

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes - 16 March 2017

Attendance

Chair Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Lynne Moran

Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Rita Potter

Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Martin Waite

Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills

Employees

Emma Bennett
Dawn Deans
Alison Hinds
Alice Vickers

Service Director - Children and Young People
Senior Social Work Manager - Adoption
Head of Looked After Children
Corporate Parenting Officer

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brookfield and Malcolm and Alison Hinds and Fiona Brennan.

2 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 26 January 2017

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising

Emma Bennett, Service Director for Children and Young People, referred to resolution 2. of minute 11 Performance Monitoring Data and stated that she would email to the Board the information related to the number of care leavers up to the age of 18 that were pregnant or already mothers and how those figures compared to overall figures.

5 Adoption Services Interim Report

Dawn Deans, Senior Social Work Manager – Adoption, presented the Adoption Services Interim report and highlighted the key points.

In response to questions from the Board, Dawn Deans and Emma Bennett stated the following:

- It was agreed that there were occasions where timescales had been sacrificed to ensure that more complex cases were dealt with appropriately.
- There were times when placements could not continue, despite being offered support and in those circumstances the welfare of the child was paramount and appropriate action was taken. This had occurred twice in this reporting period; however, the children were now flourishing with foster carers.
- It was acknowledged how important it was to ensure whenever possible that sibling contact was maintained and work was on-going to develop that.
- It remained unclear how much longer the inter-agency fee would continue and the Board would be updated at its next meeting.
- The A2 indicator was constantly monitored and the figures were affected by delays in placing older children and more complex cases. The Board would continue to be updated and an analysis of the Adoption Scorecard could be submitted to the Board once published.

After the meeting, Dawn Deans confirmed that the inter-agency fee would end on 31 March 2017.

Resolved:

1. That Dawn Deans be thanked for her report and the report be noted.
2. That an analysis of the Adoption Scorecard be submitted to the next Board meeting.

6 **Corporate Parenting Strategy Update**

Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer, presented the Corporate Parenting Strategy Update report and highlighted the key points.

The Chair referred to Corporate Parenting ELearning and asked officers to liaise with members to remind them of the requirement to undertake this training and to ensure appropriate follow-ups and recording.

In response to questions from the Board, Alice Vickers stated the following:

- Total Respect and Corporate Parenting training would be arranged in May 2017 following Annual Council for all members of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- Information related to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) could be found through the CSE tool and links to different web-based campaigns. The profile continued to be raised with all social workers and foster carers and links to clinics.
- The issue of Apprentice Panels would be looked at further, including a possible funding package; however, the introduction of a national framework had made progress more problematic.
- The Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum were working well, with young people taking 'ownership' of it and feeling empowered.
- Corporate Parenting was now part of the Social Work Bill and the partnership arrangements already in place would showcase Wolverhampton and raise awareness of the considerable progress already made.
- A nomination had been made to the Young Citizen of the Year Awards and nominations were also made to the I Awards.

Resolved:

1. That Alice Vickers be thanked for her report and the report be noted.
2. That officers liaise with members to remind them of the requirement to undertake Corporate Parenting ELearning training and ensure that appropriate follow-ups and recording was undertaken.

7 **Performance Monitoring Information**

Emma Bennett, Service Director for Children and Young People, presented the Performance Monitoring report for February 2017 and highlighted the key points.

In response to questions from the Board, Emma Bennett stated the following:

- The number of Looked After Children (LAC) had plateaued. There had been an increase in numbers from November 2016 to January 2017, with fewer children going through the system as it was taking longer to deal with more complex cases. In February a higher number had gone through the system.
- In part delays had been caused by courts seeking parental consent more than in the past.
- Figures for numbers of LAC were increasing regionally and it was hoped by 2019 that Wolverhampton would be in line with its comparators.
- There was a very stable fostering system in place, with 300 long term foster placements. Over 40% were placed through fostering agencies, under the West Midlands Regional Framework.
- Leavers were offered a range of accommodation options post 18 including 'Staying Put' with foster carers, supported accommodation, or hosts. A training flat was available and was used to assist in preparing care leavers for independence.

Resolved: That Emma Bennett be thanked for her report and the report be noted.