

Attendance

Chair Cllr Beverley Momenabadi (Lab)
Vice Chair Cllr Wendy Dalton (Con)

Labour

Cllr Qaiser Azeem
Cllr Lovinyer Daley

Cllr Jasbinder Dehar
Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN

Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Clare Simm

Conservative

Cllr Mak Singh

Cllr Udey Singh

Employees

Dawn Deans
Hannah Finch
Dereck Francis
Jazmine Walker
Jaswinder Kaur

Service Manager – Adoption@Heart
Corporate Parenting Officer
Democratic Services Officer
Head of Service, Children and Young People in Care
Democratic Services Manager

The Corporate Parenting Board also welcomed two foster carers.

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Emma Bennett, Fiona Brennan, Alison Hinds and Mark Tobin.

2 Declarations of interests

Councillor Barbara McGarrity QN declared an interest in so far as she is a Private Counsellor.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2022

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2022 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

Hannah Finch, Corporate Parenting Officer presented the schedule of outstanding matters report on actions previously considered by the Board.

The Chair congratulated Hannah Finch on being appointed permanently to the post of Corporate Parenting Officer.

Resolved:

That the Schedule of Outstanding Matters be received.

6 Updated Terms of Reference for Corporate Parenting Board

For the benefit of new members on the Corporate Parenting Board, Hannah Finch, Corporate Parenting Officer delivered a brief presentation on an outline of what Corporate Parenting is about; the responsibilities as elected members and officers; and the following core corporate parenting principles:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
5. To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people.

6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Corporate Parenting Officer then presented the report on Updated Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Board. The updated terms of reference would ensure that the Board continued to be effective.

Resolved:

That the updated Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Board be approved.

7 Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2022 - 2023

Hannah Finch, Corporate Parenting Officer presented for comment and approval the Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan for the ensuing 2022-2023 municipal year. Members of the Board were invited to contact the Corporate Parenting Officer if they had items they wished to see included in the work plan.

A request was made for information on the provision for children and young people in care with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Year Group 12. Jazmine Walker, Head of Service for Children and Young People in Care undertook to ask Darren Martindale, Virtual School Head to provide information around our children in care cohort with SEND when he attends the Board meeting on 24 November 2022 to present the Virtual School Report.

Resolved:

1. That the Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2022-2023 be approved.
2. That Darren Martindale be asked to present information around our children in care cohort with SEND when he attends the Board meeting on 24 November 2022.

8 Outcome of Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services

Jazmine Walker, Head of Service for Children and Young People in Care delivered a presentation on feedback from the Office for Standards in Education's (Ofsted's) Inspection of the Council's Children's Services. Overall the inspectors judged the service as Good. The 'impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families was judged to be Outstanding, and the experiences and progress of children who need our help and protection', 'the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers', and 'Overall effectiveness' were all rated 'Good'. Five areas for improvement had been identified from the Inspection, for which an action plan would be submitted to Ofsted in August. Progress on the actions would be monitored by Children's Social Care Leadership team and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel. A report would also be presented to Full Council on 20 July detailing positive outcomes of the inspection.

It was noted that a thank you event was held on 1 July 2022 for all involved in the Ofsted, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Youth Offending Team (YOT) inspections that took place during the last 12 months.

It was queried whether a policy/procedure existed that set out the role of social workers, foster carers and the school on persistent absences of children in care. The Head of Service for Children and Young People in Care advised that policies would be in place around children in care being missing from school. She proposed that information on the specific details be listed in the Schedule of Outstanding Matters report and presented to a future meeting. The Head of Service also agreed to discuss the matter further with the foster carer representative who raised the point.

Resolved:

1. That the presentation on the Ofsted Inspection Outcome of Local Authority Children's Social Care Services be received.
2. That information on the role of social workers, foster carers and the school around children in care being missing from school be presented at a future meeting.

9 **Supported Accommodation Annual Report**

Jazmine Walker, Head of Service for Children and Young People in Care presented the Annual Report of the Supported Accommodation Team and highlighted salient points. The focus of the team was to provide a high level of efficient and effective accommodation and support options to young people in care and leaving care. The report outlined the successes and outcomes achieved by the service, explained the challenges it had faced, lessons learned and the plan to develop and improve the offer to the young people of Wolverhampton.

Members of the Board were encouraged to note from the Annual Report that Wolverhampton care leavers were successfully living independently.

Regarding support for care leavers with extreme complex needs, it was noted that there was a multi-agency approach to looking at children and young people's needs from 14 to 18 years of age to make sure that social workers are supported to understand what the options are for children with particularly complex needs and they are supported with undertaking, for example, shared lives assessments of foster carers. For children who do not have complex needs, if they want to remain with their foster carer they have a staying put arrangement. For children with particularly complex needs who meet the Social Care Act threshold for Adult Social Care, they are then supported and assessed to see whether they can stay with their foster carers under a shared lives arrangement. An assessment would also be carried out with Adult Services colleagues on whether or not the young person would benefit from an alternative supported accommodation offer.

In response to a query on the main differences between a 'host' family mentioned in section 4 of the Annual Report and fostering, it was reported that a host family would provide supported accommodation for 16 to 21 year old vulnerable young people who are not ready to live independently but have more independent skills than a child assessed as needing foster care support or residential care. Host carers are assessed and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked but are not subject to the fostering national minimum standards.

Resolved:

- That the Support Accommodation Annual Report be received.

10 **Adoption Service Report**

Dawn Deans, Service Manager – Adoption@Heart presented the Adoption Service Report for Adoption@Heart and highlighted salient points. The report detailed performance and progress the Regional Adoption Agency had made for Wolverhampton as well as for the partnership as a whole from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Resolved:

1. That the Adoption Service Report for Adoption@Heart be received.
2. That the progress made by the Regional Adoption Agency be noted.

11 **Performance Monitoring Information**

Jazmine Walker, Head of Service for Children and Young People in Care presented the Performance Monitoring Information report and highlighted salient points. The report provided an update on service performance as at 30 April 2022.

Resolved:

That the Performance Monitoring Information report be received.

12 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13 **Councillor Visits to Establishments - Schedule of Visits**

Members of the Board were invited to contact Hannah Finch, Corporate Parenting Officer if they wished to attend a visit to Upper Pendeford Farm Short Break Centre.

Councillors Lovinyer Daley, Qaiser Azeem, Jasbinder Dehar, Barbara McGarrity QN, Rita Potter, Clare Simm and Udey Singh expressed an interest in attending. A request was made that the time of the visit(s) be arranged for between 5:00pm - 5:30pm to accommodate Board members with work commitments.

Resolved:

That the Councillors be contacted to confirm arrangements for a visit(s) to Upper Pendeford Farm Short Break Centre.