

Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday, 8 February 2018, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Mr M Bayliss,
Mrs L C Hodgson, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs J A Potter,
Cllr Margaret Sherrey, Catherine Driscoll and Jake Shaw

Also attended:

Ellen Footman
Celano Rossano

Tina Russell (Assistant Director Safeguarding Services
(Childrens Social Care)), Celano Rossano, Rhys Davies
and James MacDonald

116 Apologies

Apologies were received from Pattie Hill, Nicky Gale and
Gerry O'Donnell

117 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the
meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

118 Review of previous Action Points

Action points from the last agenda had either been dealt
with or would be during the course of the meeting.

Councillor Oborski informed the Corporate Parenting
Board that she and Margaret Sherry had attended a
superb training event for Adverse Childhood Experiences
(ACE)

119 Quarterly Data Set - Q3

Headline data was provided.

In the discussion the following points were clarified:

- Ongoing work had improved the stability of
children's placements being 13% in December
and reducing to 10% in current figures
- Councillor Oborski queried the bar chart for
"District Profiles/ Looked After Children by District
of Placement Postcode" as some of those
included were actually out of Worcestershire. Jake
Shaw confirmed he had asked for this data to be
altered but suggested the data within the
Corporate Parenting Dataset supplied this
placement information

- Councillor Potter queried lines 16 and 17 within this dataset as it indicated targets for Health Assessments and Pathway Plans were not being met. Jake Shaw confirmed that Health Assessments were increasing slowly and that a dedicated team for looked after children was in place as part of the Health & Wellbeing Team who were working closely with Social Workers to improve the flow of information. He hoped to see numbers decrease with this team in place.

ACTIONS

1. **This update was noted.**

120 Care Leavers Housing and Accommodation update

This update was produced following a presentation made to the Corporate Parenting Board in October by four care leavers, their Personal Advisors and managers from the Care Leavers Service. During this presentation a 'wish list' was read out that was believed would greatly assist care leavers to make the transition into adult life.

Rhys Davies and James McDonald brought the Care Leavers and Housing Update to the Board to provide information on key areas of development work in respect of both the 'wish list' aims and other areas of joint development working.

There was a recommendation that the Corporate Parenting Board receive regular updates on the progress of housing and care leavers from both the Care Leavers Services and District Housing.

During the update a number of points were made with Marc Bayliss raising concerns that 10 – 11% of care leavers being in unsuitable accommodation and asked for clarification on the number of children in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Rhys Davies confirmed there were none that he was aware of which was also confirmed by Nina Warrington who stated the figures for Worcester City were not easy to extract. In 2016 there were nine Care Leavers in temporary accommodation, five of these being young people from care with the others being aged up to 21 years old. In 2017 four Care Leavers were in temporary accommodation with two older Care Leavers being in B & B and two in Crash Pads at the YMCA.

Sally Clewes asked why quarterly information was not made available more frequently and where was it held.

Tina Russell advised this quarterly data enabled the team to complete a more useful analysis of trends. In monthly data this was more difficult and could be quite reactive to little changes that were not really an actual trend of performance. For the purpose of this board quarterly data aided a more useful discussion. The business did monitor a range of data weekly and monthly.

Councillor Roberts welcomed the quarterly data and felt more information around qualitative data would give a real life experience.

Jake Shaw suggested that the data specific to some of the youth groups be looked at and discussed with Speak Out.

Discussions arose around Crash Pad Plus. Councillor Marc Bayliss questioned how many units were in the north and the south of the County and asked if, in terms of current demand, this was appropriate.

Councillor Lucy Hodgson added that this was a staff intensive project and suggested volunteers may be able to take up some of the demand. She felt it would be worthwhile looking at what the VCS is already doing and what community projects were going on across Worcestershire.

Jake Shaw confirmed Care Leavers Services had started to make connections with VCS and refugee support groups and there were a number of volunteers waiting to help and provide support.

