

Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board

Worcester Children First Boardroom (F2:08), County Hall,

Worcester

Tuesday, 30 January 2024, 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Steve Mackay (Chairman), Cllr Rob Adams, Cllr David Chambers, Cllr Lynn Denham, Councillor Esther Gray, Cllr Lucy Harrison, Matthew Lamb, Cllr Fran Oborski and Cllr Christine Wild

Also attended:

Tom Bourne, Jenny Cox, Eloise Gauntlett-Shea, Rebecca Haywood-Tibbetts, Adam Johnston, Simon Lewis, James McDonald, Tom Mountford, Celena Rossano, Matthew Stiles and Marley Bourke.

Statement by the Chairman of the Board

The Chairman of the Board acknowledged the findings of the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review into the death of Alfie Steele. He recognised that changes had been made to working practices and that these changes would be followed up. He undertook to strive to ensure every child in Worcestershire was kept safe.

346 Apologies (Agenda item 1)

Apologies were received from Beverley Downing, Cllr Matt Jenkins, David Lewis, and Debbie Stokes.

347 Confirmation of the Minutes - 21 November 2023 (Agenda item 2)

The minutes of the last meeting held on 21 November 2023 were accepted as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

In response to a query regarding Minute no 341, Adam Johnston confirmed that the service leads monitored the arrangements for Health Assessments carried out by other councils on behalf of Worcestershire for its out of county

children and young people to ensure that they received the same level of service as would be received by in county children.

It was queried whether any further action had been taken to look at libraries as a suitable venue for Health assessments. Adam Johnston responded that there was an ongoing exercise to find alternative venues to undertake these assessments and he would report back to the Board in due course.

348 Participation Annual Report (Agenda item 3)

The Board received the Youth Voice Review of our Year 2023-2024 presented by representatives of the Youth Voice Team.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- In response to a query, representatives of the Youth Voice Team outlined the achievements they considered to be of most importance during 2023-2024
- In response to a query, Celena Rossano indicated that members of the Board would be welcome to attend meetings of the Youth Cabinet
- It was queried what arrangements could be made to help local councillors connect with looked after children to involve them in local activities. Celena Rossano responded that opportunities for children/young people to help in the local community would be welcomed and contact details would be circulated with the Minutes of this meeting
- Celena Rossano announced that Eloise had come second in the national hero awards for her achievement in becoming the northern benchmarking champion
- In response to a query about feedback from young people to the work of the WCF complaints service, Celena Rossano commented that the IRO service had requested feedback from the Youth Voice Team. A particular concern for young people in the group was a lack of understanding of and information made available to them concerning the advocacy service
- Corporate bodies needed to aware of the appropriate use of language/terminology to engage with children and young people. Adam Johnston responded that the IRO service had identified this issue and had adjusted their approach to communication accordingly; reports following looked after reviews were now written in first person as well
- The provision of the tenancy pack should be extended to care leavers over the age of 18
- Had consideration been given to the creation of a buddying process for young people over the age of 18, who were experiencing considerable change in their lives? Adam Johnston responded that attending group meetings helped young people to feel connected. However, these meetings were not necessarily appropriate for all young people therefore consideration would be given to the other ways of engagement including a buddying system which has commenced with a few care leavers being 'buddied'

- Eloise expressed concern that the mental health service was setting children up to fail, particularly for children in a residential setting. Children were being moved to higher risk too easily and thereby in danger of being sectioned. Adam Johnston responded that work was currently in progress between different services to develop a road map for children to access the appropriate services for their health and well-being. Celena Rossano added that the Board would be provided with the findings from Eloise's research into this issue
- The Chairman commented that the voices of young people did make a difference. Board members needed to continue to listen and learn from the views of young people
- It was queried whether there should be more activities arranged that were directly aimed at young people. James MacDonald recognised that the Youth Cabinet was a very niche activity however, activities were being arranged that were aimed at different age groups and membership had increased. Adam Johnston added that work continued to try and engage with a wider group of young people.

The Board received the Youth Voice Review of our Year 2023-2024 presentation.

349 Work Programme (Agenda item 4)

Complaints

In response to a query, Adam Johnston explained that it was very difficult to provide evidence that a complaint had been remedied without receiving direct evidence from the complainant.

Where a complaint had been resolved, was there evidence that the service had learned from the process and had emerging patterns of issues been identified? The Chairman indicated that he would discuss this issue with Adam Johnston. Adam also highlighted that it was common practice for learning from complaints to be shared service wide, often at End to End meetings with all managers and IRO's to ensure learning was embedded.

It was agreed that Daniel Gray would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Board to present a quarterly report on complaints.

Housing

In response to a query, Adam Johnston indicated that he hoped that agreement would be reached between district councils and the County Council before the end of February regarding the existing contract to provide accommodation and support for 16-21 year old care leavers. Members would be provided with an update at the next meeting of the Board in May.

Arrangements for young people to meet members of the Board

Adam Johnston agreed to look into the possibility of making arrangements for members of the Board to directly meet young people outside formal Board meetings.

350 Any Other Business (Agenda item 5)

Charles English-Peach

The Board welcomed Charles English-Peach to the meeting. Charles was a care leaver from WCF, who was studying Applied Humanities at University, specifically undertaking a project focussed on obstacles to participation services.

Free prescription service for Care Leavers

Rebecca Heywood-Tibbetts indicated that the Integrated Care Board had been looking at the possibility of introducing a free prescription service for care leavers. The proposals had now been submitted to the ICB and their decision was awaited.

The meeting ended at 3.45pm.

Chairman