

**Corporate Parenting Board****Thursday, 5 October 2017, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm****Minutes****Present:**

Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Mrs F M Oborski,  
Cllr. Gerry O'Donnell, Mrs J A Potter,  
Cllr Margaret Sherrey and Mr David Watkins

**Also attended:**

Kate Bailey, Sally Clewes, Philippa Coleman, Catherine Driscoll, Gwen Fennell, Ellen Footman, Lewis Maskell, Jake Shaw, Tina Russell and Stuart Watkins.

**95 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Patti Hill, Lucy Hodgson, Charlie Hotham and Sally Branchflower. Kate Bailey attended for Rosie Badham.

**96 Confirmation of the minutes - 20 July 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2017 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

**97 Review of Previous Action Points**

The Action Points from the last meeting were noted, and would be dealt with either later in the meeting or were on the agenda for the next meeting.

A question raised in the minutes regarding whether there were any Looked After Children being taught in schools which had been rated 'requires improvement' by OFSTED was answered. In future they would not be placed in requiring improvement schools unless there were strong reasons for that to happen. If a school was moved into that category following an inspection any Looked After Child would not automatically be moved if it was felt that they were doing well and the school met their needs.

**98 Proposal for meetings**

The proposal for future meetings was agreed.

**99 CPB Data Set**

Jake Shaw presented the Corporate Parenting Board Dataset which had come from the Service Improvement Plan.

The figures showed an increase in the numbers of Looked After Children which put pressure on social work teams. The figures also showed the numbers placed out

of county, more than 20 miles from home. It was agreed that in future the figures should also show those in county but more than 20 miles from home.

Looked after children may move up to 3 times if there is a breakdown in the placement or if there was not enough time to find an appropriated placement. A Task and Finish Group had been set up to look at how placements could be better supported and therefore reduce the number of placement breakdowns. Sometimes breakdowns could be caused because the carers do not know the full background history of the young person but there had also been problems when the negatives had been disclosed without enough attention focussed on what the young person was good at or their strong points. The Council did have some advanced carers to cope with the more difficult situations.

It would be possible to share details of the numbers of carers in each district once permission had been gained from the carers.

It could appear that agencies cost up to twice as much as in house carers and efforts were being made to support and encourage internal carers. However training and other costs needed to be taken into account to arrive at a true comparative cost.

Foster carers would be asked to get in touch with District Councillors and share information. Events for foster carers were being held in each district and Councillors would be invited. The events varied but they would all be for families and Carers and Children would be welcome.

The number of Looked After Children that were placed out of County looked quite high but sometimes it was necessary to use out of County placements for the Child's safety.

A query was raised regarding the efficiency of Looked After Children moving schools when they moved placement. The situation was improving but it relied on social workers knowing when moves were going to happen so that they could ensure that arrangements were in place.

It was agreed that the dataset was now fairly complete and could in future be presented quarterly. Once agreed the data set should not keep changing as it would not be possible to monitor figures over time.

## ACTIONS

- 1) The number of children placed in County but still more than 20 miles from home should be shown in future reports,
- 2) Foster Carer recruitment would be put on a future agenda,
- 3) The data set would be signed off at the November meeting.

### 100 Pledges to our Looked After Children and Care Leavers

The updated pledges made by the Board to Looked After Children and Care Leavers were noted.

The Chairman queried how they would know who their friends were. He was told that if the young person was being suitably supported they would know.

### 101 Care Leavers Strategy Update

Stuart Watkins was joined by Dan Sharp, Personal Advisor and Carole Stewart, Team Manager who brought along Aaron, Kane and Scott to talk about their experiences.

Some improvement had been made in the Care Leavers Service but it was recognised that there was a long way to go. 6.5 fte personal advisors had been recruited and they each had a case load of up to 24.

The number of up to date pathway plans were now at 79%

The number in education, employment or training was at 61%

The number of statutory visits completed was now at 50%

All an improvement from the end of August 2017.

2 Peer Mentor Trainees had been recruited. The positions were a stepping stone to permanent employment and also advised the service on what could be done to improve the service for care leavers. There was the potential to recruit up to 10 trainees.

The Family Firm media campaign was being launched during Care Leavers Week at the end of October and it would remind everyone what it meant to be a Corporate Parent.

Most Care leavers were in suitable accommodation. Since the inspection 2 individuals had been in bed and breakfasts, both moved there without the Council's knowledge.

The Draft joint Housing Protocol had been written and would be brought back to the CPB meeting in November for sign off.

A training flat had been set up to be used in Redditch. The intention was to set up similar flats in other areas. A drop-in centre has started at Axis Youth Hub in Kidderminster and further drop-ins centres were planned for Redditch, Worcester and Evesham.

