

Attendance

Chair Cllr Paul Sweet (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Celia Hibbert

Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz

Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Martin Waite

Employees

Emma Bennett	Director of Children's Services
Fiona Brennan	Designated Nurse, Looked After Children
Nicola Hale	Principal Independent Reviewing Officer
Dr Wendy Harrison-Frazer	Consultant Counselling Psychologist - Psychology Lead for CAMHS
Alison Hinds	Head of Children and Young People in Care
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer
Caron Kilworth	Senior Social Work Manager
Mandy Lee	Safeguarding Manager - Children
Darren Martindale	Service Manager: Vulnerable Learners
Joginder Shoker-Kang	CAMHS
Alice Vickers	Corporate Parenting Officer

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence (if any)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Udey Singh.

2 Declarations of interests (if any)

There were no declarations of interest made relative to the items under consideration at the meeting.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 27 September 2018

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2018 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising

In relation to Councillor visits to establishments, it had been requested that a visit be arranged for Councillor Martin Waite to visit one of the private residential establishments. The Board was advised that Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer had been attempting to contact private establishments in Wolverhampton but had not received any response as yet. It was also noted that visits could only be arranged for homes where Wolverhampton children were placed.

In response to a query regarding safeguarding issues in Wolverhampton private establishments, it was clarified that the response to any safeguarding incident reported in a Wolverhampton private establishment, would be for this Authority to immediately investigate the matter. If any child involved had been from a different local authority, it was stated that the child's home authority would be notified.

In response to a query regarding preventative safeguarding, it was clarified that if a child identified as 'at risk' had moved to a Wolverhampton private establishment from another authority, there would be communication between Wolverhampton Council and their home authority. It was noted that the Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would contact the designated nurses for children and young people in care to notify that a child identified as 'at risk' was moving to the area. The child would be made known to the Safeguarding Service in Wolverhampton, but the child's home local authority would be ultimately responsible for them.

It was agreed that a report detailing children in care placed by other Local Authorities in Wolverhampton and how we safeguard them would be scheduled as a future agenda item to include statistics and the Authority's relationship with them.

Resolved:

That a safeguarding report outlining statistics and relationships with 'at risk' children from other local authorities be scheduled for a future Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

5 **Schedule of Outstanding Matters**

The Chair presented the report on the Schedule of Outstanding Matters previously considered by the Board. It was noted that the actions listed had been either scheduled on the agenda or had been completed.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Outstanding Matters report be noted.

6 **Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report 2017- 2018**

Mandy Lee, Safeguarding Manager - Children presented the Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report 2017 – 2018 and highlighted key points. The Board was advised that each child or young person was allocated an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to review and monitor their individual case. It was highlighted that IROs have a quality assurance role in relation social work support to children and the findings are regularly reported to senior managers. The report informed the Board of the activities of the IROs and outlined case studies to support the information.

It was highlighted that the IRO team currently consisted of experienced and permanent employees, with no temporary or agency staff and that the timeliness of case reviews had improved on last year.

It was noted that the children and young people were encouraged to participate in their own case reviews where appropriate and there had been improved use of the Mind of My Own (MOMO) website and app. Parental contribution had also been encouraged and it was highlighted that a pilot on improving child participation would be rolled out next year.

The IRO team were congratulated on their progress and praised for the stability of the team.

In addition to the information contained within the report, officers responded to the following questions:

- In response to a query about IRO and front-line Social Worker relationships it was reported that, on the whole, relationships were good and that face-to-face communication between them was always encouraged.
- In relation to a question on emerging safeguarding threats, it was clarified that there were struggles with placing children with complex needs and sourcing difficult placements.
- In response to a query about involvement in the MOMO platform, it was highlighted that MOMO would be part of a menu of choice in which children and young people could decide how they preferred to communicate their feelings and wishes. Other options, such as the use of video conference consultations, were to be explored to offer different ways of encouraging participation by making children and young people feel more at ease. Feedback was currently awaited from this.

Resolved:

That the Independent Reviewing Officer Service Annual Report be noted.

7 **Attainment of Children and Young People in Care 2018**

Darren Martindale, Service Manager: Vulnerable Learners presented the report for Attainment of Children and Young People in Care 2018 and highlighted key points. The report contained provisional educational outcomes for children and young people in care educated within Wolverhampton and out of City (OOC). It was explained that further information would be provided in a report scheduled for the next meeting of the Board on 24 January 2019.

The following points within the report were highlighted:

Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS)

The attainment in this group was reported to be high. It was noted that 70% of children and young people in care in Wolverhampton settings and 60% of children and young people in care in out-of-City settings had met age-related expectations in all areas. Year one phonics was also highlighted as a particularly strong area.

Key Stage 1

It was highlighted that the 'in-city' educated children had performed strongly compared with the national average. KS1 were reported to be above the national average in mathematics and low in reading. The biggest gap was identified in writing, but this was being monitored.

Key Stage 2

It was noted that the progress of children and young people in care was positive. In-city children and young people were reported to be performing better in reading and writing than mathematics.

It was highlighted that, in respect of this cohort, 40% of children had an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place. It was considered that each child had made good progress from their starting point.

Key Stage 4

It was highlighted that 18.4% of children and young people in care had achieved Grade 4 in mathematics and English (equivalent to a C in the old system) which was an improvement on last year. 89% of children and young people in care were reported to have gained one or more GCSEs at Grade 1 – 9.

Key Stage 5

It was noted that 69% of pupils had achieved accredited qualifications and it was highlighted that one student had gained an A-grade in A Level mathematics.

