

# Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes - 23 February 2016

## Attendance

**Chair** Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

## Labour

Cllr Jasbinder Dehar  
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss  
Cllr Peter O'Neill  
Cllr Rita Potter

## Employees

Emma Bennett	Service Director - Children and Young People
Fiona Brennan	Designated Nurse, Looked After Children
Carl Craney	Democratic Support Officer
Wendy Harrison-Frazer	Crisis Team Manager, Black Country Foundation NHS Trust
Alison Hinds	Head of Looked After Children
Darren Martindale	Virtual School Head
Dr Chitra Ramalingam	Designated Doctor Looked After Children Wolverhampton City Clinical Commissioning Group
Dr Stephanie Simon	Designated Doctor Looked After Children
Alice Vickers	Corporate Parenting Officer

*Item No.*     *Title*

**1            Apologies for absence (if any)**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Paula Brookfield, Mrs Christine Mills, Stephen Simkins, Martin Waite and Richard Whitehouse together with Dr Roberta Fry (Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust).

**2            Chair's Announcements**

**i) Introductions**

The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson, invited those present to introduce themselves. Introductions were duly made.

**ii) Awards**

The Chair commented on the successful Awards evening which had been well attended and organised. She offered her thanks to all those involved in the evening.

**iii) Next Meeting – 30 March 2016**

The Chair advised that the next meeting was scheduled for 30 March 2016 which was during Easter week. It was agreed that an alternative date be identified for this meeting given the likelihood of difficulties being encountered with attendance during the holiday period.

**3            Declarations of interest (if any)**

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

**4            Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2016**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**5            Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2016.

**6            Schedule of outstanding matters**

Carl Craney, Democratic Support Officer, presented a report which appraised the Board of the current position with a variety of matters considered at previous meetings of the Board. He advised that details of casework, in terms of number of cases of individual Social Workers had been contained in the Performance Management Data report considered at the last meeting and could, therefore, be deleted from the schedule.

Emma Bennett, Service Director, Children and Young People, reported that the review of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) had been widened and a report on that matter was to be considered at the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel to be held on 25 February 2016. Cllr Peter O'Neill advised that members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel had been invited to attend that meeting.

Cllr Peter O'Neill reported that he had yet to be contacted with regard to the arrangements for the visit to the Merridale Street West establishment.

Resolved:

1. That the report be received and noted;
2. That the items relating to caseload and the review of CAMHS be removed from the schedule;
3. That Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer make contact with Cllr Peter O'Neill and Stephen Simkins with regard to arrangements for the visit to the Merridale Street West establishment.

## **7 Looked After Children - Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)- Annual Report**

Wendy Harrison-Frazer, Crisis Team Manager, Black Country Partnership Foundation NHS Trust, presented the Looked After Children – Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Annual Report.

Cllr Peter O'Neill expressed concern with regard to the average waiting time between referral and first contact. The Crisis Team Manager advised that the average waiting time compared very favourably against other CAMHS teams. The Service Director, Children and Young People reported that national guidance indicated that the waiting time between referral and the first contact was 18 weeks whilst the average waiting time in Wolverhampton was nine and half weeks. The Crisis Team Manager explained that each case was treated on its merits and some cases would be seen within 24/48 hours of referral.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss enquired what action was taken in the case of a crisis situation occurring. She opined that just because the performance in Wolverhampton was better than that in other areas and below the national guidance did not necessarily mean that it was satisfactory. The Crisis Team Manager explained that in the event of a crisis situation occurring the Crisis Team would respond immediately. Cllr Julie Hodgkiss queried who would provide the continuity of care in the event that a Looked After Child was removed from a Foster Carer. The Service Director, Children and Young People reported that the child would maintain its relationship with the Designated Social Worker. She explained that this would continue even if the child was admitted to Tier 4 accommodation which could be anywhere in the country given the lack of available places. The Crisis Team Manager added that in the case of a breakdown in a relationship the association with CAMHS would continue if the placement was within 20 miles of Wolverhampton.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss reminded the Board that the Children in Care Council had raised the issue previously of continuity of care if a Looked After Child was in hospital. Alison Hinds, Head of Looked After Children reported that in such a case the Foster

Carer would be expected to undertake hospital visits. The Crisis Team Manager commented that hospitalisation was avoided if at all possible.

Cllr Rita Potter enquired if a crisis situation occurred who determined whether the situation was urgent. The Crisis Team Manager reported that the CAMHS Team would determine the urgency of the situation and would respond right away if appropriate. The Service Director, Children and Young People advised that such a decision would be made in consultation with the Social Worker and the Carer. The Crisis Team Manager added that the breakdown of a relationship was not necessarily as a result of mental health issues.

