

Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday, 13 June 2019, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Ms H Dyke, Ryan H, Mr M Johnson, Mrs F M Oborski, Charlie P and Mrs J A Potter

Also attended:

Alison Brill, Emma Brittain, Catherine Driscoll, Linda Joyce, Heather Manning, Selina Rawitz, Tina Russell, Elaine Salter and Kate Griffiths

187 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Juliet Brunner, Patti Hill, Lucy Hodgson, Charlie Hotham and Margaret Sherrey.

188 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 21 March 2019 were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting subject to the amendment that Catherine Driscoll had been present at the meeting. The Chairman signed the minutes.

189 Review of Previous Action Points

Actions points would be brought back to the Board if they were not being resolved.

190 Appointment of Vice Chairman

Following the training day and subsequent meetings it had been decided that the Vice-Chairman of the Board should be a District Councillor. It was proposed that the role should be renewed each year.

Rob Adams proposed that the Vice Chairman should be a District Councillor who was not also a County Councillor and therefore proposed Mike Johnson for the position. There were no other nominations and Board Members agreed to Councillor Johnson becoming Vice Chairman.

Councillor Johnson accepted the role of Vice Chairman but pointed out that it was a struggle for District Councillors to know what practical steps they could take in their role as Corporate Parents. He mentioned that one clear request had been for District Councillors to sponsor job roles or work experience for care leavers.

The Director of Children, Families and Communities

**191 Independent
Reviewing
Officer Annual
Report**

responded that housing for Care Leavers was another area which District Councillors could help to prioritise care leavers, although as Redditch was the only District with its own housing stock, it was appreciated that this would mean getting the support of Registered Social Landlords. The representative from Housing responded that Care Leavers were the top priority and it would be necessary for more data to be shared with the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group. The aim was not to place any care leavers in bed and breakfast accommodation but that still happened in some emergency situations. Worcestershire was working on a Housing First Project which entailed providing housing and then wrapping support around the person to help them maintain the position.

The Chairman explained that it was important to embrace the Districts in the Corporate Parenting Role and suggested that perhaps alternate meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board should be held in District locations.

Linda Joyce explained that she was attending the meeting on behalf of Sally Branchflower to give an update on IROs (Independent Reviewing Officers).

The team were now fully staffed and were diverse in terms of age, gender and ethnic background. They had regular supervision to check caseloads and were encouraged to attend training.

The role of the IRO was to monitor the role of the authority in care planning, Chair review meetings – if that was what the child wished, and ensure the child's wishes were central to the process. Records were kept which showed detailed actions and recorded the young person's story in a sensitive and positive way.

A data set was produced for each worker with key targets to ensure timeliness of reviews and feedback and to enable any problems to be picked up. If any disputes occurred, IROs could help to resolve the situation, informally at first but they could then escalate the issue if necessary.

The Child's Voice was very important and the IRO ensured that children had a say in how their review meetings were set up and organised. IROs were making an effort to move reviews away from offices and schools, if that was what the child wanted. Children were able to give feedback on the minutes of their meetings. How the

children engaged with the process was varied for the individual – some preferred to speak on the phone rather than attend meetings, while some emailed or sent feedback via the MOMO app, depending on how they wished to engage. The Mind Of My Own app was accessible to young people and their social workers; it had been available for over a year and people had said it was very easy to use.

Quality assurance was maintained in a number of ways. Mid-point audits were held when input was received from the child; practice acknowledgements were given to social workers to recognise good work and some joint visits were done with a manager to assess workers.

In future the service would work on continued timeliness of reviews, involving children even more in the process and ensuring there were good links between teams.

Various comments were made:

- A young person attending the meeting pointed out that most young people would engage with the one person they trust. It was pointed out that some young people, when they became settled didn't want to take time out for meetings and in those cases review meetings could be held yearly
- Reviews had to happen at set points – within 1 month, 3 months and then 6 monthly. If needed, reviews could happen more frequently
- Sometimes children did not want their parents involved with reviews, which could be difficult, especially with older children, but parents still needed to be given high level information
- Benchmarking was not really carried out with other local authorities but the review timetable was a nationally set requirement
- The endpoint of when IROs stopped working with children would happen if the child returned home, they reached 18 or were adopted. Everyone involved had to agree that the reviews could stop and sometimes visits would continue at home until the situation had settled
- Nationally the figures on the numbers adopted had been falling. Worcestershire figures were good within the West Midlands region but the

numbers were still not increasing

- Permanency planning was improving and overall children were spending less time in care before finding a permanent place

The Chairman thanked Linda for her update and providing assurance to the Board.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Parenting Board noted the contents of the report and considered if there were any issues that the IRO service should take into account in the forthcoming year.

ACTION: Board Members should share the contents of the IRO Annual Report with the persons/ services they represent on the board.

192 Get Safe

Emma Britain explained that Get Safe was the partnership title for the identification and management of multi-agency support and protection for children and young people at risk of **G**ang-related activity, sexual **E**xploitation, **T**rafficking, modern day **S**lavery, **A**bsent and missing, **F**orced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation, and criminal **E**xploitation.

GET SAFE linked to existing multi-agency forums and processes within education, health, youth justice and the police and the Strategic Group oversees the GET SAFE Action Plan. Risks and vulnerability in people aged 0-25 were being assessed and identified and the Operational Group would look at high risk cases and problem areas.

The GET SAFE launch would take place in the week of 24-28 June, with awareness campaigns across schools, health sites and social media.

During the discussion a number of points were clarified:

- In response to a query about the number of individuals who were affected, it was explained that a profile was being pulled together from different organisations and systems were now in place to record concerns,
- Missing Monday meetings and information regarding those Not in Education, Employment or Training may refer to looked after children.
- Mapping high risk areas or cohorts would be done

from the perspective of the child as well as the perspective of organised crime however, it was explained that it was not enough to respond to the known high-risk areas, there needed to be an awareness raising exercise as organised criminals would target young people who did not already have any input from professionals

- There needed to be a community approach and continuous messages for people to be aware and report their suspicions. It was suggested that dustmen should be trained about safeguarding and report anything unusual
- GET SAFE would work with individuals up to the age of 25, after that age adult safeguarding processes would take over. If people did not require Adult Social Care then Community Safety Partnerships would have responsibility.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Parenting Board noted the content of the GET SAFE report; and

ACTION: Board Members should take responsibility for cascading the information within the report to the parties they represent on the board.

193 Work Plan

Noted

194 Future Meeting Dates

15-19 July 2019 - Keep in Touch Visits
8 October 2019
27 November 2019

The meeting ended at 3.50 pm

Chairman

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