

CORPORATE PARENTING SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUP

Monday, 14 October 2019

PRESENT – Councillors; Gunn (In the Chair), Afzal, Batan, Bateson, Davies, Gee, Kay, Liddle, Oates and Whittle.

OFFICERS –

Alyson Hanson - Interim Head of Permanence

Caroline Waldron - Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and LAC

Jaffer Hussain - Participation Officer

Jayne Ivory - Director of Children's Services

Joanne Siddle – Head of Education

Paula Quinn – FCA Fundraising Manager

Sam Briggs – FCA Secretary

Firoza Hafeji – Governance Officer

Wendy Bridson – Governance Officer

RESOLUTIONS

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Brookfield, Smith D, McFall, Daley and Taylor. Apologies were also received from the Care Leaver (Vice Chair).

2 Declaration of Interest in items on this Agenda

There were no declarations of interest received.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2019

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2019 were approved as a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

4 Vice Chair update on behalf of Young People

The Chair provided a verbal update on behalf of the Vice Chair, which was fed back to the Group. In particular, the Chair highlighted the following;

- The Vice Chair had been visiting children in care and talking to them about their experiences. Any arising issues would be fed back to the Group at a future meeting.
- A buy/swap shop was in the process of being established. This would be run by Care Leavers which would give them a little work experience. A venue was still to be found.
- For those Care Leavers who were setting up home for the first time, the Vice Chair was preparing a Starter Pack List of all the essential items she needed when she was leaving care.

- Discussions took place around the transition period of being in care to leaving care and the need for a personal advisor providing information about how to get a home, how to set up home etc. The Vice Chair had fed back that help and assistance from professionals helps to instil trust which was invaluable for a Care Leaver.

Discussions took place around the need for PEPS to be monitored continuously. Jayne confirmed that links were being built with credit agencies so that Care Leavers could learn how to manage money – this would be feedback to a future meeting.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted by the Group.

5 Update on Participation

The Group received an update of activities that had been undertaken by the Participation Officer since the last meeting of the Group in July 2019.

Interview Skills

Jaffer informed the Group that further to the Interview Skills Training Sessions held in July and August, 15 young people had been trained up on interview skills ensuring that they were involved in the recruitment and selection of key personnel working with young people. The Group heard that this would be a rolling opportunity with further training being delivered next Spring.

Advocacy, Independent Visitors and Mentoring Commission

The Group heard that support to Barnardo's had been re-established to ensure that the commission met its aims and objectives. A bi monthly meeting was being scheduled and Barnardo's was continuing to send quarterly reports of what was being achieved.

Service Reports

The quarterly Participation Services reports had also been re-established after a period of redesign following consultation with colleagues across Children's Services and the 3rd Sector. The now simplified one page report asked for participation activity, one challenge or learning from the last quarter, and up to 3 plans for the next quarter. 23 reports had been submitted to date.

Champions Network

The Participation Champions Network had been re-established with it's first meeting taking place on 9th October. The event was well attended and received some great feedback. Time was spent looking at what the next Participation Strategy should focus on as the current strategy was due to expire next year. The next meeting of the Champions Network was scheduled for 29th January 2019.

Integration Programme

Work was continuing on building links between the Champions Network and the Integration Programme. There was also still a plan to support young people in care to engage in the Ambassadors programme either through Blackburn Rovers or Blackburn Youth Zone.

Investors in Children

Support was continuing to be provided to organisations who needed it to ensure that they could achieve Investors in Children.

Redrafting Guidelines

Some young people in care were working with UCLan on a project which was commissioned by NICE and aimed at redeveloping the guidelines for social workers and carers. Young people will be taking on the role as young researchers developing tools and techniques to ensure as many young people can input into the research and the subsequent redevelopment of the guidelines. The project will come to end next Summer with young people reporting back their findings to a group of seniors decision makes at NICE.

Participation / VOICE Relaunch

The Group were informed that the event would be taking place on 25th October 2019, between 12-3pm at Ewood Park.