Cllr Peter O'Neill enquired whether the Foster Carer Allowance would be stopped if a child was admitted to hospital. The Service Director, Children and Young People responded that this depended on the individual case and the anticipated length of stay in hospital. This issue was addressed in the Standard Operating Procedures and were reviewed on a case by case basis.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss asked as to the present position with the use of Police cells in the event that no suitable places were available in mental health establishments. The Crisis Team Manager confirmed that the use of Police cells was no longer permitted. She explained that in the event of the Police being called to an incident involving a young person with a suspected mental health issue CAMHS would be contacted and a street triage service would be initiated which would prevent further Police involvement. This service was considered to be a model of good practice.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

## **8 Health Care Service for Looked After Children - Annual Report**

Dr Chitra Ramalingam, Designated Doctor Looked After Children and Fiona Brennan, Designated Nurse Looked After Children presented the Health Services for Looked After Children Annual Report for the period September 2014 to August 2015.

Cllr Peter O'Neill commented that the data in respect of teenage conception and under-18 conception related to 2013 and suggested that more up to date data would be available in the Director of Public Health's Annual Report. The Service Director, Children and Young People explained that there was a delay in the publication of Public Health data but that it was believed that the teenage pregnancy in the city was at its lowest ever rate. The Designated Doctor Looked After Children advised that the data to be published shortly would relate to 2014 as there was an 18 month delay in publishing Public Health data.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss suggested that an a comparison exercise of data against the national data should be undertaken together with an attempt to compare the data in relation to Looked After Children as opposed to the population in general. She enquired why this data was not readily available. The Head of Looked After Children explained that such statistics could only be collected and collated if the necessary disclosures were made. The Service Director, Children and Young People commented that the figures also included Care Leavers who the Council had no manner in which to require disclosure of relevant data. The Head of Looked After

Children reported that an exercise in gathering of data in connection with usage of contraception amongst Looked After Children was also being undertaken currently.

The Designated Doctor Looked After Children referred to the high rate of out of city placements which had led to a delay in meeting the statutory timescales in conducting health assessments for Looked After Children. She advised on the steps which had been taken to overcome this problem and to regularise the situation. The Head of Looked After Children reminded the Board that out of city placements were only used if no suitable in city placements were available or where specialist placements were required. She reminded the Board on the high level of the Looked After population and on the action taken to reduce the number.

Cllr Jasbinder Dehar referred to paragraph 4.6 of the report insofar as it related to the delay in meeting statutory timescales on health assessments for children placed in Wolverhampton. The Designated Doctor Looked After Children advised that this had been for two reasons: i) Delays in referrals; ii) The review of staffing arrangements coupled with staff shortages. She assured the Board that 90% of assessments were now undertaken within the statutory timescales. The Service Director, Children and Young People, reminded the Board that it received information regularly on this matter via the Performance Monitoring Data reports.

Resolved:

1. That the report be received and noted;
2. That a further report be submitted to the Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel in relation to a comparison of the teenage pregnancy and the number of under-18 conceptions against the national average figures in due course.

## 9 **Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report**

Darren Martindale, Virtual School Head, presented the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) report for 2014/15.

Cllr Rita Potter welcomed the report and commented that the service was moving in the right direction. She queried who attended such events as "Parents Evenings" for Looked After Children. The Virtual School Head advised that the Key worker would attend such events, if required. The Service Director, Children and Young People commented that parents were also encouraged to attend such events, if appropriate.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss expressed some surprise that the number of Looked After Children eligible for free school meals was so low. The Service Director, Looked After Children, the Head of Looked After Children and the Corporate Parenting Officer explained the reasons for this, as this was an entitlement for all children in Key Stage 1 and reflected the number of Looked After Children in this cohort.

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss enquired as to the steps taken to assist children who were excluded permanently from Pupil Referral Units or Special Schools. The Virtual School Head reported on the steps which would be taken to ensure that such pupils were re-integrated into main stream schools or that Educational Health Care Plans were prepared and therapeutic support provided. Each case was assessed on its merits. The Service Director, Children and Young People commented that during the

Ofsted inspection of the Youth Offending Team the provisions made for Looked After Children who had been excluded permanently from Pupil Referral Schools or Special Schools had been commended. A check of the arrangements for alternative provision had been commissioned to ensure the most appropriate arrangements were being made. The Virtual School Head advised that alternative provision, in for example, further education was sometimes was considered to be more appropriate.

Resolved:

1. That the report be received and noted;
2. That the Virtual School Head be thanked for the comprehensive report.

10 **Performance Monitoring Data**

The Service Director, Children and Young People, presented the Performance Report for February 2016 (data as at January 2016).

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

[The Chair reported that it would not be necessary to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public as the report on Councillors visits to establishments due to be considered at Agenda Item No. 11 was not available – (see Minute No. 6 above)]

11 **Exclusion of the press and public**

See Minute No. 10 above.

12 **Councillors visits to establishments**

See Minute No. 10 above.