

# **CORPORATE PARENTING SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP**

## **Wednesday, 13 March 2019**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Gunn (Chair), Bateson, Daley, Kay, McGurk, Oates and Whittle

### **OFFICERS –**

Care Leaver	Vice Chair
Janette Clarke	Head of Permanence
Caroline Waldron	Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children & LAC
Charlotte Hesketh	LAC Virtual Head & Assessment Officer
Sam Briggs	BwDFCA – Secretary
Paula Quinn	BwDFCA - Events and Fundraising Manager
Rebecca McPartlan	Leaving Care Personal Advisory
Firoza Hafeji	Governance Officer
Rachel Surkitt	Governance - Apprentice

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were received from Cllrs Batan, D Smith, Liddle, P Akhtar, J Smith, McFall, Gee, Surve and Khan. Apologies were also received from Jayne Ivory and Robert Arrowsmith.

### **2 Minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2019**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were agreed as a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

### **3 Foster Carers Association**

The Chair welcomed Samantha Briggs, BwDFCA Secretary and Paula Quinn, Events and Fundraising Manager to update the Group on Foster Carers Association.

Members heard that Blackburn with Darwen Foster Carers Association (BwDFCA) was run, voluntarily, by a group of foster carers to help fostering families provide the best possible secure, loving, nurturing, educational and happy homes for all the children in our care. BwDFCA were recognised as the voice of foster carers and held regular meetings with foster carers which helped maintain placements and deliver a good service.

The Group were updated on events that were organised for fostering families, Children Services staff and Corporate Parents. It was noted that Cllr Bateson and Cllr Gunn regularly attended and supported the events.

**RESOLVED** – That Members thanked Samantha Briggs and Paula Quinn for the detailed information.

## 4 Personal Education Plans and Education

The Chair welcomed Charlotte Hesketh, LAC Virtual Head and Assessment Officer, to share a presentation on Personal Education Plan (PEP).

Members heard that all looked after children must have a care plan which included a health plan and PEP. The PEP was updated termly which included a record of the child's education and training.

The PEP was initiated by the social worker as part of the care plan but developed and reviewed in partnership with relevant professionals including Designated Teacher although other school staff had an input.

The Group were informed that the PEP was part of the Looked After Child's official school record and if a child moved school the PEP was forwarded on to the new school alongside other school records.

Charlotte highlighted that all PEP's have an initial quality assurance and compliance check when they are submitted to the Virtual School and are recorded on a PEP tracker. Non-complaint PEP's are returned with a request for the detail requirement.

BwD aim to audit 50% of the submitted PEP's. Members noted that in Autumn 2018, only 34% of the completed PEPs were of a good or better quality which was a result of a change in the audit process and a shift to demand higher quality completion of PEP's. It was noted that of the remaining PEP's 51% were judged as required improvement and 15% inadequate.

Members were informed of the challenges and risks which included:

- Completion rates were not good enough – 12% without a PEP in autumn term
- Meetings with all parties did not always take place – PEPs by email
- Capacity of Social Workers, Designated Teachers and Virtual School
- Quality still to be worked on, particularly of SMART targets
- Use and evidence of impact of Pupil Premium Plus
- Secure exchange of the document between social worker and schools was clunky and made the process more time consuming
- Risk – non-compliance and more importantly lack of effective engagement around a child/young person's education.

Members heard that a child would not receive the relevant funding without a compliant PEP. It was noted that mandatory training was provided to schools and professionals to support them complete PEP SMART targets. Charlotte stated that schools were being challenged regularly but the team no longer had the capacity to visit each school.

The Group were informed that to improve efficiency, quality and security of the PEP process for 2019/20, a delegation portal had been purchased for the Protocol application. This meant that PEPs would not only be completed, recorded and stored within the existing social care system but they would be accessible to designated teachers within schools our CIOC attended. The Virtual School would be able to delegate sections of the PEP out for completion to the relevant practitioner and monitor its completion. A pilot scheme was to be carried out with a small number of schools and social workers in the Summer term ready for a full roll out in the new academic year.

Members agreed to invite Charlotte Hesketh to a future Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group meeting to provide an update on PEP's and identify if progress had been made in completing and submitting up to date PEP's.

**RESOLVED –**

- 1) That Charlotte Hesketh, LAC Virtual Head and Assessment Officer was thanked for the detailed presentation.
- 2) That Charlotte Hesketh be invited to a future Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group meeting for an update on progress.

**5 Feedback from the 'Making a Noise' event**

The Chair welcomed Janette Clarke, Head of Permanence to feedback from the "Making a Noise" event held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at Darwen Vale High School.

Members heard that nine teams within Children's Services and six partners worked together to deliver the Make a Noise consultation fun day for children open to social care.

45 children and young people across the age range, 23 parents/carers and invited guests enjoyed a wide range of hands-on participation activities across 17 stalls. It was noted that majority of the activities were designed to capture the views of children and young people to find out what was important to them and what they would like their corporate parents to get better at and prioritise.

Members noted feedback captured on the day which was in addition to the detailed discussions with children and young people throughout the year, particularly their engagement as part of the Investing in Children accreditation process which was held by 25 services across the borough.

Janette Clarke explained that from the event the views of the young people would support the development of new and updated corporate parenting strategy which evidences the voice of the child. It was therefore proposed that a new and refreshed 'Children in our Care' website was developed so that communication was ongoing and issues could be listened to and responded to.

Members were informed that young people would also be invited to be part of the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure their views were heard.

**RESOLVED –** That Janette Clarke, Head of Permanence be thanked for the information.

**6 Monitoring Report; Children in Our Care**

Janette Clarke, Head of Permanence presented an update on the latest monitoring report for Children in Our Care for March 2019.

Members noted that the number children entering care in 2019 was 30 and the number of children leaving care was 6 with 43% of children aged 0-2 years old. It was noted that currently there were 408 children in our care.

The Chair thanked Robert Arrowsmith, Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance and Jeanette Richards, Strategic Head of Social Care who had previously supported the Committee and have now left the Authority.

**RESOLVED** – That Janette Clarke, Head of Permanence be thanked for the detailed report.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
at which the minutes were confirmed