

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 7 September 2015

Present:

Councillors:

Peter Fowler
Dave Parsons
Clive Rickhards
Dave Shilton
Jenny St John
Chris Williams (Chair)

Officers

Ann Mawdsley, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Brenda Vincent, Services Manager (Safeguarding)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Shinderpaul Bhangal.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

None.

2. Update on the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Corporate Parenting Development Group

Members noted the rota for future CiCC meetings.

3. Improvement Plan for Looked After Children

Brenda Vincent introduced the report which collated the findings from three consultation events and was being implemented to respond to the priorities identified by young people. This would be reported against as a standing item at all future Corporate Parenting Panel meetings.

Brenda Vincent updated members on a number of other documents that were currently being developed/refreshed:

Having Your Say

This booklet, aimed at eight to fourteen year-olds, was now printed and in the process of being distributed. The CiCC had contributed towards the document and it would be made available to all children in this age group that were currently in care or coming into care.

Corporate Parenting Panel Leaflet

Brenda Vincent tabled an early draft of the leaflet for comment. Members agreed to have their contact information included, and undertook to provide a 40 word statement within two weeks for inclusion in the leaflet. A revised draft would then be shared with the CiCC.

My Review Booklet

Brenda Vincent noted that this was a booklet that young people could use in preparing for their reviews. The CiCC were looking to review the booklet. Brenda added that statutory guidance on the Care Planning for looked-after children had been published earlier in the year. This included reference to Reviews and the need to balance sharing information and understanding that the reviews belonged to the young people and needed to be sensitive to their views and how these should be recorded. Guidance was also provided on attendance at review meetings.

During the discussion that followed these points were raised:

1. Members agreed that as children and young people accessed their information primarily through their phones, that the development of an app for these documents should be investigated.
2. It was noted that for those children and young people with learning difficulties, social workers or foster carers would go through the information with the children.
3. Concern was raised about the closing the gap agenda and it was noted that this was scheduled as a report to the 26 October meeting.
4. It was highlighted that one of the recurring concerns raised by young people was not feeling prepared for adult life. Brenda noted that a workshop was being arranged (to be held before April 2016) to consider what could be done to improve preparedness for young people leaving care. This event will include young people, leaving care services and other stakeholders. Members agreed that those young people who had already left care needed to be included to share their experiences.

Members agreed that copies of the documents discussed above should be shared with Parish, Town and District/Borough Councils and schools to inform members/schools of the service and to raise awareness around children in

care, and the role that everyone had as corporate parents. Brenda Vincent undertook to progress this.

4. Update from Strategic Lead and Performance Set

Brenda Vincent summarised the performance dataset included in the report.

There was a broad discussion around the reporting of missing children, including reference to the new service commissioned by the People Group to monitor school attendance of LAC on a daily basis. It was agreed that to the following two reports are to be presented to the December meeting:

- a comprehensive report on how Warwickshire manages missing children (Anita Gurry)
- a report on Leaving Care Services (Jo Davies).

Brenda noted that Warwickshire were piloting a solo fostering care service which was going well, and gave the following updates:

Adoption Regionalisation Agenda

Brenda reported that under Government's ambition for fewer bigger adoption services across the country, funding had been made available for bidding. Warwickshire had developed a proposal with Coventry and Solihull, and this was due to be submitted on 7 September. The proposals were set out in two phases – the first to be used to align the three organisations' adoption services and the second to look at developing a single adoption service with appropriate governance. Warwickshire will lead on this development and members were given assurance that Warwickshire's services would be maintained at their current high level.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

A JSNA on LAC had been commissioned and the terms of reference for this were in the process of being finalised. The JSNA would be carried out by commissioners and would include a trends analysis, and working with stakeholders to consider outcomes for LAC across a range of areas including health and education. The JSNA would result in a set of priorities and an action plan to address these. Discussions are taking place to determine how work will be progressed and then shared with the different agencies who are responsible for LAC as corporate parents.

Ofsted Questionnaire

A copy of the Warwickshire responses to the annual Ofsted Survey of LAC was tabled. Brenda Vincent outlined the report, collating the 13 responses from Warwickshire LAC. Members agreed that while this was a small number, the outcomes reflected a credible service. It was agreed that the document should be shared with both the CiCC and within the Foster Carers' Newsletter.

5. Health Checks and Annual Health Assessments

Members noted the data provided and requested a further update be provided to an appropriate meeting, including more detail of ages and reasons why health checks had not been completed

6. Work Programme 2015/16

The work programme was agreed with the additional reports requested at this meeting.

7. Any other business

Councillor Jenny St. John requested a briefing note by provided to all members on the bursary fund for LAC going on to further education that had been allocated in the 2015 budget.

Brenda Vincent noted that the next possible date for an Ofsted inspection was 14 September 2015. She tabled a set of positive and negative themes compiled from Ofsted inspections of other authorities approaches to corporate parenting. The Panel agreed the ongoing need for training of members on their corporate parenting responsibilities and it was agreed that Councillor St. John and Brenda Vincent would look to arranging a pilot session for Warwick Councillors that will give them the opportunity to explore corporate parenting and their responsibilities in a more informal and interactive way. If successful this would be rolled out to the other district/borough areas. It was agreed that Ofsted inspections should be a regular item on the agenda for

The Chair noted that he and Councillor St. John would be visiting the Corporate Parenting Panel in Oxford on 19 October and in Stafford on 20 November. A date was also to be arranged to visit the Worcestershire Corporate Parenting Panel. These visits would be used to monitor performance of this Panel against comparative neighbours.

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting before Ann Mawdsley left Warwickshire County Council and recorded his thanks and those of the Panel to Ann for her work with the Corporate Parenting Panel. He noted the importance of the role and the need for support to be more than just an administrative function.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The future meeting dates set out in the agenda were agreed.

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Chair

The meeting closed at 12.10 am