In addition to the information contained within the report:

- The Board were assured that students were achieving more than one GCSE. In respect of students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), it was explained that they may be only just missing out on a GCSE by a few marks or they may achieve mathematics and not English, or vice versa.

- In response to a query about the performance of OOC educated children and young people and why they were not doing as well, it was clarified that more in-depth detail would follow in the January report. It was thought that this was because there was a higher level of need than usual for this year's cohort. The Board were advised that children educated out of City were more difficult to work with than in-City, however there had been opportunities to learn how to support them better.
- In response to a query regarding Ofsted, the Board were advised that the body did have an interest in the achievements of children and young people in care and that this had been picked up at the last inspection.
- It was noted that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) were being audited for quality and that new ways to provide support were being explored constantly.
- It was highlighted that the KS 5 results were impressive, and it was suggested that a member of staff investigate the factors involved for producing good results to inform how to improve performance for future cohorts. The suggestion was welcomed, and it was agreed that a strength-based model was to be explored and that the Aspire to Uni Project data would be shared at a future meeting.

Resolved:

1. That the report on Attainment of Children and Young People in Care 2018 be noted.
2. That the Aspire to Uni Project data be shared at a future Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

8 **Outcome of Care Leavers' Annual Survey**

Caron Kilworth, Team Manager presented the Outcome of Care Leavers' Annual Survey and highlighted key points. The report had provided an analysis of the responses given by participants of the survey. It was stated that the information gathered was intended to inform the priorities of the service and identify actions. It was highlighted that the uptake of the survey had decreased by 32 compared to last year and that it was important to encourage a higher level of participation.

It was suggested that a focus group could be set up to look into qualitative research. It was agreed that this could be of great value and would be explored.

It was noted that the survey was not the only way of gathering information on the view of children and young people in care and that the Care Leavers' Forum was another way they could express views which could help shape the service.

Whilst there had been hard copies of the survey and a digital version, it was noted that there could be a form of incentive offered to encourage more children and young people to participate in future surveys.

It was suggested that Facebook could be a platform on which to publicise the survey, making it more noticeable and simpler to complete. It was reported that the number of adverts appearing on the Facebook page was being reduced in order for more relevant posts to stand out. It was noted that children and young people in care didn't

often have continuous access to wi-fi and may not be able to access social media as often. It was agreed that a wide range of engagement tools would be explored.

Resolved:

That the report on the Outcome of the Care Leavers' Annual Survey be noted.

9 **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Interim Update**

Wendy Harrison-Frazer, Consultant Counselling Psychologist and Psychology Lead for CAMHS delivered a verbal presentation providing an update on the activity of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The Board had been advised that this was a verbal update and that the full report would be shared jointly with the Health report at the March 2019 meeting of the Board.

It was reported that CAMHS had been undergoing a transformation and it was highlighted that the service was looking to streamline the journey of service users.

It was explained that meetings were held between professionals and young people to ascertain the length of time intervention was required or if any was required at all.

It was noted that it was important to determine if the anxiety had been caused by issues within the care system and to address those issues or whether the anxiety was within the individual and to provide as much support to them as appropriate. This more holistic approach was supported by the Board as it was suggested that a child's reaction to external or environmental circumstances could also be contributing factors when experiencing issues.

It was reported that challenges were faced with resources, however funding was slowly being provided. Streamlining had assisted with managing resources.

There had been a rise in referrals of children and young people in care; 2016 – 2017 had seen 48 referrals and in 2017 – 2018 there had been 106. Six were currently undergoing assessments.

It was highlighted that having the professional meetings at Beldray had seen an improvement and that children were able to have earlier intervention if appropriate.

Resolved:

That the update on Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services be noted.

10 **Performance Monitoring Information**

Emma Bennett, Director for Children's Services presented the refreshed Performance Monitoring Report and highlighted key points. It was explained that the Board could comment on the statistics shown and advise if there were any further figures they wished to see represented.

It was highlighted that many of the statistics were stable, although the Court system had caused some delays in adoptions.

It was noted that the costliest age group entering the care system was 10 – 14-year-olds; a new team was being set up in April 2019 to target this age group and was expected to run for two years.

The increase in family and friends fostering was positive and there had been a decrease in fostering placements with agencies.

The assessment figures had been updated to reflect the correct numbers and participation in assessments had also been strong.

The discrepancy in the dental check figures had been investigated and had improved, although there had still been some inconsistencies in the figures. It was thought that more Children and Young People in Care had been receiving checks that had been recorded therefore Alison Hinds, Head of Children and Young People in Care and Fiona Brennan, Designated Nurse for Children and Young People in Care had been working together to resolve this.

Care applications had continued to increase, and the median recording of adoption timescales was to be added for a future meeting.

It was highlighted that that the A2 indicators were no longer in the red and that Wolverhampton was good in comparison to statistical neighbours.

The new format was received well; however, it was requested that the adoption timescales be represented as a median figure.

In respect of adoption placements, it was noted that the regional adoption agency (RAA) was continuing to find placements for difficult to place children. It was clarified that the City of Wolverhampton Council had been hosting the RAA; Dudley Council had also expressed interest in hosting initially, however Wolverhampton had been selected by participating local authorities following a scoring process. It was highlighted that City of Wolverhampton Council demonstrated best practice and commitment to finding placements for difficult to place children.

Resolved:

1. That the Performance Monitoring Report be noted.
2. That the statistics for timeliness of adoption timescales be represented as a median figure.

11 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information contained in paragraph 2 of the Act, namely information that is likely to reveal the identity to an individual.

12 **Councillor Visits to Establishments**

No visits to establishments had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Board.