

Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board

County Hall, Worcester

Tuesday, 29 November 2022, 2.00 pm

Present:

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

Also attended:

Adam Johnston, Thomas Bourne, Celena Rossano, Alice Gillett, Sarah
Dempsey, Debbie Stokes, Matthew Styles, Barbara Sarbinouslea, David Lewis,
Jane Stanley, Matt Lamb and Daniela Carson

305 Apologies

Apologies were received from Nyear Nazir and Beverley Downing.

306 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 October 2022 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and would be signed by the Chairman.

307 Complex Health Needs National Review

Daniela Carson, Group Manager, Social Care Services gave an update on the complex health needs national review via a PowerPoint presentation. The slides to be circulated to the panel after the meeting.

Following the presentation various queries from Board Members were clarified:

- Each local authority must have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Protocols regarding medication were followed looking at what medication was given, the amount, the time for dosage and any changes in symptoms would be reviewed. Paperwork was checked and medication stored correctly in safe boxes/cabinets.
- Social Workers advised on any behavioural incidents or changes.

308 WCF Contact and Family Time Service

Alice Gillett, Group Manager, Through Care Services gave a presentation of the Family Time Service, slides were circulated with the agenda papers.

In discussions following the presentation the following issues were addressed:

- The Chairman of the Board had asked if anything had been learnt following the protocol during the Covid pandemic of on-line contact. The Board was advised that some children had a good connection on-line, but not all children preferred that way of communication.
- The Board were assured that an independent view was provided through Advocacy which was there for all children. The children's views were listened to in reviews and through social workers and it was emphasised that all children's needs were respected,
- Contact for older children was available outside of school hours, including on Saturdays, and it was confirmed the contact team was large enough to accommodate this contact
- Children were taken to locations where required and help was available for relatives to travel either by public transport or with Social Workers, as this support was part of the legal Duty.
- Family contact by older children of 18 years old depended on the wishes of the young person. If there were no concerns, contact would be unsupervised as it was a priority that contact was kept as naturalistic as possible. Safety was also a priority and contact was kept under review. Contact between young people and their family was informal and ad hoc as required.
- Contact was not restricted by the relationship to the young person, they were never forced to have contact and this was facilitated by the carers.

Councillor Rob Adams advised that Wychavon District Council offices could be utilised for daytime contact appointments if required. The Chairman of the Board thanked Councillor Rob Adams and welcomed the offer.

309 Illegal Placements

Adam Johnston, Director of Child Protection and Through Care gave a presentation on illegal placements and confirmed that, in some extreme cases where emergency accommodation was necessary, illegal placements could be in the best interest of the child.

The Board heard of accommodation that had been closed by OFSTED but had reopened and was an example of an unregistered home of multiple occupation where the Police had become involved. There had been numerous complaints by neighbours regarding behaviour at this location and it was felt by some members of the Board that the legislation did not go far enough.

It was not possible for OFSTED to visit every provider but by encouraging providers to register with OFSTED problems should be filtered out.

With regard to the discussed complaints of behaviour at the accommodation which impacted on residents, the Chairman of the Board suggested complaints were forwarded to OFSTED.

The Board heard there have been 11 young people in unregistered accommodation since April 21, the majority for around a week in duration before they were moved on to registered provisions. The circumstances for unregistered provisions to necessarily be utilised were explained and a case example illustrating the issue helped to provide context.

Properties were encouraged to become registered with OFSTED and it was agreed that this avenue should be explored further. Worcestershire Children First did try to identify a legal placement in the first instance, but it depended on the context of the situation, such as a need for emergency accommodation. The Board agreed there was no perfect answer, but unregistered providers were vulnerable under the current legislation.

The Chairman of the Board felt this was a grey area and, with legal obligations of the Director of Children's Services, suggested this matter returned to the Corporate Parenting Board Easter 2023 to look at legislation for 16+ young people and any proposed changes to the legislation.

310 Experience of LGBTQ+ Children in Care

The impact assessments in reports are not being completed. Specific examples had been found in Children and Young People's Plan. The impact assessments were standard multiple choice and no boxes had been ticked, this was found to be inadequate.

Further discussions would be required regarding protected characteristics where bullying led to mental health issues.

The Chairman of the Board agreed to take the issue of protected characteristics to the WCF Executive Board to ask about the implications for LACs and discuss issues around transitioning young people, how EIAs can be done, what support is available for the different protected characteristics and the need for baseline data.

Adam Johnstone introduced Matthew Styles, Virtual Head who was welcomed by the Board.

311 District Champion Updates

The following District Champions gave updates to the Board:

- Councillor Rob Adams – The Lost Toy Trail in Evesham started 21 November and would run until January 2023. The Board Member requested the information that had been forwarded previously should be circulated to the Panel.
- Councillor Fran Oborski – Suggested 100% discretionary relief from Council Tax for care leavers. District Councils are responding but the

Panel Member felt a co-ordinated response was required and suggested this matter was taken up at County Council level.

