



Corporate Parenting Board Minutes - 3 July 2014

Attendance

Chair Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Susan Constable
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Martin Waite

Employees

Emma Bennett	Assistant Director, Children, Young People and Families, Community
Alison Hinds	Head of Service, Looked after Children, Community
Lorraine Millard	Designated Senior Nurse Safeguarding, Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group
Darren Martindale	COPE Team Manager/ Virtual School Head, Community
Puja Taloy	Participation Officer, Community
Carl Craney	Democratic Support Officer, Delivery

Representatives of the Children in Care Council

Sekia Biye
Angel Bryan
Kyron Hughes
Shaideen Malcolm

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence (if any)

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Jas Dehar, Mrs Christine Mills and Mrs Patricia Patten.

a) Chair's Announcement

The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson, introduced Alison Hinds, head of Service, Looked after Children, to the Board.

2 Declarations of interest (if any)

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre declared personal interests in any matters pertaining to pertaining to Woodthorne School (Chair of Governors), Central Learning Partnership (Heath Park, Moseley Park and Woden Primary Schools) [Director], City of Wolverhampton College (Governor) and Graiseley Primary (Governor).

3 Minutes of the previous meeting (12 March 2014)

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising

The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson referred to Minute No. 5 (Health care Services Annual Report) insofar as it referred to waiting lists for referral to the CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service) and advised that at a recent Families in Focus meeting this had been identified as an issue insofar as it related to those children who were not in the care of the local authority. Emma Bennett explained that a piece of work was currently being undertaken on pathways for access. There was an issue in the City inasmuch as there was no Tier 2 provision due to capacity. It had originally been planned that this would be picked up by the MAST Teams but the Behaviour and Mental Health Workers had been lost with effect from April 2014 following the withdrawal of the DSG grant for schools. Lottery funding had been applied for to provide for early interventions with the 10 – 14 year old age group (Headstart Scheme). If successful trial schemes would be rolled out across the City and the possibility existed of further lottery funding in 2015/16.

Resolved:

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel be requested to consider the access arrangements to the CAMHS service and to identify any issues for further consideration.

5 **Dates and Times of Meetings - 2014/15 Municipal Year**

Resolved:

That meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board be held on the undermentioned dates commencing at 17:30 hours in the Civic Centre, Wolverhampton:
11 September 2014;
14 October 2014;
19 November 2014;
21 January 2015;
11 March 2015.

6 **Performance Monitoring - Looked After Children (LAC)**

Emma Bennett presented Performance Monitoring Information based on an extract from high level information from May 2014. She advised that the format of the information had been amended to better represent the outcomes and indicators.

With regard to the information relating to Number of Looked After Children per 100,000 population, Emma Bennett reported that 15 children had been admitted into the care of the local authority on one day in May 2014, including a family of nine and a further family of five. She advised that there was now a multi -agency “edge of care” meeting which endeavoured to keep families together and children out of local authority care where possible and practical. She further advised that she oversaw personally all new LAC admissions and care proceedings. With regard to the large families, Cllr Paula Brookfield enquired as to whether intervention had been made at too late a stage. Emma Bennett explained, in general terms, the particular case histories of both large groups.

With regard to the information relating to Health Checks, Emma Bennett reported that this was an area of concern and that discussions were underway between both the Council and the Wolverhampton City Clinical Commissioning Group (WCCCG) and the WCCCG and the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust to address these concerns. She advised that it was, however, possible that the figures were being affected detrimentally by Out of City placements. Cllr Paula Brookfield enquired as to whether it would be possible to separate out the report to reflect In City and Out of City placements. Emma Bennett explained that the report included details relating to any Out of City placements within a 20 mile radius of Wolverhampton. Lorraine Millard assured the Board that the issues were being addressed and actioned.

Cllr Martin Waite enquired as to who was responsible for ensuring that LAC received the appropriate health checks. Emma Bennett advised that a process was in place which ensured that both Social Workers and Independent Responsible Officers were alerted to the anniversary of health checks and that this ensured that all appropriate arrangements were made in good time. Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre questioned the position on the age at which LAC / Care Leavers and Young Offenders on remand remained the responsibility of the local authority. Emma Bennett undertook to arrange for the circulation of a Briefing Note in connection with this issue.

With regard to the information relating to PEP's up to date and School Attendance, Emma Bennett reported that for the information to include school attendance information this would need to be inputted manually. Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre drew to the attention of the Board that the method of calculation relating to school attendance had been changed by the Department of Education and that authorised study leave was now treated as an unauthorised absence. He also enquired as to whether there were individual Education Plans and Personal Education Plans or whether they were presented as a combined document. Emma Bennett confirmed the latter to be the case.

With regard to the information to Adoptions, Cllr Paula Brookfield commended the expeditious manner in which adoptions were being processed but enquired as to rates of placement failure. Alison Hinds advised that the Council had a very low rate of placement failure and that this had been the case historically.

Resolved:

1. That the report be received and noted;
2. That a Briefing Note be circulated in connection with the age at which Lac / Care Leavers and Young Offenders on remand ceased to be the responsibility of the local authority.

7 Role and remit of the Corporate Parenting Board

Resolved:

1. That in the absence of any newly appointed Councillors consideration of this item be deferred;
2. That as all Councillors had Corporate Parenting responsibilities the PowerPoint presentation be amended and circulated via the respective political groups to all Councillors;
3. That the respective political groups be requested to consider inviting the Children in Care Council to make a presentation to group meetings.

8 Children in Care Council

[Representatives of the Children in Care Council, as listed above, together with Puja Taloy, Participation Officer, were present for this item.]

Angel Bryan, on behalf of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), advised that it wished to re-visit and refresh the Council's Corporate Parenting Pledge. She requested that the Board divide into three groups to discuss various elements of the current Pledge with the representatives from the CiCC. Following the division into Groups the Board considered feedback on the following areas of concern:

- Care Leavers;
- Education / Employment;
- Out of City Young People / New Looked after Children;
- Complaints;
- Other issues including working in partnership in the Black Country and further training for staff.

Resolved:

1. That the Children in Care Council be thanked for attending the meeting and facilitating the discussions and that the Chair be requested to send a suitably worded letter to the CiCC expressing the Board's thanks;
2. That the Children in Care Council be requested to consider further the various issues raised during the group discussions and feedback sessions and report back to a future meeting.

9 **Work Programme 2014/15**

The Board considered a report which outlined a proposed work programme which would enable it to fulfil all statutory requirements and the Council to fulfil its Corporate Parenting Responsibilities. The programme also aimed to align the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel with that of the Children in Care Council. The report also identified suggested dates for visits to be undertaken to residential homes. In addition to the themes identified, it was also intended to submit a Performance Monitoring report to each meeting of the Board.

[The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson left the meeting. Cllr Julie Hodgkiss in the Chair.]

A number of Councillors expressed concern in relation to the proposed work programme inasmuch as it appeared to propose consideration of a series of Annual Reports which could be viewed as limiting oversight on particular themes to once per year. The scheduling of the meeting with Foster Carers' in advance of consideration of the Annual Fostering Service report was also questioned.

Resolved:

1. That consideration of the Work Programme be deferred until the next meeting;
2. That the report be amended to reflect the points made in the discussion;
3. That with regard to visits to establishments a letter be prepared and circulated to all members of the Board addressing the accessibility of the various establishments, proposed travel arrangements and whether the visits were to be accompanied or unaccompanied.