

Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday, 7 February 2019, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Mr T Baker-Price, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr M Johnson, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs J A Potter and Cllr David Watkins

Also attended:

Derek Allen, Justine Bishop, Sally Branchflower, Sally Clewes, Amanda Delahunty, Gwen Fennell, Rhys Davies, Ellen Footman, Tracey Harvey, Mark Poultney, Tina Russell, Rona Whitfield and Kate Griffiths

172 Apologies

Apologies were received from Charlie Hotham, Gareth Prosser, Margaret Sherrey and Juliet Smith. Tom Baker-Price attended for Gareth Prosser

173 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 29 November 2018 were agreed to be a correct record of meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

174 Care Leavers and Universal Credit

Mark Poultney and Tracy Harvey from the Department of Work and Pensions explained what happens when Care Leavers approach their 18th birthdays and need to apply for Universal Credit.

Changes to managed migration of claimants had been announced which was the way people who were already on benefits were moved over to Universal Credit and this was being limited to 10,000 until 2020; however, people becoming 18 who were eligible for benefits were being put directly onto Universal Credit.

The process for Care Leavers was that the team ensured that around 28 days prior to the Care Leaver becoming 18, a meeting took place to ensure that a claim was prepared and ready to be submitted as soon as the young person was 18. The preparatory meeting was to confirm identity, bank details and any queries the young person may have. For example, payments could be made twice a month or four times a month so they were at useful times to pay rent.

During the discussion various points were made:

- The Manager of the Care Leavers team felt that

arrangements generally went well and any issues were addressed quickly, but claims cannot be submitted pre a young persons' 18th birthday so things always felt last minute so where there were problems they were hard to resolve quickly

- Claimants were entitled to advanced payments in the form of a loan so they would not have to wait for four weeks and that loan could be for a period of 12 or 16 months. Discretionary housing money may be an option for those who wanted to move into rented accommodation
- One member of the Board queried what could be done by the County and District Councils to help care leavers over the transition period and wondered whether discretionary payments would be available. Mark Poultney responded that he knew of one District Council that did provide discretionary payments. Tina Russell explained that the County Council could make emergency payments if necessary and no young person would be left without essential funds for housing or food
- It was explained that Universal Credit met the costs of social housing as amounts were standard; private rents were not always covered in full
- The Outreach Team confirmed that through the ASDAN award they provide personal budgeting support and skills; the Care Leavers Team provided 17/18 preparation and the Through Care Team provided advice to young people up to the age of 25
- It was suggested that the County and District Councils should create a process map around Universal Credit which detailed what support was given and where to go to for help
- It was clarified that if there were problems there was an escalations route through each benefit office.

ACTIONS

- **The Chairman and Cllr Hodgson would work together to come up with some ideas around how the County and District Councils could help Looked After Children with Universal Credit**
- **A Task and Finish Group should be formed to produce the process map.**

175 Edge of Care

Tina Russell explained about the Edge of Care policy. It was generally good for children to stay with their own family and where necessary parents were being given support to enable them to keep their children at home.

To enable Edge of Care to be successful, professional anxiety had to be managed and it was important to recognise that being in care did not put an end to risk for a young person but being able to work with families was sometimes still the best way to manage risk. For some, care would still be the right place.

Surveys to the public and professionals have been undertaken to understand what people think should be in an Edge of Care Service.

Review of Edge of Care development across the country and those with positive evaluations have been taken into consideration in our own planning.

For the Edge of Care strategy to be successful more capacity and the right skills were required, and it would require co-operation from other services, such as adult mental health services and drug and alcohol services.

In essence the strategy promoted family care where it was safe to do so and focused on helping parents to see for themselves when and where things had gone wrong, what caused it and what could be done about it.

During the discussion various points were clarified:

- Co-operation from Partners was important and social care services were working with the CCGs; however, the right services needed to be further developed to ensure the right skills were available to meet needs
- Children at risk would still need to be protected and some may still need to become a Looked After Child in any of a range of placements
- It was suggested that for some staff such as housing officers this strategy would be a culture change as they were used to thinking that if a child was at risk they would be best referred to a social worker and removed from the situation. Some staff would need help understanding that leaving the child in the home was the right thing to do
- Edge of Care was not part of the Corporate Parenting Board's remit as it dealt with children before they became Looked After.

176 We said we would... Actions from the previous year

Tina was thanked for the update.

It was noted that many of the action points contained within the list were completed in the activity between meetings. The list needed to be reviewed so it only identified those which were still outstanding or required further evidence of completion/impact

The Chairman pointed out that some points still needed to be actioned:

- The fact that Care Leavers did not wish to be referred to as homeless had been discussed by Speak Out and they had invited Laura Marshall, Strategic Partnership Manager, to their March meeting to discuss the terms used in local housing policies
- Issues about accommodation were on-going
- It appeared that little had been done about apprenticeships for Care Leavers but Cllr Hodgson Chaired the Adult Learning and Apprenticeship Board and confirmed that she would take this issue back to see what could be done
- The Youth Voice Team had received an update on leisure passes and Malvern and Redditch now offered discounts to Care Leavers as well as Looked After Children and Carers
- The Chairman explained that at the training session in July 2018 it had been suggested that the Vice Chairman of the Board should be a District Councillor – this would be progressed after the District elections in May.

ACTIONS: List to be revised and outstanding actions which have not been completed or those that needed evidence of what difference had been made would be re-sent to board members for action/Comment.

177 Work Plan

Kinship Care: The Vice-Chairman explained that Kinship Care was being looked at by the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel. She wondered if it would be possible to have a joint Board on this issue. Cllr Roberts and Cllr Oborski to discuss and agree with Officers.

Keep in Touch: Tina Russell explained that the July date would actually be a week of 'Keep in Touch' visits/events with an opportunity for all board members to have direct contact with a Looked After Child or Care Leaver in a variety of settings. Members to look at their calendars for that week of 15-19 July and free up 2-4 hours and a

programme of events would be sent to Members and matched to their availability.

178 Future Meeting Dates

Dates 2019
21 March 2019
13 June 2019
15-19 July 2019 – Keep in Touch events
8 October 2019
27 November 2019

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

Chairman