

Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board

County Hall, Worcester

Thursday, 12 May 2022, 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Andy Roberts (Chairman), Cllr Rob Adams, Cllr Lynn Denham, Cllr Matt Jenkins, Cllr Steve Mackay, Cllr Nyear Nazir and Cllr Fran Oborski

Also attended:

Tanya Beckett, Justine Bishop, Thomas Bourne, Shannon Childs, Beverley Downing, Adam Johnston, Dr David Lewis, Heather Manning, Kerry Nicholl, Tina Russell, Elaine Salter, Bev Weaver, Paul Webber and Charlotte, Nathan and Tia.

284 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mike Johnston, Margaret Sherrey and Tom Wells.

285 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 February 2022 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and would be signed by the Chairman.

It was noted that shadowing opportunities to attend various appointments or support groups with children who were looked after, would be available on an on-going basis, and Corporate Parents were encouraged to contact Adam Johnston to make arrangements.

286 Pledges in Practice

Adam Johnston explained that The Corporate Parenting Board Pledges were important aims which covered primary needs such as supporting and listening to Looked After Children and Care Leavers. However, it was important that the pledges were put into practice and a prompt card was being developed with input from young people.

The Care Leavers Offer was available on the website and included the financial offer available. Although the DfE had given feedback that the Local Offer was comprehensive, Worcestershire Children First had recognised that there were some weaknesses which were being addressed through the

Connect programme, 18+ pathway plans and a project to ensure all young people had access to some forms of identification.

Following Adam's presentation, Board Members had various queries which were clarified:

- A request was made that care leaver benefits be considered in more detail at a future meeting.
- The Connect scheme worked with young people who wished to take up the opportunity; it did not work with the volunteer and community sector but rather Worcestershire Children First Staff who were not paid, but were given time back. The scheme would be piloted and then reviewed.
- Councillors asked for young people to be told that Councillors carry out case work and may be able to offer help in a variety of situations as they had useful contacts.
- The Pledge Prompt was being prepared, and Shannon, the Participation Peer Mentor, explained that Speak Out had discussed what should be included and how the message should be spread. Ideas included using it as screen savers, on QR codes on key fobs, and spreading the word on social media.
- Young people were allocated a PA while they were still considered a looked after child before they became 18. Conversations around what happened when they reached 18, in terms of which services would be available for them, began much earlier.

287 Kickstart Programme

Kerry Nichol, Team Manager introduced the Kickstart programme Peer Mentors. The programme gave individuals valuable opportunities and enabled personal development for individuals while at the same time helping Worcestershire Children First learn from care leavers with different life experience.

Charlotte, a young mum and care leaver and Nathan, a care leaver with experience of the criminal justice system were both peer mentors. They explained that they were able to communicate with other young people who were facing similar problems and able to help the PAs by explaining situations from a young person's perspective.

Nathan spoke very movingly about wanting to help others avoid the mistakes he had made and he hoped that in future a job could be created for a specialist PA to help young people avoid criminality. He recognised that he had been very fortunate to be given a second chance and wished to thank the Care Leavers Team and particularly his PA.

Bev Weaver explained that she was the Business Support Manager in Worcestershire Children First and although she did not work on the front line she chose to mentor four young people because she cared about working with young people in care. She introduced Tia who she was helping in an office placement, and read out some words prepared by Tia about what she had achieved and what she hoped to achieve in future.

The Chairman thanked the contributors from the Kickstart programme and felt that the Board had received a better insight into care from those who have experienced it and want to help others, than they could have from officers. He encouraged Councillors to reflect on what they had heard and consider if they could attend other meetings with young people, which could be arranged through Adam Johnston, which would help them to consider how they could support looked after children and care leavers.

288 Friends and Family Fostering

Tina Russell explained that a new policy was being developed for when friends and family took care of young people who were classed as a children in need. The policy should not be called a fostering policy but would suggest a way of working which allowed family values to be promoted and followed the children in care duty of looking for a connected person to take care of a young person in the first instance if the parents are unable to cope.

The policy would allow friends and family to read the document and see how arrangements would work in practice. It would detail what WCF would be able to offer the family and what kinship carers would be offered.

It was clarified that the Ukrainian and Afghanistan resettlement programme were not part of children in care system and that the County Council rather than WCF were leading on receiving families, while unaccompanied children would be placed straight into the care system.

289 Activity Event

As mentioned in the Kickstart item – Corporate Parenting Board members were encouraged to attend further appointments or events with young people.

290 Quarterly Data, Q4 2021-22

The Board noted the quarterly data information. A request was made for a future meeting to have a report on the data, focusing on out of county placements.

291 Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 12 July at 2.00pm at County Hall,.

The meeting ended at 3.50pm

Chairman