RESOLVED – That the updates be noted.

6 Update on the education results for the CIOC pupils

The Group was provided with a brief update on the GCSE results for the CIOC pupils.

Figures were provided for KS1, KS2 and KS4 with the Group hearing that the results were provisional at this stage.

Outcomes for the young people were generally good and there was a lot to celebrate already as the results were higher than the national average in 2018.

It was agreed that the item come back to a future meeting with an depth analysis of the results.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

7 Highlight Report; Corporate Parenting dashboard

The Group was presented with an update on the latest monitoring report for Children in our Care for July to October. The Group heard that there wasn't a huge amount of change since the last update in June.

Members noted that as of 2nd October 2019, the number of children entering care in 2019 was 117 and the number of children leaving care was 100 with 50% of children aged 0-2 years old. It was noted that currently there were 403 children in care which consisted of 55% males and 45% females.

RESOLVED - That the update be noted by the Group.

8 Feedback on the SEN inspection

The Group received feedback from the recent SEND Inspection which took place 17th June – 21st June 2019 and heard that the inspection involved considerable stakeholder participation which included meetings with children and young people with SEND; parents and carers; and Local Authority and NHS officers.

The findings for Blackburn with Darwen were positive. There were some areas of improvement but these had not resulted in the need for a WSOA (Written Statement of Action).

Key areas of strength as highlighted in the report were noted, in particular:

- Provision for SEND is a key priority for all partners
- There is a real enthusiasm, and can do attitude, to work closely together to make sure children and young people get the best support
- Since 2014 the local area has made considerable progress in implementing the reforms and recent changes to leadership and governance has accelerated this
- Families feel listened to and the majority feel their children receive the help and support they need
- Local area demonstrates a clear capacity for improvement
- Leaders have an in-depth knowledge of the local area and have made considerable progress in addressing issues
- Local area's coproduced SEND Strategy
- Quality, coproduced Local Offer website

Key areas for improvement were noted as follows;

- Leaders' and managers' accurate knowledge of the local area is not fully reflected in improvement plans and Improvement planning is too process, rather than outcomes, focussed
- Better use of data is required to inform/evaluate commissioning and strategic planning
- Provision for young people when they leave school is not sufficiently well developed
- Parents have concerns about their child's transition into adulthood and feel anxious about their future
- Parents tell us they are not listened to when their children's needs are less obviously visible which can lead to delays in accurate identification of needs
- Demand for psychological services for those with lower-level mental health needs is exceeding capacity
- Lack of clear targets in EHC plans reduces the ability to measure, monitor and evaluate improved outcomes

Next steps were identified as:

- Areas that have been identified for further improvement will form the basis of the revised SEND Strategy Action Plan for the local area
- This plan will be coproduced with stakeholders and co-owned between Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Outcomes based planning framework is to be adopted to support SEND improvement planning, performance monitoring and accountability, to ensure effort remains impact focussed

RESOLVED - that the Group note the SEND Inspection findings

9 Update on Care Quality Commission inspection

The Group were provided with an overview and key findings from the CQC review of Health Services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding.

The review was carried out from 29th April to 3rd May 2019 and a link to the full report was contained within the main report. The report was submitted to CQC for their approval on the 31st July with the CQC advising on some minor amendments. These had since been incorporated into the revised plan for Quarter 2. The CQC had requested an update on progress by the end of February 2020.

Some of the key issues highlighted in the report were as follows:

1. Key lines of enquiry within the review including the experiences and views of children and their families; the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in health; and the quality of health services and outcomes for children who are looked after and care leavers

2. Key strengths identified within the review including;
 - Early Help and Child in Need
 - Child Protection and Looked after Children
 - Leadership / Management / Training and Supervision

3. Key areas for action within the Combined Action Plan including;
 - Improving safeguarding practice within primary care
 - Initial health assessment, performance improvement
 - CAMHS and Transitional arrangements for 16-19 year old children

RESOLVED – that Members note the contents of the report and action plan.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed