

Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes - 9 November 2017

Attendance

Chair Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Peter O'Neill

Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama

Cllr Paul Sweet

Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills

Employees

Alice Vickers
Alison Hinds
Darren Martindale

Dr Roberta Fry

Dr Stephanie Simon
Emma Bennett
Fiona Brennan
Helen Tambini
Joginder Shoker Kang
Mandy Lee
Nicola Hale
Paulette Morris

Corporate Parenting Officer
Head of Looked After Children
COPE Team Manager/Virtual School Head, Community
Directorate
Consultant Clinical Psychologist - Black Country Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust
Designated Doctor, Looked After Children
Director of Children's Services
Designated Nurse, Looked After Children
Democratic Services Officer
CAMHS Looked After Children's Team
Safeguarding Manager
Independent Reviewing Officer
Service Manager Specialist Mental Health CYP&F

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Potter and Waite.

2 Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 14 September 2017

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2017 be confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters arising

The Chair asked if any foster carers had expressed an interest in attending future meetings.

Alison Hinds confirmed that two foster carers had expressed an interest and although they were unable to attend the meeting this evening, in future one or both would be attending.

5 Schedule of outstanding matters

The Chair presented the report on current progress on matters previously considered by the Board.

Helen Tambini, Democratic Services Officer confirmed the reports that were scheduled for the meeting in January 2018.

Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer confirmed that Kyron Hughes was now attending meetings as the representative of the Care Leavers Forum.

Emma Bennett confirmed that work was progressing with the format of future Performance Monitoring reports.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service 2016-2017

Mandy Lee, Safeguarding Manger and Nicola Hale, Independent Reviewing Officer attended the meeting and Mandy Lee presented the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service 2016-2017 and highlighted key points.

Mandy Lee confirmed that the IRO service had remained stable, with an experienced and capable team and the team's positive contribution had been recognised by OFSTED.

She confirmed that there had been a slight reduction in the timeliness of reviews and that appeared to be due to a spike in sickness and bereavements. That situation had now improved and it was a priority for 2017-2018 to improve that further.

The participation of children and young people in their Looked After Children (LAC) reviews also fluctuated and improving participation was another priority for next year.

Quality assurance had also improved, with access to quality assurance data, with quarterly review reports provided to the Children's Services Management team. Future Action Plans would be looked at based on that data.

In addition to the information contained in the report and in response to questions from Board members, officers stated the following:

- Work was underway to try and improve the uptake of the Mind of My Own (MOMO) app. There appeared to be a discrepancy with the reporting as the data for the MOMO 1 app was only being picked up on the Dashboard; however, there was a further app, MOMO Express which many more children and young people were using. An Action Plan had been produced and those using the app had been approached for input and the work formed part of several task groups.
- The possibility of using current users as ambassadors was being considered as a way forward.
- The MOMO Express was originally targeted for younger children and those with more specialised needs as it was more flexible and interactive; however, it had been found that many young people preferred it to the more two dimensional MOMO 1 app. Feedback had been given to MOMO to try and make it more interactive.
- If a young person was remanded then they were considered to be a LAC. The number was usually small, at around 2% of all LAC.
- If an IRO found evidence of good or excellent Social Work practice, then an Awards Form would be completed and recognition given to appropriate officers through the Line and Service Manager. The service did not share best practice as a matter of course; however, the manager might choose to share it.
- In respect of drift and delay, a permanence plan should be in place by the second review. If the IRO found that that was not in place, they would be monitoring progress closely and escalating any concerns to managers. Sometimes there were unavoidable delays, outside of the control of social workers; however, they would always be kept under review.

The Chair referred to paragraph 2.5 in the report and the reference to the change in legislation in 2011 and asked that in future reports the wording could be updated to reflect the current timescales.

Resolved:

That the Annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officer Service for 2016-2017 be noted.

7 **Educational Achievement of Looked After Children**

Darren Martindale, Virtual School Head for Looked After Children presented the report for Educational Achievement of Looked After Children (LAC) and highlighted key points.

He confirmed that the report provided an up to date summary and the full Annual Report to be considered by the Board in January 2018, would provide further details, as some of the data was un-validated it needed to be acknowledged that that might change. The report highlighted the significant improvement in Key Stage 1, the slight dip in Key Stage 2 and the continued improvement in Key Stage 4.

Last year a disparity in performance for children living out of the city had been identified. Following the investment of additional resources, that disparity had now levelled out. Post 16 education was good, with two care leavers achieving degrees, one 2.1 and one 2.2. They were both hoping to carry on with master post-graduate studies.

He referred to the work of Virtual Heads trying to identify more meaningful ways to show progress, with a more holistic and wider response as the current data could only show part of the picture. He confirmed that the general direction was very positive and officers were aware of the areas which required focus.

In addition to the information contained in the report and in response to questions from Board members, officers stated the following:

- The Annual Report would cross-reference a cohort of characteristics, including information on any gender disparities. The gender analysis did confirm that in Key Stage 1 girls were better at reading and writing across all school cohorts.
- The data for Key Stage 2 had highlighted that in all but two cases, LAC who had not achieved their target had made above expected levels of progress which was encouraging.
- Stability was the key, as it was known that change did affect academic success and it was a priority to find better ways of working together to ensure stability.

Resolved:

That the report on the recent educational attainment of Looked After Children be noted.

8 **Health Services for Looked After Children Annual Report**

Fiona Brennan, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Dr Stephanie Simon, Designated Doctor for Looked After Children presented the Health Service for Looked After Children Annual Report and highlighted key points.

Fiona Brennan referred to the core activities that required commissioning for Looked After Children (LAC) relating to statutory duties, including the Initial Health Assessments (IHA), the Review Health Assessments (RHA), Care Leaver Summaries (LCS) and Adoption Reports.

She confirmed that there were 630 LAC, which was a high number when compared to other local authorities, with almost 60% living outside of the city. She also referred to the breakdown of 'Out of Authority' placements.

She confirmed that up until June 2017, she had been undertaking health assessments for LAC placed in neighbouring boroughs; however, she had stepped down as her role was more strategic and that work was now being undertaken by the Royal Wolverhampton (NHS) Trust. There were huge challenges in respect of quality and timeliness and if the criteria were not met they were returned. It was hoped that by February 2018, the Trust would cover all LAC assessments.

She advised that in respect of initial health assessments, only 18% had been completed out of date, as the remaining outstanding assessments had not been due until a later date.

Dr Stephanie Simon advised that due to staff leaving it had been a challenge to undertake all the health assessments; however, it had been covered by other senior medical staff.

She referred to the many improvements, including the introduction of the Health Passports, the establishment of Care Leaver Summaries and a named nurse engaging closely with LAC, which included attending drop in sessions at The Way.

She confirmed that some assessments had not been undertaken as LAC had left care, or figures had been included in adoption figures. Some LAC were also hard to reach or refused contact and in those circumstances the named nurse would offer support.

She referred to the Family Nurse Partnership and the current review of commissioning arrangements. She confirmed that the new service would be called The Partnering Families Team.

Fiona Brennan referred to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and OFSTED inspections undertaken in July 2016 and January 2017 respectively. The CQC inspection found the service to be adequate and made several recommendations. The OFSTED inspection found the service to be good; however, it highlighted the inequality of care for children placed a distance from the city. She confirmed that all the actions had been addressed and implemented.

She advised that she would now be sitting on the National Expert Group for the West Midlands and she would share and highlight best practice.

In addition to the information contained in the report and in response to questions from Board members, officers stated the following:

- There was no specific data in relation to obesity in respect of LAC; however, if it was an issue it would have already been escalated.
- It would be helpful if more general statistics on health issues for LAC could be included in future reports.
- In respect of a health presence during reviews, a balance had to be struck to ensure that there was not a large adult presence, as it was essential that children felt at ease during the process.

- When a LAC was placed outside of the city it was vital that they received the same support. Good communication was the key to ensure that delays were kept to a minimum.
- Uptake at The Way was beginning to increase, with a 'drop in' session every Friday from 1-4pm. The named nurse provided a vital link to the most vulnerable and her involvement was part of the package of support.

Resolved:

1. That the Health Service for Looked After Children Annual Report be noted.
2. That future Annual Reports include general statistics on health issues for LAC.

9 Performance Monitoring Report

Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services presented the Performance Monitoring Report for September 2017 and highlighted key points.

Emma Bennett confirmed that it was envisaged that the new format for the report would be available for the next financial year, in line with the new Dashboard.

She confirmed that the number of Looked After Children (LAC) remained at 630. At the next meeting details of national returns would be available highlighting 903 outcomes for Children in Care. The number continued to be high compared to comparator authorities. Wolverhampton was now fourteenth highest nationally and second highest in the West Midlands after Stoke on Trent. She advised that it should be noted that the number of LAC continued to increase nationally; however, in Wolverhampton it had previously fallen and was now stable.

In addition to the information contained in the report and in response to questions from Board members, officers stated the following:

- The social worker referred to being allocated one case was most likely allocated that case as a primary worker, as most cases were allocated with co-workers. It was therefore a recording issue and that social worker would have other cases.
- A bid had been made and awarded from the Controlling Migration Fund to ease the pressure on local services from recent migration and that was being used to support the asylum seekers in the city. That cohort was doing well, especially those who had attended the Royal Wolverhampton School.
- Both financial and legal support was given to those asylum seekers waiting for their status to be dealt with by the Home Office. It was a concern nationally that the process was long and protracted.
- On the Council's Learning Hub there were case studies available to view on Corporate Parenting E-Learning – Our Journey into Care.

A member of the Board asked for clarification regarding the measurement of the percentage of LAC known to the local authority 30 days prior to becoming LAC, as it did not seem clear what the 88% referred to.

Emma Bennett advised that it was the way the figure had been measured historically; however, she would check the details and advise the Board.

Resolved:

1. That the report and comments raised be noted.
2. That the Director of Children's Services confirm details of the percentage of LAC known to the local authority 30 days prior to becoming LAC.

10 **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.

11 **CAMHS Looked After Children's Mental Health report**

Dr Roberta Fry, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Joginder Shoker Kang, CAMHS Looked After Children's Team and Paulette Morris, Service Manager Specialist Mental Health CYP & F, Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust presented the report and highlighted key points.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Board's concern regarding the current referral waiting times be noted.
3. That future Annual Reports include more detailed information on referral waiting times both inside and outside the city.

12 **Councillor Visits to Establishments**

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