

## Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday, 11 October 2018, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

### Present:

#### Minutes

Mr A C Roberts (Chairman), Dr C Hotham, Mr M Johnson, Mrs F M Oborski, Cllr. Gerry O'Donnell, Mrs J A Potter, Cllr Gareth Prosser, Cllr Margaret Sherrey, Cllr Juliet Smith and Cllr David Watkins

### Also attended:

Sally Branchflower, Alison Brill, Barbara Carter, Gwen Fennell, Ellen Footman and Jake Shaw

### 152 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Catherine Driscoll, Pattie Hill, Lucy Hodgson, Tina Russell and Elaine Salter.

### 153 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

### 154 Review of Previous Action Points

None

### 155 Virtual School Annual Report

Gwen Fennell, Virtual School Head Teacher went through the main points of her report. Various issues were highlighted and clarified:

- The VS Governing Body met on a termly basis and it had been agreed that Fran Oborski, as a Governing Board Member would report to the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) with an update on the Virtual School
- The Children in Care Awards for Primary Age Children had been a great success. The Secondary awards would take place in November
- All Schools across Worcestershire had received Attachment Training, regardless of whether they had Looked After Children on roll or not. A Looked After Child could be admitted to a Worcestershire School at any point. The training benefited all children and colleagues working in schools. Over 20 Schools had committed to the Attachment Aware Schools Project
- When asked how outcomes could be measured it was explained that the VS Head Teacher assessed outcomes and progress of each cohort along with the Babcock School Improvement VS

team member, reporting and updating the Governing Body on a termly basis; the Governing Body would then feed back to the CPB

- It was clarified that there were no Looked After Children who were home educated
- Members discussed the amount of help that Looked After Children should expect from their carers. It was explained that the contracts for Foster carers included a duty to support a child's education. Schools often held parent/carer workshops in how to support their children in education. The Virtual School currently hold termly Carer Workshops; in the past there had been a good uptake, however this term the Story Telling workshop had to be postponed until later in November due to low numbers
- It was clarified that schools had to justify how they wished to spend the Pupil Premium Plus in line with SMART targets set for each Looked After Child and how the funding would be used in order to achieve those targets. If they required more funding schools must complete an additional funding form justifying the need and detailing how they had spent the original allocated sum
- Members were interested in the numbers of Looked After Children who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The VS Head Teacher had figures that suggested the numbers of Looked After Children who were NEET was reducing however the Data for Quarter 1 appeared to show higher numbers who were NEET
- The Post 16 team had been reduced from 6 to 2 members with a main focus of working with those pupils who were at risk of becoming NEET and offering support where required. The PEP Co-ordinators and Area Learning Advocates were currently completing Post 16 PEPs with very little capacity. Social Care would be leading on both Post 16 and EYFS PEPs with the support of the Virtual School
- It was recognised that some Looked After Children who finish Year 11 do not have sufficient qualifications and this hinders their next stage of education and employment. VS only receive funding for 5-16 years
- The numbers of Looked After Children currently stood at 825 with over 550 at school age; over 150 of those were placed out of County
- Results for all Key Stages for Looked After Children had improved from last year.

Worcestershire results for all pupils at Key Stage 2 were below the national figure apart from in Bromsgrove where the schools were improving by working together better

- A District Council Member requested that it be made clearer how District Councillors could contribute to helping Looked After Children.

## **ACTION POINTS**

- **A short report would be brought to the next meeting to clarify the numbers of NEETS and what could be done to help Looked After Children once they got to 18 and were looking for employment or training**
- **The Chairman and The VS Head Teacher should discuss how future Annual Reports should be presented taking into account the request for an 'organisation plan' and a flow chart showing the Children's journey through care so that District Councils can see more clearly where they could contribute**
- **A list of schools who had not completed their necessary training should be made available to Councillors so that they could encourage them to make staff available for the training.**

## **156 Fostering and Kinship Service Annual Report**

Barbara Carter, Group Manager for Fostering and Kinship Care, explained that Kinship Care was when family and friends were approved as carers, often Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles or even older siblings.

The Council aimed to recruit 25 fostering households a year; in 2017/18 17 had been recruited but 21 had stopped fostering. Households stop fostering for a number of reasons such as reaching retirement age, it not being compatible with work or their own children or because there has been changes in their personal life. It was a particular challenge to find foster families for teenagers.

Placement Plus households took young people who had been through previous placement breakdowns. The placements had a high level of support from a social worker, a psychologist and family support worker. The scheme was being reviewed so that learning could be used for the whole service.

More placements were now being made with families and

friends, which was both good practice and a statutory duty. Following trying to keep children with their parents, the second course of action should be to try to keep children with other family members. 28% of looked after children in Worcestershire were with family and friends which was higher than the national average.

It was explained that Section 20s were voluntary agreements where the parents retain parental authority even when the children are living apart from them. Care Orders occur when the Local Authority has parental authority. 21% of Looked After Children were under Section 20 Agreements and 79% were under Care Orders.

Going forward a lot of work was being done on Early Help, Targeted Family Support and Edge of Care which was a range of early intervention support which aimed to reduce the numbers of children who became looked after.

It was hoped that Partner Agencies would assist in recruiting Foster families. A question was asked about whether there were any policies about recruiting minority groups and it was clarified that they recruited across the Board with the important characteristic they were looking for was whether someone could parent a child. For Kinship care agreements people living all over the world had been assessed.

Members queried whether other Counties paid more to Foster Carers. It was explained that 3 years ago Worcestershire raised the fees they paid so that they were competitive compared to independent agencies. There was a Government set amount of Foster Care Allowance and The Council paid allowances for clothes and events rather than just paying an amount at set intervals.

There was a high drop out from the Skills to Foster Course as some people found it was the wrong time for them or that fostering would not fit in with their own children. Members appreciated there were various reasons for people to drop out but hoped it wasn't because they were being scared by the Council with a list of challenges they would be facing.

## **ACTIONS**

**157 Data - Quarter 1**

- **Corporate Parenting Board Members were invited to watch the Fostering Recruitment film There was a boy, which could be found at <https://www.worcestershirefostering.co.uk/the-rewasaboy/>**

The data was noted. The Chairman requested that if members had particular queries about data from their area they should contact Jake Shaw directly.

The Representatives from Bromsgrove District Council explained that Bromsgrove was currently trying to set up a flat for Care Leavers.

**ACTIONS**

- **That a report be brought back to a future meeting about the success of setting up a flat for Care Leavers**
- **That figures for previously Looked After Children who were classed as homeless be brought to a future meeting.**

**158 Household Items Collection**

This item was deferred as Tina Russell had sent her apologies.

**159 Councillors District Events**

Due to success of previous events organised around the County for Looked After Children and their carers it was hoped that more events could be organised in the future.

**160 Work Plan**

Noted.

**161 Future Meeting Dates**

Dates 2018  
29 November 2018

Dates 2019  
7 February 2019  
21 March 2019  
13 June 2019  
19 July 2019  
8 October 2019  
27 November 2019

**Cabinet Report regarding Edge of Care and Children's Homes**

The Chairman wished to update the Board that:

- Ofsted had visited Worcestershire Children's Services in the last week. A further visit would be carried out in January and a full report would be received once the ADM was in operation. The Chairman congratulated Children's Services on

the continued improvement

- A report would be presented to Cabinet on 18 October 'Children at the Edge of Care and Children's Homes'. The report would outline the fact that Worcestershire had a higher than expected percentage of children in residential care but learning from Essex County Council suggested that more focus should be put on prevention and Edge of Care services to help families stay together safely. It would be proposed to reduce the number of residential homes from 12 to 6.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

Chairman .....