The Council now had responsibility for Care leavers up to the age of 25 so a further 249 young people could require a service. Care leavers who were no longer in touch had been written to and 61% of respondents wanted a service. Worcestershire had joined the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum to learn about best practice for 21-25 year olds.

Carol Stewart from the Care Leavers Team explained how things were improving:

- the team now had stronger links with housing services,
- Pathway plans were being completed more quickly and were of a better quality; all personal advisors were getting training,
- Staff were being allocated to upcoming care leavers who were 17. Part of the preparation for transition to adult services was managing young people's expectations of what would be available,
- Performance management data was available on a daily basis.

However they were still working on improving the service being provided, accessing support from health and mental health services and dealing with emergency homelessness.

Four young people spoke of their experiences and felt that they were experiencing positive changes in their lives through their contact with the care leavers' team. All the young people were very thankful and full of praise for the help and support they had received. The only criticisms raised were about the length of time it took waiting for a flat, and the difficulty of applying for Universal Credit.

Carole Stewart raised certain issues she wondered if the Board could help with:

- Whether something could be done to help subsidise the care leavers bills, such as the waiving of Council Tax for Care Leavers and

**102 Transformation plans and transition arrangements for young people moving from Children's to Adult Mental health Services**

problems with the 6 week wait for Universal Credit. It was suggested that the DWP could help with this,

- Whether there should be joint commissioning arrangements for those with more complex needs?
- Could the pathway plan be the main plan for young people, with the IRO leading the process?

**ACTIONS**

- 1. The Draft Joint Housing Protocol would be brought to the next meeting for sign off,**
- 2. A statement on health and well-being should be included in future reports,**
- 3. A response should be prepared regarding the issues raised by the Care Leavers Team Managers.**

Philippa Coleman introduced the third annual report regarding the Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. The report detailed new services and initiatives and showed how services were being consolidated and providing outcomes.

The different strands of the Transformation plan were detailed in the agenda and included:

- Kooth.com – an online platform for free counselling and advice,
- Reach 4 Wellbeing – a county wide team offering short-term group support programmes,
- Worcestershire YMCA mental health champions offering 1 to 1 Counselling,
- A Specialist Community Eating Disorders Service to help promote earlier identification and referral and a reduction in the number of admissions to hospital. Maureen Forde explained that in-patient care was not available in Worcestershire so they wanted to keep youngsters with their family if possible. There were hopes that a parents support group would be set up and also that they could soon take self-referrals.

In the following discussion various points were clarified:

- That traditionally there had been problems with the transition from children to adult services due to the difficulty in identifying adult mental health workers, but now the transition planning was starting when the young person got to 17 1/2,
- Children with the highest need would be

		<p>transferred to the adult service but some children would not meet the threshold for adult mental health services,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a psychologist in the Integrated Service for Looked After Children (ISL) funded by transformation monies, who worked with children who did not meet the threshold for specialist CAMHS, but there was only one,</li> <li>• It was clarified that Looked after Children and Care Leavers were not prioritised for services but they were not at a disadvantage compared to other children, as access to services is based on clinical criteria. The Corporate Parenting Board felt this needed to be addressed as they were areas of focus for the Board and the most vulnerable children should be prioritised.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Looked after Children and Care Leavers should be prioritised in the Transformation Plan;</b></li> <li>2) <b>At a future meeting the transition between children and adult services would be looked at in more detail.</b></li> </ol>
103	<b>Health Assessments Update</b>	<p>Stuart Watkins gave an update on health assessments. The number of up to date health assessments had now reached 58% which showed an improvement but there was still work to be done.</p> <p>A specialist health assessment nurse team (3 workers) had been created within the ISL Health and Wellbeing team. Social work teams were being reminded of the importance of completing the health assessments and outstanding health assessments were now shown on the CFC dashboard by worker and team.</p> <p>Paediatricians completed initial health assessments and they were then reviewed by health visitors or school nurses.</p> <p>Completed health assessments showed they were of good quality but completion rates were too low.</p>
104	<b>Work Programme</b>	<p>The Board considered the work programme and made the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Virtual School Headteacher would continue to give termly reports. The Spring term report would be given at the March meeting,</li> <li>• The Annual Report of the Healthy Care Steering</li> </ul>

**105      Future Meeting  
Dates**

Group would be brought to the 8 February meeting.

Future Meeting dates:

30 November 2017	All at 2pm at County Hall
8 February 2018	
22 March 2018	
7 June 2018	
12 July 2018	
11 October 2018	
29 November 2018	

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm

Chairman .....

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