

**Corporate Parenting Board**  
**Thursday, 21 March 2019, Council Chamber, County Hall,**  
**Worcester - 2.00 pm**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

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

**Also attended:**

Alison Brill Sally Branchflower, Barbara Carter, Sally  
Clewes, Catherine Driscoll, Heather Manning, Selina  
Rawicz, Tina Russell, Nina Warrington and Charlie, Ollie  
and Rona.

**179 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Rob Adams, Gareth  
Prosser, and Juliet Smith. Ellen Footman had sent her  
apologies but Heather Manning was attending as her  
substitute.

**180 Confirmation of  
the Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February were  
agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and were  
signed by the Chairman.

**181 Children in Care  
Council and  
Youth Voice  
Team**

Alison introduced representatives from Worcestershire's  
Children in Care and Care Leavers Councils, which  
comprised of Big Voices (0-12), Who Cares We Care  
(12-18) and Speak Out (16+). The groups represented  
the views of looked after children. Ollie, Rona and Charlie  
explained what they had done over the last year. They  
explained that various activities were organised and  
numbers attending different events varied depending on  
the activity.

Various events over the year included organising regional  
events and attending national events and conferences.  
They were involved in speaking to Ofsted Inspectors,  
attending the APPG at Westminster, running the annual  
fun day and helping with the first Corporate Parenting  
Roadshow.

The groups were working to raise the profile of Looked  
After Children and that encouraged people to ask their  
opinion on various services. They represented the views  
of young people and being involved with the groups

helped their own confidence and improved their opportunities.

They explained that they would continue to do what they were doing by working with the Care Leaver's Team and using social media to keep people up to date and attract new members. It was difficult to encourage young people to join the groups but it was important that their voices were heard. They hoped to have a good working relationship with Worcestershire Children First in future.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- The groups made use of twitter and Instagram to communicate with young people. However, it was hoped a website could be created in future
- Various groups offered support to care leavers such as Worcester Arts Workshop and the Youth Engagement Network. The Rees Foundation had opened a Community Café in Kidderminster. It was agreed that the Districts needed to be advertising these to children, young people and professionals
- The Local Children's Trust in Kidderminster would like a young person as a member and wished to encourage people to apply
- Tina Russell reinforced that listening to the Voice of the Child and Looked After Children was important to Worcestershire Children First and was part of their business plan. Barbara Carter and Sally Branchflower were developing ways to collect feedback on placements and following on from the work of Croome and the "What is Home" project and exhibition, Tina was planning a piece of work on telling positive stories of children who have left care
- Tina Russell shared regional plans for a Peer Review regarding Children in Care Councils within West Midlands authorities as part of the future social sector led improvement.

The Chairman thanked the young people for their presentation and appreciated that they were working to attract new representatives.

## 182 Kinship Care

Barbara Carter explained that it was estimated that there were 200,000 children living with kinship carers in the UK. They could be living with Grandparents or other relatives. In 2011 the Government's Statutory Guidance required each Local Authority to produce a Family and Friends policy and Worcestershire's was reviewed last year.

A range of arrangements were possible:

- Family fostering, when a child was looked after for a period, but the parents retained parental responsibility
- Private Fostering where a child lived with a family friend who was not a close family member and the Local Authority assessed the situation regularly
- Child Arrangements Orders when parental responsibility was shared between the parents and the carers
- Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) which meant that carers had parental responsibility. The Council offered various services when SGO were in place – funding for the initial legal consultation, set up costs, training and support, and access to 15 hours of free child care from 2 years old
- Kinship foster Care meant there was a legal requirement for the child to be placed with approved foster carers.

There had been a lot of growth for all the areas of kinship care. Worcestershire had 22% of its looked after children in kinship foster care while the national figure was 17%. The workforce had expanded and the service re-designed to better reflect demands in Kinship Care.

Barbara Carter highlighted in her report the work of the service on supporting family members as support carers as opposed to assessed foster carers. It was hoped that if services could be involved at an earlier point as part of the edge of care developments then children could be prevented from becoming looked after if it was safe to support them at home/within the family.

During the subsequent discussion the following main points were made:

- That the Kinship Carers UK charity had been set up by Enza Smith who lived in Worcestershire
- In response to a query about whether the social care team review the support kinship carers receive to see if they were struggling, it was clarified that if they were an approved Family and Friends carer (known as Kinship) they received the same support as Foster Carers

Following the compilation of the list of action points it had been proposed that the Board should concentrate on a number of priorities for 2019/20.

- 1. Housing – Accommodation for Care Leavers**
- 2. Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked After Children and Care Leavers**
- 3. Quality and Timeliness of Care and Pathway Planning for Looked After Children and Care Leavers**
- 4. Looked After Children and Care Leavers not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)**
- 5. Bringing Corporate Parenting Priorities to District Councils**
- 6. Voice of the Child**

Various comments were made by Board Members:

- More information was required regarding young people who were not in Education, Employment or Training
- It was important to encourage secondary schools to fulfil their obligations to school leavers
- It was queried why Worcestershire Children First could not rent suitable accommodation and rent it back to care leavers. It was explained the WCF would not be picking up the housing remit as that sat with District Councils
- It was felt that some District Councillors did not appreciate that they had a responsibility for Looked After Children – it was not just an issue for Children’s Social Care.
- It was suggested that the Leaders Board needed to discuss Looked After children – it was pointed out that it had been discussed and work was on-going to try to get flats built
- The District Housing Representative stated that Corporate Parenting was on the agenda and mentioned in all relevant reports. Training was also booked for all new Councillors
- Members agreed with priorities 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 but felt priority 3 should be business as usual and should by now have improved. This was also covered in performance data received by the Board.

## ACTIONS

1) The priorities and associated activities supported by the work programme would be developed into the business plan for 2019/20 and shared with all members – This would then be reviewed within the work programme.  
Tina Russell

2) All district members to ensure mechanisms for raising the priorities/data and any locality offer to Looked After Children and Care Leavers is formally raised at district council meetings.  
NB: District Officers can attend CPB meetings as public observers if this helps District representatives to take issues back to their districts.

### 184 Quarter 3 Data

It was explained that higher numbers of young people left care in 2017/18 as work to address drift and delay in permanency planning took effect. For new entrants it was confirmed more children were achieving permanency faster than previously.

Work on the sufficiency strategy was underway and would re-focus the way residential care was used and look at how the use of internal fostering could be increased.

In general, social care now had more stable management. The falling percentage of looked after children with personal education plans had been due to staff sickness and a vacancy but that problem was being resolved.

**ACTION – The sufficiency Strategy to be presented to a future Board – Tina Russell.**

### 185 Work Plan

Noted

### 186 Future Meeting Dates

Dates 2019

13 June 2019 - 2.00pm  
15-19 July 2019 - Keep in Touch Visits  
8 October 2019 - 2.00pm  
27 November 2019 – 2.00pm

Chairman .....