of 14 and 16 are often poor. The Adolescent Support Unit provision had been effective at keeping young people out of the care system which has been recognised as best practice nationally.
- There was a high level of demand for outreach services to support adolescents at risk of coming into care - cusp of care support for families and foster carers.
- Priority to keep young people with their families with appropriate levels of support to achieve better outcomes.
- Potential to extended Adolescent Support Unit age range - provide ASU short breaks to children aged 8 to 11 to prevent admissions to care.
- Increase ASU capacity from 55 cases with 20 of these receiving regular short breaks, to at least 75 cases with 25 receiving regular short breaks.
- Continue to operate a 4 bed 'children's home' for young people whose care plan is long term residential care – with ongoing review of options to improve outcomes.

RESOLVED – That Members thanked Imran Akuji, Head of Adolescent Services for the detailed presentation which was noted.

6 Adoption and Permanence

RESOLVED – That this item would be brought to the next Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group meeting to be held on 29th January 2019.

7 Monitoring Report: Children in Our Care

The Chair welcomed Robert Arrowsmith, Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance to provide a presentation on the latest monitoring report for Children in Our Care, 28th September 2018.

Members noted that the number of Children in Our Care had increased since the last reporting period from 350 to 355 with more males (58%) than females (42%). It was noted that the highest proportion (79%) of Children in Our Care were from the White British heritage.

The Group were updated on the placements of Children in Our Care which highlighted that a high proportion of children were placed in family homes.

RESOLVED – That Robert Arrowsmith, Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance be thanked for the detailed presentation which was noted by Members.

Signed:
Chair of the meeting at which the minutes were confirmed

Date: