

Attendance

Chair Cllr John Reynolds (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Martin Waite

Cllr Rashpal Kaur
Cllr Rita Potter

Conservative

Cllr Paul Appleby

Cllr Udey Singh

Employees

Emma Bennett
Fiona Brennan
Alison Hinds
Shelley Humphries
Alice Vickers
Mandy Lee
Andrew Scragg
Shaquille Spence

Director of Children's Services
Designated Nurse, Children and Young People in Care
Head of Children and Young People in Care
Democratic Services Officer
Corporate Parenting Officer
Safeguarding Manager for Children
Young People Engagement Coordinator
Participation Officer

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Sweet, Councillor Paula Brookfield and Councillor Zee Russell.

2 Declarations of interests

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

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2019

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 Schedule of Outstanding Matters

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Outstanding Matters report be received.

6 Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers' Forum Workshops

Representatives from the Children in Care Council were welcomed by the Corporate Parenting Board and the young people led Councillors in an interview-style group activity called 'My New Friend' to get to know each other.

The young people also provided an overview of the activities they had participated in throughout the year.

August Interviews

It was reported that the young people had taken part in interviewing social workers to offer their insight on the service from the perspective of a young person in care.

Delivering Total Respect Training

It was noted that the Total Respect was designed to raise awareness of the experiences of children and young people in care which would also help in delivery of the service. The young people deliver face-to-face training and lead workshop-style exercises and it was agreed that training could be arranged for members of the Corporate Parenting Board and Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel. This would need to be delivered during the holidays or outside of school hours. It was noted that the training was also available on the Learning Hub.

Residential Days

It was reported that the last event was held at the Pioneer Centre and was enjoyed by all the children and young people. Other events had been arranged such as a tour of the Molineux.

I Awards

The young people enjoyed the I Award event and one representative in particular enjoyed delivering a presentation on their experiences and achievements in care.

Resolved:

1. That the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Forum workshops be noted.
2. That Total Respect Training be delivered to members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

7 **Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2019 - 2020**

Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer presented the Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2019 – 2020 for approval. It was outlined that the purpose of plan was to set out agenda items for the coming municipal year. It was noted that although it was to be approved at this meeting, additional items could be submitted throughout the year as required.

In response to a particular query on the Virtual School Report, an outline was provided on the statutory role of the Virtual School Head and it was clarified that the purpose of the Virtual School Report was to provide information on the attainments of children and young people in care.

It was worth noting that the attainment of the early years and foundation stage cohort was found to be excellent and that the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were achieving figures above national average. It was clarified that a significant number of children and young people in care went on to higher education and university.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2019 – 2020 be approved.

8 **Children living in Wolverhampton who are in the care of other Local Authorities**

Mandy Lee, Safeguarding Manager for Children presented the Children Living in Wolverhampton Who are in the Care of other Local Authorities report and highlighted salient points. The report was intended to provide assurance that children and young people placed in Wolverhampton were appropriately safeguarded. An outline of the process and reasons for placing children from other authorities in Wolverhampton and the responsibilities of each party was provided. Children and young people would still have access to services as if they were residing in their own local area.

In response to a query around who initiated the decision to stay with a connected person, it was clarified that a child's placement followed fostering regulations under friends and family. It was also clarified that Wolverhampton could not refuse to allow other local authorities to place a child.

It was noted that notice prior to placement was preferable as best practice however, under emergency circumstances, a child may be placed and notification given to Wolverhampton after the placement. The notification allows the Emergency Duty Team to know who to contact if a child in the care of another local authority comes to attention out of hours.

In respect of the funding provided from the placing local authority, it was noted that the care package would be funded in terms of the fostering/residential care placement Healthcare was provided by Wolverhampton and an invoice for the placing authority would be raised. Pupil Premiums would be specifically allocated.

It was agreed that the report provided assurance that appropriate child safeguarding was in place.

Resolved:

That the Children Living in Wolverhampton Who are in the Care of other Local Authorities report be received.

9 **Accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old Young People in Care and Care Leavers**

Alison Hinds, Head of Children and Young People in Care presented the Accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old Young People and Care Leavers report. It was outlined that a letter had been received from Nadhim Zawahi MP, Parliament Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, which had been sent to all Directors of Children's Services and Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards. It was reported that the letter, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, highlighted the challenges faced by local authorities in relation to these services and that there was currently no regulating body.

The report provided an overview of the City of Wolverhampton Council's approach and assure the Corporate Parenting Board of the procedures in place when placing 16 – 17-year-old young people in accommodation such as semi-independent units, supported accommodation, hostels, foyers and supported lodgings.

It was noted that extensive work had been undertaken to ensure City of Wolverhampton were following safeguarding processes and providing appropriate placements of the right quality.

It was clarified that financial support was offered as part of the service to young people in the accommodation provided as well as budget management support to enable young people to manage their money effectively.

In a response to a query regarding young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), it was clarified that as part of their pathway plan, their needs would be assessed to determine if the accommodation was appropriate. The Pathway Plan would then be reviewed every six months or fewer if required.

In response to a query regarding access to higher education, it was noted that whilst tuition fees were not waived by universities, the local authority could provide bursaries to cover costs for necessities such as travel, books and equipment.

It was clarified that Wolverhampton Homes owned some of the properties used and that spot purchasing was being explored. Reassurance was offered in respect of quality of units and appropriateness for young care leavers.

It was noted that a training flat was in use to offer young people the chance to trial the experience of living independently. It was outlined that their stay in the flat could be graduated from a few hours to a few days until they felt ready to have a home of their own. It was agreed that a video of the training flat would be shared and Councillors were invited to undertake a visit at a time when it was not in use.

Resolved:

1. That the Accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old Young People and Care Leavers report be received.
2. The arrangements in place to ensure the support and quality of care for 16-17-year-old young people in care living in supported accommodation be noted.
3. That a video of the training flat be shared with the Board.
4. That a visit to the training flat be arranged for Board members if required.

10 **Performance Monitoring Information Report**

Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services presented the Performance Monitoring Report and highlighted salient points. The dashboard at appendix 1 had been updated with data as at 31 March 2019.

It was highlighted that since 2013, the number of children and young people in care had seen its highest peak of 807 but had decreased over time. The number as at 31 March 2019 had settled at 624. In respect of the 10 – 18 cohort, it was reported that a legacy spike was moving out of the system. Extensive work had been undertaken to reduce the numbers of children and young people in care and length of time spent in care.

In respect of the analysis of placements for children and young people in care, it was clarified that external placements remained the higher cost pressures. It was noted that internal placements were less expensive and of better quality and it was positive that friends and family placements had shown a significant increase. A consistently good performance in short-term and long-term placement stability was highlighted and it was noted that work was constantly being undertaken to improve upon this. It was also highlighted that Ofsted registration for the new Key to Inspiration home had now been achieved

It was requested that indicators be added to trend placement stability over time and map average caseload over time.

In respect of education and attainment, it was agreed that for the benefit of new members, last year's Virtual School Annual Report would be shared with the Board to inform them of the achievements of children and young people in care and work done by Wolverhampton to support them.

It was requested that numbers be expressed as a median figure for the A1 adoption timescale indicator.

Resolved:

1. That the Performance Monitoring Report be received.
2. That the Virtual School Annual Report 2018 be shared with members of Corporate Parenting Board.

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 items of business as they involve 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 - Schedule of Visits

Excluded as per above.