312 Quarterly Data Report Q2 2022/23

The Chairman of the Board was concerned about the worrying trends in the national data indicating more children were coming into care and asked for headlines and bullet points be brought to the next meeting on placement costs, unaccompanied asylum seekers and future trend.

The Board was asked to forward any points or issues they had with the data to Adam Johnston.

313 Future Meeting Dates

Dates accepted as set out on the agenda.

The meeting ended at 3.37 pm

Chairman

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST



National Review 2022

Children with complex needs and disabilities

Introduction

- The National Review of Children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings is being undertaken by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- The Review is being led by Dr Susan Tranter, supported by Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), for the National Children's Bureau (NCB).
- The review is considering allegations of widespread abuse.
- In phase one it considered the experiences of children and young people placed in three specialist independent residential settings in the Doncaster area.
- Phase two, of which this report is relevant, will consider the broader safeguarding needs of Children in care with disabilities and complex health needs in specialist residential settings and seeks additional assurances about their safety and wellbeing.

Action required

- There were 2 requests of Local Authorities;
 1. Ensure Quality and Safety Reviews are completed for all children with complex needs and disabilities currently living within placements with the same registrations (i.e., residential specialist schools registered as children's homes) to ensure they are in safe, quality placements.
 2. That the host authority LADO for each individual establishment reviews all information on any LADO referrals, complaints and concerns over the last 3 years relating to the workforce in such establishments to ensure these have been appropriately actioned.

1. Children placed by WCF

The Review defines a specific cohort of Children and Young People as being in scope, the criteria of which are;

- Looked after Children
Who are,
- Placed in a residential specialist school, that is registered as a Childrens home
And,
- Have a disability and/or complex health need.

Worcestershire Children First have five young people placed across three provisions in scope.

Provision	Number of Young People
Sunfield School, Worcestershire	3
Cambian Whinfell School, Cumbria	1
Jasmine House, Derbyshire	1

What was done

- To ensure a thorough review of each young person, their care and experiences, a Social Worker and Commissioning Monitoring Officer visited each provision and jointly and independently undertook observations, conversations and reviewed documents to ensure that a robust assessment against 13 questions was completed.
- Each young person was seen in both their home and school setting, relevant paperwork reviewed in depth and feedback sought by the allocated Social Workers from parents/carers.
- Cambian Whinfell School has been visited by the Young Person's Social Worker, however the day the Commissioning Monitoring Officer was due to visit, Ofsted arrived for a two day full inspection and subsequently this visit did not take place. We trust a full assessment will have been undertaken and await feedback from Ofsted regarding this inspection.

Findings

- In all provisions there is evidence of effective communication between home and school within setting and parent/carers.
- Parent/carers have positive experiences of each setting and are aware of how to contact staff should they need to.
- Positive interactions observed between young people and carers.
- All young people have effective communication plans in place with evidence of them being used, they are reflective of individual needs, child focused and centred and link into PBS plans, risk assessments and routines.
- Positive behaviour support plans are in place in all settings, some of these are more reflective of young persons needs than others and there is some work to be done on translating re occurring incidents and significant incidents accurately on to behaviour plans.
- Medication processes are in place with overall effective and safe practices.

Findings

- There is a good understanding of physical and mental health needs at an individual levels and this information is used to inform planning in both home and school settings.
- The use of incident forms have shown variance in recording and whether they have been used appropriately with potential over usage in one setting.
- There is concern regarding the need for physical restraint within one home and whether de-escalation techniques had been effectively implemented prior to this. Debriefing post incident is not evident in the recording across the settings and any proposed actions to reduce further incidents not evident clearly if PBS updated.
- Overall, the review of all three settings has not raised any ongoing safeguarding concerns regarding the care provided those young people open to our service.
- Some case actions were identified during the review as part of day to day care planning and theses have been notified to the responsible social worker

2 . LADO involvement

- Sunfield School & Childrens Home in Clent was the only placement in Worcestershire that meets the criteria as set out for the National Review
- Worcestershire LADO records from September 2019 – September 2022 were reviewed by Karen Green, LADO, in respect of Sunfield and Karen met with the Registered Manager Sarah Marshall to review these.
- In the last 3 years there have been 11 LADO referrals in respect of Sunfield School and Children's home.
- There are 25 children 'placed' at Sunfield and all Local Authorities responsible for each child have been contacted

Findings

- Although there were 11 referrals some included multiple staff, as such there were 7 reported incidents. Of the 11 referrals 4 did not meet the LADO threshold; 1 was unsubstantiated; 3 were unfounded and 3 were substantiated.
- Sunfield were able to evidence that all actions following LADO referrals were undertaken in a timely manner and were all recorded appropriately.
- It was noted in the discussions that several of the incidents had taken place during the night cover. The registered manager made a decision to employ a night Manager to address this.
- The responses from all LA's identified many positives in relation to Sunfield and no safeguarding concerns were raised in relation to the placement.
- Good quality recording regarding the referral incidents and responses was seen

Overall the review found that those Children and Young People placed by WCF in residential schools registered as Childrens homes receive good quality care and the home within our Local Authority responds effectively to safeguard when any concerns arise.