

Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board

County Hall, Worcester

Tuesday, 12 July 2022, 2.00 pm

Present:

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

Also attended:

David Lewis, Celena Rosseno, Adam Johnstone, Sarah Dempsey, Matt Bough, Sally Branchflower and Linda Joyce

292 Apologies

Apologies were received from Matt Lamb, Dan Gray, Shannon Childs and Tom Wells.

293 Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 May 2022 were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and would be signed by the Chairman.

294 Confirmation of the Minutes

Sally Branchflower played a video which had been filmed at an activity event at Perdiswell which 60 children had taken part in. The video was of foster carers giving feedback on IRO service.

The link to the video is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuriUIGwxOE>

Work was ongoing to ensure that all children understood the IRO role and have the opportunity to give feedback.

The IRO Annual Report showed that performance figures continued to improve and focus would be on children with additional needs and ways to engage with them.

Conversations had taken place within the team regarding young people who were approaching 18 years of age. This group were vulnerable and isolated and as the IRO role ends at 18 a review would be undertaken, and they would be asked if they wished a post 18 meeting.

This review process would be piloted at the end of July 2022.

Cllr Lynn Denham raised several issues with the report:

- The number of children per IRO had not been included in the report and asked if there were plans to include this in light of the increase in the number of Looked After Children.
- Appendix D - IRO audit on missing episodes for looked after children in January and February 2022 – Councillor Denham was concerned at the risk to highly vulnerable children, with concerns around unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Adam Johnston confirmed that although missing episodes sound bad, in reality unaccompanied asylum seekers were given support and all efforts to track them wherever they may be located, are made in conjunction with partners and other local authorities.

The Chairman suggested this be taken up after this meeting and further information be brought back to the next Corporate Parenting Board as an appendix.

Questions were raised regarding the level of engagement with children and young people who did not wish to participate in events. It was confirmed that all children were seen at the point of review followed by regular contact, which was either face to face or virtually, this regular contact, although not monthly was spread over 12 months.

Further information was requested on the recommendation in the Independent Care Review on the scrapping of the IRO role, in light of evidence where carers had said the IRO role had made a difference to them. It was felt this recommendation lacked context and a full understanding of the IRO role.

The Chairman stated there were big discussions around this and the capping of private care providers with SEND changes coming in 2030. The service remained focussed and the Chairman suggested this item come back to the Corporate Parenting Board in the future.

Councillor Rob Adams felt brilliant work had been done to produce the report and requested information on how he could help. It would be useful to share with other district councils, so people felt involved. Sarah Branchflower agreed to share this public document with a breakdown of how many looked after children were in each district.

295 Out of County Looked After Children

Adam Johnston represented Daniel Gray and gave a verbal overview of the report and explained Worcestershire had 900 Looked After Children with 30% placed out of the county. Of these out of county children the majority were teenagers, which was a more challenging cohort to identify placements for as it was easier to recruit foster carers to care for babies and younger children.

Adam agreed:

- To provide figures on the amount of funding for out of county children Worcestershire was paying.
- To provide information on where in the country the out of county children were placed to give a geographic sense.
- To provide numbers of out of county placed children that go missing visits.

Directors of Worcestershire Children First were looking at the national situation in light of the care review and the Josh MacAlister report was hinged on placements of children. There is a need for the light children to be accommodated and to recruit carers. Placements needed to be procured in a more co-ordinated fashion on a national level.

The Chairman referenced the newspaper report on profits in children's homes and asked for the link to be circulated.

[Revealed: top 10 children's care providers made £300m profits | Children | The Guardian](#)

296 District Champions

All District Champions would have the opportunity to produce a short video on their role with support from the Communications Team at Worcestershire County Council.

The Corporate Parenting Board were shown Cllr Fran Oborksi's video on her role as District Champion for housing and council tax benefit. This video would be circulated to the Corporate Parenting Board.

These videos along with the approach for the forthcoming CPB Annual Report would be a portable tool to use at district level to raise awareness and the District Champions were asked to promote this role in local press.

The District Champions were asked to produce a report for the Corporate Parenting Board meeting in October.

A fun day on 7 August was taking place and Corporate Parenting Board Members were asked to contact Margaret Sherrey and Celena Rosseno if they were able to assist.

Cllr Fran Oborski had been approached with queries as to whether apprenticeships and college placements could be offered to care leavers.

The Chairman and Adam Johnston would discuss this further.

District Champions were then asked to remain for filming.

297 Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 5 October 2022

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

Chairman