

# Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 24 June 2019

## Present:

### Councillors:

Pete Gilbert, Jeff Morgan (Chair), Tricia Elliott (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council), Caroline Phillips, Chris Williams and Pam Williams

### Officers:

Nigel Minns, Strategic Director for the People Group  
Deena Moorey, Virtual School Head  
Sharon Shaw, Service Manager, Corporate Parenting  
Paul Spencer - Senior Democratic Services Officer

### Other attendees:

Jackie Channell, Strategic Lead (Looked After Group, NHS)

## 1. General

### (1) Apologies

Apologies for absence from the meeting had been received from Councillor Clive Rickhards, Shinderpaul Bhangal, Practice Leader - Children's Participation and John Coleman, Assistant Director - Children and Families.

### (2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None

### (3) Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2019 were agreed as a true record subject to the following amendments:

- Correcting the date of the minutes of the previous meeting which had been held on 21 January 2019.
- Item 4 - Update from the Virtual School Body. On page two, the fifth bullet point, line two the minute was changed to read 'measuring exclusions by OFSTED'.
- Correcting the date of the following meeting from 15 May to 24 June 2019.

The Chair asked for updates and matters arising from the previous minutes.

- Deena Moorey, Virtual School Head reported on the action to investigate options for funding post sixteen tuition support. A meeting had taken place with Adult Community Education, but no progress had been made to date. This was a national issue and there was currently no 'pupil premium' for children aged over sixteen attending colleges, for example

to repeat their GCSE examinations. For children looked after (CLA) a bursary could be granted of approximately £1,000, which was used in the main to fund travel costs. Nigel Minns, Strategic Director confirmed that the pupil premium ceased at age sixteen, which was a gap in the current system

- More general points were raised about the lack of appetite of students aged over sixteen to re-sit their GCSE's and the negative impact of repeated failure at examinations. This could cause some pupils to drop out of education. Another option was for the pupils to re-sit a whole year, rather than just the examinations. There was a need to consider financial support and guidance for post sixteen CLA students and to keep this subject on the Panel's Agenda.
- Discussion took place on the performance data reported at the May meeting. With regard to Section 20 accommodation orders, examples were sought of reasons for children being taken into care. This could be when the child had behaviours beyond a parent's care abilities or the breakdown of a placement. It was noted that a requested briefing note to give a breakdown of information on the CLA in care was provided later on the agenda.
- From the previous minute on the Children in Care Council, Sharon Shaw, Service Manager, Corporate Parenting gave an update about the mentoring scheme. There had been 21 expressions of interest to date and training was due to commence this month. Further meetings would take place with the group Volunteer Matters, to resolve some outstanding issues, for example the placement of people with mental health conditions or those who were currently in unstable placements. Officers were asked to take a robust approach in ensuring that those young people, who most needed the mentoring support were able to be included.
- On the good news stories from the last meeting, there had now been four placements in the House Project, which supported young people who were leaving care.
- The Chair welcomed the appointment of Councillor Tricia Elliott and he asked that a letter be sent in his name to encourage further district and borough council representation on the Panel.

## **2. Update on Children in Care Council (CiCC)**

Sharon Shaw presented a written update to the Panel, which covered the following areas:

- Pledge Poster/Pledge Card/ Social Worker Poster
- Refugee Banquet Week
- Young Inspectors
- Accommodation Guide for Care Leavers Mentoring Scheme
- Quirky Café and Re-Use Project
- Grab Guides NHS
- Home Furnishing Grant
- Football Project
- Star Awards

Members sought further information and submitted questions and comments as follows:

- On the 'Grab Guides', there was discussion about access to GP services. It was stated that with a few exceptions, nearly all CLA were either registered with or had access to a GP.
- The progress with the football project was noted. It was questioned whether similar provision was made for cricket. This had been raised by young asylum seekers and it was being pursued for the Leamington area. Councillor Gilbert referred to the excellent facilities available in both the Nuneaton and Bedworth areas.
- The Chair requested that in future all documents for the Panel be circulated with the Agenda.
- The location of the Quirky Café was confirmed, being co-located with a drop in centre on Myton Road, between Warwick and Leamington. If this trial was successful, there were plans for a second centre at Portland House in Nuneaton.

### **Resolved**

That the Panel notes the report.

### **3. Performance Data**

The Panel reviewed the latest performance infographic, acknowledging the useful data and format of the document. Questions were raised on the following areas:

- It was noted that at May 2019, 91% of CLA had a completed their annual health assessment. There was a variety of reasons why the remainder hadn't completed such assessments. An example was where the child was located out of area and the assessment was undertaken by the local provider. Related to this, the Panel discussed the reasons for CLA being located out of area and ensuring that assessments were completed. Other reasons were where the child had declined the assessment or their carer was unable to take them to the appointment. Jackie Channell, Strategic Lead (Looked After Group, NHS) advised that she received quarterly information on the timeliness of health assessments and she outlined the multi-agency endeavours to improve further the proportion of CLA that had the annual assessment. The Chair asked that this be noted as an area for the Panel to review at a future meeting.
- Members sought further information about CLA who were missing or away from placement without authorisation. A person was deemed as missing if they had been absent for longer than 48 hours. It was questioned if there were any children missing currently and the actions taken to respond to CLA that went missing repeatedly. Officers advised that there was one missing person currently, but they made regular telephone contact. Review meetings were held to seek to identify patterns for those going missing and who the CLA were associating with. There was confidence in the good processes in place.

- A chart compared Warwickshire CLA to the national average in terms of the stability of short and long term placements. It was confirmed that the data for Warwickshire was higher than the national average for short term placements and lower in terms of long term placements. There were eight CLA who moved home regularly and in such cases, a residential placement might be better for them. There was evidence that helping young people find employment helped with placement stability. Support was provided through various routes to encourage young people to continue with their education, to gain career advice or find employment. The progress being made was noted, but members questioned if its pace could be increased further. There were plans to review the structure of CLA support within the County Council.
- There was a shortage of foster carers nationally and matching placements was a challenge, particularly in areas of high demand. Warwickshire was attracting new foster carers, but likewise some were reaching the end of their careers.
- Leaving care activity status was discussed, it being noted that 88% of CLA were in suitable accommodation. A key group was 'sofa surfers' who moved frequently. These could often be people aged 18 who had run into difficulties in managing their accommodation and were then classed as intentionally homeless.

#### **Resolved**

That the Panel notes the report.

#### **4. Forward Plan**

The Panel reviewed an extract of the Council's Forward Plan. This detailed areas to be considered by the Cabinet over the coming months and which concerned corporate parenting issues. The strategic director gave a brief verbal report on an exempt report coming to the Cabinet in July 2019.

#### **Resolved**

That the Panel notes the report.

#### **5. Development of Work Programme for 2019/20**

The Corporate Parenting Panel reviewed its work programme for 2019/20. In addition to the standing items for each meeting, it was agreed to consider an item on mental health assessments at the Panel on 19 July. This meeting would also consider the items shown in the programme on the Virtual School Governing Body and Housing Related Support for Care Leavers. The remaining items scheduled for the July meeting would be deferred to September.

Nigel Minns advised that a focus visit from Office for Standards in Education was expected shortly and its findings may also be available for the September meeting.

## **Resolved**

The Panel updates its work programme for 2019/20 as set out above.

### **6. Update from the Virtual School Governing Body**

Deena Moorey gave a verbal report to the Panel. The body now had its head teacher representation, but it still required an additional County Councillor. Councillor Gilbert expressed an interest in participating and this would be discussed further by the relevant Portfolio Holders.

With regard to children missing education, weekly meetings took place between education and social care officers, who were fine tuning the approach to cases involving CLA. Progress was being made overall, but there remained some areas of key concern. An example was asylum seekers who arrived later in the academic year when schools were focussing on revision classes for year 11 students. There was no funding to enable the County Council to provide for example, English lessons, due to budgets being devolved to schools.

## **Resolved**

That the Panel notes the report.

### **7. Children's Residential Report**

Sharon Shaw had circulated a written report following the request submitted previously by members. The report covered:

- Residential care statistics - including the needs of the children
- Residential care commissioning and costs
- A comparison with the national statistical picture

A map was circulated showing the locations where Warwickshire CLA were being accommodated out of County. Discussion took place on the weekly costs associated with providing this service, which were perceived to be higher than the reported average cost. The costs varied dependent on the child's needs. There were regular reviews to assess the level of support required and the potential for each person to return to Warwickshire. A range of options were being considered to reduce reliance on national placements, including the commissioning of step down block accommodation. The pilot scheme had four placements and this was going well to date. Building relationships with two new children's homes was a further example.

The positive report was welcomed and members asked if there could be further detail, to highlight mental health aspects, the types of placements and lengths of stay in those placements. The Chair suggested this should be kept under review.

Councillor Elliott referred to children with autism and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA). Some children with PDA benefited from a different parenting approach including visible stimulus, rather than being instructed verbally. There seemed some confusion over whether this was recognised by the County Council. It

was agreed that Nigel Minns would speak with Councillor Elliott outside the meeting, so that this could be researched and the matter brought back to a subsequent meeting.

**Resolved**

The Panel notes the report.

**8. Good News Stories**

The Chair invited those present to share any good news stories. Reference was made to a recent refugee event and an event to recognise the work of foster carers. This had included awards for carers who had completed 15 years of service and a foster carer of the year award. Both events had been very successful.

Further information was provided on the House Project, the pilot scheme to accommodate four young people, which also gave them training as a group and a support network. The next phase for the Nuneaton area would accommodate 12 people. It would be helpful to secure district and borough council involvement in providing tenancies. The Chair would include this in his letter seeking further representatives to join the Panel.

An outline was given of the activities planned over the summer months, including those for young people and foster carers.

**Resolved**

That the Panel notes the report.

**9. Any other Business**

Councillor Pam Williams had recently attended a SACRE meeting at a mosque and noted that it had classroom facilities. It was questioned whether this should be regulated, but it wasn't the case for religious classes provided outside the school day.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel would take place on 19 July 2019 at 10.00am in Committee Room 3, Shire Hall, Warwick.

The meeting closed at 11.45am

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Chair