Nina Warrington advised the Corporate Parenting Board that there would be changes in funding and it was hoped that following the consultation which closed 23rd January, different streams of funding would be available.

Sally Clewes raised the issue of care leavers being referred to as homeless when they were actually searching for homes and asked that the Board look at changing how Care Leavers were referred to.

Nina Warrington confirmed that the housing team had already started looking at the terminology in their service area and this was noted by the Corporate Parenting Board.

Marc Bayliss was concerned that there was a need to use terms that raise the issue of homeless care leavers

to keep it on the public agenda.

Councillor Roberts gave a recommendation on what terminology should be used and Sally Clewes agreed to take this back to discuss with care leaver groups.

Catherine Driscoll added that agencies needed to think about their lobbying voice and turning up the volume for care leavers. If the legislation was poorly drafted then the Board would need to think about how to get it heard in political circles.

Jane Potter referred to point 14 on the Care Leavers and Housing Update and requested more information on the discussions between the Care Leavers service and Speak Out.

Sally Clewes agreed to go back to the young people and if they agreed, would share the minutes of that meeting.

Councillor Roberts asked if things were improving. Catherine Driscoll felt she could not assure the Board that all the things the County Council were committed to have been done, although a lot of hard work had been done. She highlighted that the 2017 Social Work Act was clear Districts share corporate parenting responsibilities as Corporate Parents. She reminded the Board that OFSTED would be returning in April 2018 and agreed with Councillor Bayliss that they would be asking for numbers of how many young people are in B & B.

Nina Warrington stated that under the Section 11 order there were a range of questions with the WM framework but nothing specifically about corporate parenting, she felt that something needed to be added on this.

Catherine Driscoll agreed to feed this back.

Councillor Fran Oborski requested an update on the proposal to exempt care leavers from council tax. Jake Shaw confirmed this had been discussed at the Worcestershire Leaders' Board on 1st February and they had recommended that District councils will use their discretionary hardship funds to reduce the council tax liability to zero for care leavers under the age of 25 with effect from 1 April 2018, subject to the following:

1. The care leaver being in receipt of some council tax support for at least part of the year;
2. The district council being notified by the County Council promptly of all care leavers under the age of 25 living in its area;

3. If the financial burden / additional administration becomes unmanageable for any district council, then that district council reserves the right to seek financial assistance from the County Council.

Jake Shaw agreed to feed back to the Corporate Parenting Board if District Council Leaders endorsed this approach.

Councillor Bayliss asked if officers could provide assurance that if OFSTED came in tomorrow they would see an improvement as they would need to see a rapid improvement that B & B is no longer being used.

This was echoed by Councillor Andy Roberts.

Catherine Driscoll responded that she felt the Corporate Parenting Board could not be assured that all had been done that the County Council was committed to. Corporate Parenting did need to be continually highlighted and it was for District Councils to step up. A lot of work was still needed which was a joint responsibility and the Corporate Parenting Board was the vehicle to send this message. She was pleased with the measures that were being taken but as a Corporate Parent she was concerned the standard was not satisfactory and hoped people would work hard to eradicate B & B.

ACTIONS:

1. **The Corporate Parenting Board receives regular updates on the progress of housing and care leavers from both the Care Leavers Services and District Housing.**
2. **The data specific to some of the youth groups be looked at and discussed with Speak Out.**
3. **Sally Clewes to speak to young people looking for homes - to identify how they wish to be referred to as an alternative to 'homeless'.**
4. **Sally Clewes to share the minutes of those discussions.**
5. **Catherine Driscoll to feedback comments that the WM Framework does not include questions specifically on corporate parenting.**
6. **Jake Shaw agreed to feedback to the Corporate Parenting Board if Council Leaders agreed to endorsing care leavers being exempt from council tax.**

121 Consultation with Looked After Children

Sally Branchflower updated the Corporate Parenting Board on the consultation activity day that had taken place at Perdiswell on 25th October

The Suggestion Tree had provided some rich information on how young people wanted their meetings to be.

Feedback from the session had been positive and both carers and young people wanted this consultation activity day to be an annual event.

This event had led to more consultation with the Care Council and the design would be rolled out across looked after children.

Further events were planned with partners and fostering services to encourage a culture change in meetings to make them how the young people wanted them.

The Board asked for reassurance that this would facilitate change and encourage new ideas and Sally Branchflower confirmed she would do everything to make sure this happened and was happy to come back and update the Corporate Parenting Board.

ACTIONS:

- 1. PowerPoint on the activity day at Perdiswell to be circulated to the Board.**
- 2. Sally Branchflower agreed to feedback on the effectiveness of the consultation through the IRO annual report.**

122 Children and Young People who have become Looked After

Tina Russell updated the Corporate Parenting Board on the process put in place Nov 16 that was followed when children and young people were received into care. Tina outlined the guidance in practice and how the form ensured worker followed statutory duties and best practice including ensuring we have young person's and the parents' views on bringing them into local authority care. The Team Manager was responsible for the assessment the Group Managers then reviewed the case and decided whether it was in the child's best interests to protect them from harm or promote their welfare by bring them into care.

Examples were then given of three cases of pro-active safeguarding which the Corporate Parenting Board found very informative.

Councillor Andy Roberts felt it would be useful to have

updates in the future on how these three cases were progressing.

Councillor Marc Bayliss asked what are the independent mechanisms for reviewing decisions made and requested reassurance of the appeal process.

Tina Russell confirmed that clear parental consent was required in all Section 20 (voluntary care) cases, and whilst there was a "no order" principal within the Children Act 1989 i.e. if we could work with a family without a court order we should, there had also been clear direction to LA about not allowing children in S20 to drift in care without effective permanency. For other cases they went through the Court process and children had an independent Guardian and solicitor as do parents so there is a lot of independent review of the LA decision making and plans. The IRO service is also the independent mechanism for reviewing the quality of care planning by the LA. For decisions not to bring a child into care but leaving them in the family home meant there was less independent scrutiny but there was a managers audit process in place to review both decision making and quality of case work

ACTIONS:

1. **Tina Russell to update the Corporate Parenting Board on the three cases used as examples of safeguarding.**

123 Children's Social Care Operating Model

Tina outlined the new operating model for children social care. In short the new model developed smaller teams and gave enhanced managerial oversight and supervisions for social workers and we had developed a Through Care service where Looked After Children Permanency Team, Out Reach services and Care Leaver services had come together to provide a coordinated and streamline service to children and young people during their journey through care.

ACTION:

The update was noted.

124 Leisure Passes

Sally Clewes stated that Joe Frost from Green Fingers had asked her to bring information regarding Leisure Passes to the Corporate Parenting Board. Sally presented a paper on behalf of the children and young people. It would appear that there were discrepancies on what was available across District Councils. Redditch

and Bromsgrove has recently changed their offer to looked after children and care leavers.

Sally agreed to send information for the Corporate Parenting Board to read.

Councillor Marc Bayliss agreed to take this to the County and District Leaders Group.

Councillor Roberts suggested Leaders of the Council to meet representatives of Looked After Children groups.

ACTIONS:

- 1. Sally Clewes agreed to send information on Leisure Passes to the Corporate Parenting Board.**
- 2. Councillor Bayliss to take the issue of changes to leisure passes to the County and District Leaders Group.**
- 3. Leaders of the Council to meet and discuss with representatives of the Looked After Children groups.**

125 Work Plan

The Corporate Parenting Board were asked to provide their availability for In Touch events for the week commencing 3rd April.

ACTIONS

- 1. The work plan was noted.**
- 2. Corporate Parenting Board Members to provide availability for w/c 3rd April.**

126 Future Meeting Dates

Future Meeting Dates for 2018 were:

22 March 2018
3rd – 6th April – In Touch Events
7 June 2018
12 July 2018
11 October 2018
29 November 2018

At 2pm at County Hall unless otherwise specified

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chairman