

Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday, 20 July 2017, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Cllr Joe Baker, Mrs L C Hodgson, Ms P A Hill, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs J A Potter, Cllr Margaret Sherrey and Mr David Watkins

Also attended:

Rosie Badham, Alison Brill, Catherine Driscoll, Gwen Fennell, Lewis Maskell, Jeremy Newell, Celena Rossano, Tina Russell, Jake Shaw, Andrew Tombs, Rona Whitfield

89 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Marc Bayliss, Dr C Hotham and Cllr Gerry O'Donnell. Jeremy Newell attended for Ellen Footman.

90 Confirmation of Minutes - 22 June 2017

The minutes of the last meeting on 22 June 2017 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

91 Virtual Head Teacher Report

The virtual School Governing Body had held their second meeting.

Training courses were being organised for social care staff to enable them to understand the educational process for Looked After Children. Details of other training and support programmes included: Attachment training, which was mandatory for all schools and the Attachment Aware Schools programme which was entering phase one where ten schools would initially be trained and would then help spread good practice to other schools; English, Maths and Phonics Workshops were held for Carers; a second cohort of middle school pupils took part in the Fresh Air Project in July; support for individual Year 10 Looked After Children to help prevent them from becoming NEETs and Mentor Link, a mentoring service offered to all schools.

In the following discussion it was clarified that:

- Social work training was essential and it was suggested the training could be taken to team meetings to improve the numbers of staff able to attend,
- The Attachment Training was organised so that 10 schools would initially receive training and support. They would then be available to support

other schools and become a centre of excellence on Attachment. Every school in Worcestershire had received funding to organise their own Attachment Training. The Virtual School would ensure it was implemented,

- Board members were keen to ensure that schools should be questioned as to why they turned down the opportunity for the initial Attachment Awareness Schools Project and the Governors of schools should be included in all Attachment Training communications,
- Babcock were in the process of updating placement and transfer information,
- There was a concern that an adopted child had been sent to a school which had received a 'Requires Improvement' rating from Ofsted; which was against the Council policy of placing them in a Good or Outstanding School. It was clarified that the Local Authority can ask an Academy to admit a child but has no power to direct it to do so. The Local Authority and the Academy will usually come to an agreement, but if the Academy refuses to admit the child, the Local Authority can ask the Secretary of State to intervene. The Secretary of State has the power under an Academy's Funding Agreement to direct the Academy to admit a child and can seek advice from the Adjudicator in reaching a decision.

ACTIONS

The following items would be brought to the November Corporate Parenting Board:

- 1) The Virtual School Improvement Plan 2017/18**
- 2) The Virtual School Self-Evaluation 2016/17 (Data will be included within the document)**
- 3) The Autumn Term Head Teacher Report.**

An overview of the Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report 2016-17 was presented to the Board.

- Andrew Tombs and Sally Branchflower had taken over in March 2017 and they now had an experienced and stable team of 10 Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO),
- Workloads for IRO were currently too high but additional admin support and the edge of care strategy should address this,
- The timeliness of Looked after Reviews were now recorded using the actual date of review and there were plans to improve the completion of the record of discussion,

- A revised Dispute Resolution Process had been implemented and a dashboard would soon be able to identify areas of concerns,
- There was a focus on improving how many children participated in and/or attended their own reviews.

In the following discussion it was clarified:

- that the tables showing Looked After Children by District, showed where the children were living when they became looked after, rather than where they currently live. Councillors on the Board requested that in future they receive data about where Looked After Children currently live,
- The Report was the Annual Report for 2016/17 following last year's Annual Report which had been presented very late. In future the quarterly reports would be produced more regularly,
- The report was easy to read for young people and dyslexics,
- IRO were currently managing to complete their core role, but due to current workloads were unable to complete additional quality assurance tasks, such as audits,
- The increasing numbers of Looked After Children was partly due to improving safeguarding work. Future quarterly reports would detail how work was on-going with the Edge of Care Strategy to reduce the numbers needed to be moved into care and also being able to move them out of care more quickly,
- There were currently 7 voluntary independent visitors but 15 had been commissioned and were currently being recruited.

ACTIONS:

- 1. In future quarterly reports would be produced and would include:**
 - 1) How many Looked After Children there were by age in each district and at which school**
 - 2) The most up to date information available,**
 - 3) Information which could be shared with District Councils**
 - 4) The dashboard of issues which had been escalated by IROs**
- 2) The numbers of Looked After Children who requested advocacy in 2015/16 to be provided at the next meeting to enable**

93 Corporate Parenting Strategy Work Plan and Pledge

comparison with 2016/17 figures,

The draft Worcestershire Corporate Parenting Board Pledges to our Looked After Children were presented to the Board. A young person on the Board felt the pledge should simply be "we will ensure your voice is always heard". It was explained that the more detailed pledges had been developed to enable actions to be measured but following the suggestion one over-arching pledge would be considered with more detail underneath.

The Board were keen for there to be a wide agreement and support for the strategy with Worcestershire businesses, charities and the general population signing up, not just the main health and care partners. Jake Shaw had met with housing providers from the 6 districts to involve them in early help, safeguarding and support for care leavers. It was felt that District Councillors could help to take the message out to the wider community.

ACTIONS:

- 1) Once the format of the pledges had been re-designed young people and Councillors would be consulted,**
- 2) The Areas of focus to be used to populate the work plan for the Board and dates to be allocated.**

94 Work Programme

ACTION: The Chairman confirmed that he and the Vice-Chairman would populate the workplan in consultation with Jake Shaw as Lead Officer and bring it back to the October meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Chairman