

CORPORATE PARENTING SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP

Tuesday, 29 January 2019

PRESENT – Councillors Gunn (Chair), Afzal, Bateson and Whittle.

OFFICERS –

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Jayne Ivory | Director of Children Services & Education |
| Janette Clarke | Head of Permanence |
| Joanne Siddle | Headteacher for Pupil Referral Unit |
| Caroline Waldron | Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children & LAC |
| Dr D Ratnaweera | Designated Doctor for LAC |
| 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 P Akhtar, Floyd, McFall, D Smith, Casey and Liddle. Apologies were also received from Samantha Briggs, Rebecca McPartlan, Charlotte Hesketh, Aldo Staffa and Robert Arrowsmith.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2018**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2018 were agreed as a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3 **Foster Carers Service**

The Chair advised the Group that this item had been deferred to the next Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group to be held on 13th March 2019.

4 **Update on Children Services with a focus on Children in Our Care**

Corporate Parenting proposal

The Chair welcomed Jayne Ivory, Director of Children's Services & Education. Members were requested to consider the proposal of a Corporate Parenting Board to provide strategic leadership across the borough to ensure that all local authority departments and key partner agencies promote and champion their responsibilities as corporate parents to improve outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers. It was noted that the Board would provide strategic intelligence and regular reports on impact to the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group and contribute to and drive a Corporate Parenting work plan.

Members were informed that a "Make A Noise" consultation was to be held on 20th February 2019 which would see children and young people of all ages come together in the half term holiday to take part in a fun afternoon with participation activities and informal chat. The learning from the consultation would influence and strengthen the work of the Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group and pave the way for a work plan which would be driven by the proposed Corporate Parenting Board.

The Group heard that the Corporate Parenting Board will not take the place of the current Executive decision making functions and roles within the council, and seeks to complement our existing governance arrangements. It was noted that the Group was to be chaired by the Director of Children's Services alongside the Chair of Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group as the Deputy Chair.

RESOLVED - That Members thanked Jayne Ivory, Director of Children's Services & Education and noted and approved the proposal of a Corporate Parenting Board.

Update on Ofsted recommendations

The Director of Children's Services & Education gave a verbal update on Ofsted recommendations which included looking at the broader and wider remits.

It was noted that an overview of the implementation process was to be brought to a future Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group which would demonstrate the impact it would have on our children and families.

5 Adoption Report

The Chair welcomed Janette Clarke, Head of Permanence to share a presentation on Permanency.

Members were taken through the key drivers for achieving permanence and the options for consideration which were shared as:

- Children remaining in the care of their parents
- Rehabilitation to parents (or parent) after court proceedings
- Placement with a family member under Special Guardianship Order
- Long term foster care
- Adoption

The Group heard that the Regional Adoption Agency was called "Adoption Now" which consisted of 6 Local Authority agencies:

- Blackburn with Darwen
- Tameside
- Bury
- Rochdale
- Bolton
- Oldham

Janette Clarke shared the Adoption Now 6 monthly report from 1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018 which highlighted that 11 children in the first 6 months had decisions that they should be placed for adoption. Of those 11 children, 4 were matched and placed and 2 had matches identified. Members heard that as of 30th September 2018 15 children were waiting to be placed – 6 boys over 4, 2 sibling pairs, 1 child with complex needs, waiting for her foster carer to be assessed to adopt, 1 child awaiting a second match as her first adopters during introductions sadly had to end the process due to illness. Adoption Now had approved 67 sets of adopters since November 2017 and 30 were available as at 30th September 2018 – those waiting the longest wish for the very youngest

children with the least unknown risks. 12 children were matched and/or placed in this 6 month period. An adoption activity day was held at the end of September – 47 children and 37 sets of adopters attended across the 6 LA's.

Members were informed that Special Guardianship Order offered enhanced parental responsibility to a connected person for any child until they reach adulthood. Blackburn with Darwen currently had 264 children subject to Special Guardianship Order.

The Group were updated on service development within Permanency Planning which included:

- Ensuring the right children within Blackburn with Darwen remained in care for the right length of time.
- Ensuring the staff right across the service had the skills to always have an eye to the permanency agenda.
- Ensuring that every child whom we looked after had the best life chances
- Ensuring that the child's voice was a common thread within our care planning
- Ensuring that every social work team had the confidence for free thinking and developing permanency plans to prevent drift and delay

RESOLVED – That Members thanked Janette Clarke, Head of Permanence for the detailed presentation which was noted.

6 Monitoring Report; Children in Our Care

The Chair informed Members that in Robert Arrowsmith's absence Jayne Ivory, Director of Children's Services & Education will present the latest monitoring report for Children in Our Care for January 2019.

Members noted that the number of children entering care in 2018 was 162 and the number of children leaving care was 151 with 41% of children aged 0-2 years old.

RESOLVED – That Robert Arrowsmith, Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance and Jayne Ivory, Director of Children's Services & Education be thanked for the detailed information.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed