

Agenda for a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on Wednesday 9 March 2016 at 1630 in Committee Room 4, City Hall, Bradford

Members of the Committee – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
D Smith	Thirkill (Chair)	Leeming
	Engel	
	Tait	

Alternates:

<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Liberal Democrat</i>
<i>M Pollard</i>	<i>Akhtar</i>	<i>N Pollard</i>
	<i>Shaheen</i>	
	<i>Shafiq</i>	

Co-opted Members: J Pickles - West Yorkshire Police
L Donohue - Bradford Achievement Service
N O'Neill - Bradford NHS
The Chair of the Children in Care Council

Notes:

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- If any further information is required about any item on this agenda, please contact the officer named at the foot of that agenda item.
- Light refreshments will be provided for Members.
- The taking of photographs, filming and sound recording of the meeting is allowed except if Councillors vote to exclude the public to discuss confidential matters covered by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Recording activity should be respectful to the conduct of the meeting and behaviour that disrupts the meeting (such as oral commentary) will not be permitted. Anyone attending the meeting who wishes to record or film the meeting's proceedings is advised to liaise with the Agenda Contact who will provide guidance and ensure that any necessary arrangements are in place. Those present who are invited to make spoken contributions to the meeting should be aware that they may be filmed or sound recorded.

From:

D Pearson
Interim City Solicitor
Agenda Contact: Sheila Farnhill
Phone: 01274 432268
E-Mail: sheila.farnhill@bradford.gov.uk

To:



A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. **ALTERNATE MEMBERS** (Standing Order 34)

The City Solicitor will report the names of alternate Members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed Members.

2. **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

(Members Code of Conduct - Part 4A of the Constitution)

To receive disclosures of interests from members and co-opted members on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

Notes:

- (1) *Members may remain in the meeting and take part fully in discussion and voting unless the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or an interest which the Member feels would call into question their compliance with the wider principles set out in the Code of Conduct. Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.*
- (2) *Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*
- (3) *Members are also welcome to disclose interests which are not disclosable pecuniary interests but which they consider should be made in the interest of clarity.*
- (4) *Officers must disclose interests in accordance with Council Standing Order 44.*

3. **MINUTES**

Recommended –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2015 be signed as a correct record.

4. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

(Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 3B of the Constitution)

Reports and background papers for agenda items may be inspected by contacting the person shown after each agenda item. Certain reports and background papers may be restricted.

Any request to remove the restriction on a report or background paper should be made to the relevant Strategic or Assistant Director whose name is shown on the front page of the report.

If that request is refused, there is a right of appeal to this meeting.

Please contact the officer shown below in advance of the meeting if you wish to appeal.

(Sheila Farnhill - 01274 432268)

B. BUSINESS ITEMS

5. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER SERVICE

The Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services will present a report (**Document "L"**) which examines the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) who review the care plans for all Bradford's Looked After Children, for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015. The report presents performance data and demonstrates the robust oversight of care planning in the Bradford district.

The report explains that the production of an IRO Annual Report is required under the regulations contained in the IRO Handbook. The report should provide evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the reviewing service, examine the quality of the reviews offered to young people and set targets for the development of the service.

Recommended –

- (1) That the work undertaken by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service and its ongoing role in providing robust and challenging reviews of all Care Plans be noted.**
- (2) That the improvements over the past 9 months in terms of children's participation, the continued improvement in timeliness and the successful introduction of a quality assurance process for the service be noted.**
- (3) That the Service's work plan for 2016/17 be endorsed.**

The Panel is also asked to consider adjusting the timing of the IRO Service's annual report within its Work Plan so that the material can be considered in May when full year figures are available.

(Frank Hand - 01274 437915)

6. **LEAVING CARE SERVICE - SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT UPDATE**

Previous reference: Minute 17 (2014/15)

At the meeting of the Panel held on 14 January 2015, Members considered a report of the Assistant Director – Children’s Specialist Services about the issues and developments in respect of employment, education, training opportunities and support for care leavers, including the progress made in respect of apprenticeships and Higher Education. The Panel had resolved, amongst other things:

‘That the Assistant Director – Children’s Specialist Services be asked to submit a further report to the Panel, in six months time, to update Members on any progress made in respect of the provision of a single point of contact for the Leaving Care Service for young people who are not in education, employment or training, to include any suggestions of how the Panel might support this provision.’

The Assistant Director – Children’s Specialist Services will now present a report to update the Panel on this issue (**Document “M”**).

The Panel is asked to consider and note the contents of Document “M”.

(Vaughan Chapman - 01274 436760)

7. **WORK PLAN 2015/16**

The Panel’s Work Plan for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/16 is submitted (**Document “N”**), for Member’s consideration.

(Gani Martins – 01274 432904)

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THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

Report of the Assistant Director (Children's specialist Services) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on Wednesday March 9th 2016.



Subject:

Report for the Independent Reviewing Officer Service April – Dec 2014

Summary statement:

This report examines the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) who review the care plans for all Looked After Children in Bradford. The report presents performance data and demonstrates the robust oversight of care planning in Bradford MDC.

The production of an IRO annual report is required under the regulations contained in the IRO Handbook. The report should provide evidence as to the effectiveness of the reviewing service, examine the quality of the reviews offered to young people and set targets for the development of the service.

Gani Martins
Interim Assistant Director
(Children's Specialist Services)

Portfolio:

Children's Services

Report Contact: Frank Hand
Phone: (01274) 437915
E-mail: frank.hand@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area :

Children's Services



1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report examines the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) who review the care plans for all Looked after Children in Bradford. The report presents performance data and demonstrates the robust oversight of care planning in Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Following the case of *Re S* in 2002 the House of Lords raised concerns that children 'getting lost' in the care system could be a breach of the childrens' and parents' rights under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. The Government responded with Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 which amended the Children Act 1989 and established the role of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- 2.2** This role was further strengthened by the IRO Handbook, regulations and statutory guidance for IROs that came into force in 2011, to improve care planning and strengthen the role of the IRO. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the individual child's care including regular monitoring and follow-up between looked after child reviews. This has increased the importance of mid review checks and processes. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of Care Planning for Children Looked After and for challenging drift.

3. REPORT ISSUES

None.

4. OPTIONS

None.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That the Corporate Parenting Panel notes:

- (i) The work undertaken by the IRO service and its ongoing role in providing robust and challenging reviews of all Care Plans.
- (ii) The improvements over the past 9 months in children's participation, the continued improvement in timeliness and the successful introduction of a quality assurance process for the service.
- (iii) That the panel endorses the work plan for year 2016/17
- (iv) That the panel consider adjusting the timing of this regular report so that they are considering this material in May when full year figures are available.

7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Report of the Independent Reviewing Team 1st April 2015 - 31st Dec 2015

APPENDIX 1

Report for Corporate Parenting Panel regarding the Independent Reviewing Officer Service (IRO) April 1st 2015 to February 22nd 2016.

1. Purpose and Legal Context

- 1.1** Following the case of *Re S* in 2002 the House of Lords raised concerns that children were 'getting lost' in the care system after the court had made final orders and that this could be a breach of the children's and parents' rights under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act.

The Government responded with Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 which amended the Children Act 1989 and established the role of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

- 1.2** This role was further strengthened by the IRO Handbook, regulations and statutory guidance for IROs that came into force in 2011, to improve care planning and strengthen the role of the IRO. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from the management of the review process to a wider overview of the individual child's care including regular monitoring and follow-up between looked after child reviews. This has increased the importance of mid review checks and processes. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of Care Planning for Children Looked After and for challenging drift and delay.

- 1.3** There have been several research studies focusing on the effectiveness of the IRO role. The University of East Anglia published a study in October 2015, *Care Planning and the Role of the IRO*, which involved an in depth study of 122 case files in addition to interviews and focus groups held with Looked After Children, parents, social workers, social work managers, and Cafcass representatives. Amongst a range of key findings the research noted:-

- It is important to recognise the value of the collaborative and supportive work that IROs do, for social workers, parents and children, not just the formal challenge. It is also important to appreciate that there will be many negotiated settlements, and the negotiations may be particularly difficult in some circumstances. A full picture of the IRO service should take account of this 'hidden' work.
- IRO's have generally become more active and interventionist.
- Social workers and team managers usually valued the input of IRO's, even when they found it challenging.
- Social workers generally welcomed informal advice and monitoring; most IRO's thought that they were effective at working in these collaborative ways, to improve practice
- Local authorities, and ultimately the children and young people in their care, will benefit if well-supported IRO's have effective channels to feed in collective concerns and influence policy development.

2. Profile of the IRO Service in Bradford

- 2.1** Currently Bradford employs 13 IRO's, 9 full time and 4 part time (11.2 FTE). The teams are all experienced practitioners with 5 years post qualification experience as required by the IRO Handbook.
- 2.2** Traditionally the IRO team has been a relatively stable entity undergoing fewer personnel changes than the social work teams however over the past 9 months the team has coped with staff reducing their hours and the loss of an experienced worker and former practice manager who retired following ill health. Another experienced IRO will retire in March this year. At the point of writing the service is undertaking recruitment and will hopefully be able to find suitable replacements. It should be noted that IROs have to have 5 years post qualification experience which makes finding suitable candidates more challenging.
- 2.3** The IRO Manager has now been in post since August 2014 and has had a positive impact on the service ensuring effective supervision of staff and that IROs are positively supported in their role.
- 2.4.** Changes to the legal framework as part of the Family Justice Review have meant an enhanced role for IROs requiring them to:-
- Monitor the child's case rather than simply monitoring progress in relation to reviews
 - Oversee effective liaison with SW teams and other key professionals, including CAFCASS
 - Ensure they have all relevant information in order to effectively review a child's case
 - Speak to the child or young person, where appropriate, and obtain their views
 - LAC care plan must include a plan for permanence from the second review onwards
- 2.5** IRO's in Bradford are solely focused on reviewing plans for Looked after Children; they do not undertake additional tasks for example chairing child protection conferences or foster care reviews as they do in other authorities. This is a policy decision to ensure the team develops a shared expertise in reviewing and means that there are no unnecessary diversions from this task.

3. Statistical information regarding Looked after Children (LAC) and the IRO Service

3.1 Looked After Children in Bradford

N.B. Figures have been presented giving the year end totals for financial year 2014 -2015 and then figures for April to December 2015 for comparison. Full year data for 2015 -16 will not be available until May of this year.

CARE STARTED / CEASED 1 APRIL 2014 - 31 MARCH 2015	
Total Number of Children who have Started to be Looked After	294
Total Number of Children who have Ceased Care	301

CARE STARTED / CEASED 1 APRIL 2015 - 31st DECEMBER 2015	
Total Number of Children who have Started to be Looked After	256
Total Number of Children who have Ceased Care	271

Over the 9 month period we have had 256 new children became looked after (BLA). Over the 12 month period 01.04.2014 – 31.03.2015 the number was 294. If we break that down by month the number of new BLA over 9 months, 2014-15 would have been 220 children. Therefore if the current trend continues we can expect an increase of approximately 40 new BLA over this financial year.

If we calculate the monthly average for children that have ceased care for the period 01.04.2014 – 31.03.2015 it comes to 225 for 9 months. This shows that over the last 9 months there has been a significant increase of 46 children no longer being looked after, from 225 to 271.

If the current trend continues then even though we may have approximately 40 more children BLA by year end 31.03.2016, children who have ceased will also be approximately 60 more, and therefore the LAC population at year end should show a modest reduction.

3.2 Age and Gender 31.03.2015

AGE AT 31 MARCH 2015			
BOYS		GIRLS	
Under 1:	23	Under 1:	22
1 - 4:	81	1 - 4:	70
5 - 9:	108	5 - 9:	91
10 - 15:	170	10 - 15:	170
16 - 17:	78	16 - 17:	65
18 & over and placed in a community home:	0	18 & over and placed in a community home:	0
TOTAL BOYS:	460	TOTAL GIRLS:	418
TOTAL ALL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 31 MARCH 2015:	878		

Age and Gender 31.12.2015

Age band	Gender		Grand Total
	Female	Male	
0 - less than 1	19	28	47
01 - 04	66	66	132
05 - 09	91	95	186
10 - 15	179	187	366
16 - 17	67	72	139
Grand Total	422	448	870

We can see that the total LAC population has remained relatively stable, with a reduction of only 8 children over the past 9 months from 878 to 870 LAC. The number of boys has reduced from 460 to 448 and the number of girls has increased by 4 from 418 to 422. The most popular age range is still 10-15 with an increase of 9 for girls and 17 for boys. Whilst boys still predominate the gap has narrowed significantly over the past 9 months.

3.3 Legal Status

LEGAL STATUS AT 31 MARCH 2015		
Care Orders:	Interim	124
	Full	529
Voluntary agreements under S.20 (single period of accommodation)		127
Freed for adoption		1
Placement Order		92
On remand, committed for trial, or detained		5
Emergency orders or police protection		0
TOTAL:		878

LEGAL STATUS AT 31 DECEMBER 2015		
Care Orders:	Interim	128
	Full	561
Voluntary agreements under S.20 (single period of accommodation)		109
Freed for adoption		1
Placement Order		66
On remand, committed for trial, or detained		5
Emergency orders or police protection		0
TOTAL:		870

Over the 9 month period we can see a slight increase of ICO's from 124 to 128 and an increase of 32 Full Care Orders from 529 to 561. There has been some decrease in S20 and Placement Orders. S20 children have gone down from 127 to 109. Recently concern has been expressed regarding the inappropriate use of Sec 20 by local authorities. The IRO service has been involved in a recent challenge panel looking at Bradford's performance in this respect and will be reviewing all children with this legal status to ensure that it is appropriate. Children on placement orders with plans for adoption have decreased from 92 to 66. The majority of these children have been adopted.

3.4 Placement Type

PLACEMENT AT 31 MARCH 2015		
Foster placement with relative or friend:	Inside local authority	170
	Outside local authority	48
Placement with other foster carer:	Inside local authority	308
	Outside local authority	67
Secure unit		3
Homes and hostels		101
Hostels and other supportive residential placements		1
Residential schools		9
Other residential settings		5
Placed for adoption (including placed with former foster carer)		58
Placed with own parents		76
In lodgings, residential employment or living independently		32
Other placement		0
TOTAL :		878

Placement Type 31.12.2015	Total
Family and Friends	200
Foster care In-house	370
Foster care Purchased	32
Other	33
Placed for Adoption	29
Placed with Parents	102
Residential In-house	58
Residential Purchased	46
Grand Total	870

In house and purchased foster family placements are still the most popular placements increasing from 375 to 402 over the 9 months. Second behind foster families are connected persons placements with Friends and Families which have gone down from 218 to 200.

Children placed for adoption has gone down from 58 to 29 which show that 29 adoptions have been granted over the 9 months. PWP placements have gone up from 76 to 102 children.

3.5 Category of Need

CATEGORY OF NEED FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AT 31 MARCH 2015	
Abuse or neglect	747
Disability	18
Parental illness or disability	7
Family in acute stress	37
Family dysfunction	52
Socially unacceptable behaviour	5
Low income	0
Absent parenting	12
TOTAL :	878

Category of Need 31.12.2015	Total
Abuse or neglect	746
Disability	18
Parental illness or disability	7
Family in acute stress	37
Family dysfunction	44
Socially unacceptable behaviour	5
Low income	2
Absent parenting	11
Grand Total	870

Abuse and Neglect is still the main category of need and has remained constant over the 9 months with only a reduction of 1 child from 747 to 746. Family dysfunction has decreased by 8 children.

3.6 Care Started / Ceased

Looked After Children Totals by Month

As At Date	LAC Total
April 15	885
May 15	889
June 15	877
July 15	866
August 15	874
September 15	864
October 15	863
November 15	867
December 15	870

If we compare the same 9 month period over the past 2 years we once again see a relatively similar pattern. From April 2014 – Dec 2014 the LAC Total was 881 – 874 (reduction of 7) and last year April 2015 – Dec 2015 the number of children was 885 – 870 (reduction of 15).

This once again shows that we have a constant number of new BLA and children leaving care. It also evidence consistency in our thresholds and care planning.

4. Participation

4.1 The IRO service strives to ensure that the voice of the child is heard within reviews and that Care Plans reflect their wishes and feelings. These are reported nationally under the following codes.

Participation Code	Total
PN1 Child attended & spoke for self	752
PN2 Child attended - advocate spoke	11
PN3 Child attended - gave views non verbally	4
PN4 Child attended without contributing	12
PN5 Child not attended, advocate briefed with views	329
PN6 Child not attended, views sent	499
PN7 Child not attended & did not send views	112
Grand Total 31.12.2015	1719
Participation Rate (PN1 to PN6)	93%

- 4.2** We are very pleased to report an increase in the aggregate participation performance for our LAC population, from 89.6 % in 2014 -15 to 93 %.
- 4.3** There has been a significant decrease in PN7 code from 147 (calculated at 9 months for period April 2014 – Dec 2014) to 112. We have addressed this area and work was undertaken at the IRO development day in Oct 2015 specifically looking at our PN codes. There was agreement between IRO's and a clear aim to continue to drive high levels of child participation and that any further PN7 entries need to be flagged up so lessons can be learnt for subsequent reviews. Not all children wish to attend their meetings but their views should be communicated to the reviews and taken into consideration.
- 4.4** PN1 child attended and spoke for themselves is still the leading category. If we again use a monthly calculation for 2014 from the annual figure of 866 we get 649 for a 9 month period. We have had an increase of 103 from 649 to 752 over a 9 month period. This is very encouraging.

5. Timeliness of LAC Reviews

Performance at 31.12.2015 98%

- 5.1** The IRO service is proud to report improved performance of **98% of LAC Review meetings** being held within statutory timescales between April to December 2015 compared to an overall 97% in 2014-15.
- 5.2** The timeliness of LAC reviews is a key measure for the effectiveness of the IRO service and is an indicator that is scrutinised in any Ofsted inspection. IROs have worked hard to ensure that meetings are not delayed and have raised appropriate challenge where this is threatened.

6. Viewpoint LAC

From April 2015 – 31st December 2015 we have had 361 completed viewpoint questionnaires in comparison to 366 for the same period in 2014. This shows a constant and similar performance for viewpoint over the same period.

7. IRO Quality Assurance

- 7.1 We are pleased to report that our (in house developed) IRO Quality Assurance process went live on our LCS Liquid Logic database on 17th September 2015. We now have a QA system implemented into our LCS database where IRO's can address and report on Challenge, Good social work practice and undertake a Quality Assurance Audit overview in relation to the organisation, conduct and recording of reviews.
- 7.2 Over the period 17th September 2015 to 31st December 2015 our IROs issued 46 separate challenges, 19 recognitions of Good SW practice and 142 QA case file audits.
- 7.3 87% of the challenges were resolved without the need to escalate any further. Two challenges did escalate to Formal Dispute Resolution Process involving a meeting with the service manager for one and a formal meeting with the Assistant Director for the other.
- 7.4 Each of the 146 QA audits looked at the following 5 category areas in the review process; Pre Meeting Report, Education, Care plan, Participation and Health. IROs report that 85% of the time we received good pre meeting reports for our reviews. 83 of the 95 personal education plans completed were audited as being up to date and of a good standard. That 82% of the care plans audited were of good quality. Only 3 audits out of the 146 undertaken did not evidence the voice of the child in the assessment, plan and review process (less than 2%). On 87% of the cases audited, health assessments were undertaken on time.
- 7.5 The feedback from team managers and service area managers so far has been very positive. They have found the QA audits very useful, in not just raising areas for improvement but also identifying good individual social work which then can be used to drive better practice across the rest of the team. Team managers have welcomed IROs to be even more subjective in their scrutiny and auditing.
- 7.6 Following consultation with the Assistant Director we began to grade all the audits with an outcome rating.

From 23.11.2015, 60 QA audits were graded as follows;

Excellent	23
Adequate	29
Needs Improvement	8
Grand Total	60

From mid January 2016 the Outcomes Grading has been changed to;

- *Outstanding*
- *Good*
- *Needs Improvement*
- *Challenge*

This is in line with National Ofsted Grading and 2 Needs Improvement outcomes in a row will trigger a mandatory challenge.

8. Missing from Care

- 8.1** Children going missing from both home and care are a matter of both local and national concern. Bradford recently contributed to the All Party Parliamentary Group researching children going missing and absent.
- 8.2** Colleagues from West Yorkshire Police raised issue in September of last year about an increase in missing children across the region. This prompted a reconsideration of Bradford's response to missing children particularly those who are looked after.
- 8.3** There is now daily monitoring of Looked After Children going missing and the service to provide return interviews which are conducted to try to understand why a child goes missing and prevent future occurrences has been additionally resourced.
- 8.4** Funding has been found to recruit a Missing Children's Coordinator to ensure that Bradford's services to missing children meet all of the statutory requirements and that this service links closely with the Child Sexual Exploitation Hub to ensure that children missing from care receive the highest quality service.

9. The Bradford Young People's App

- 9.1** The Bradford Young People's smart phone App was launched jointly with the Bradford Pledge for Children In Care on 23rd December 2015. The App was developed with input from our Children in Care Council who not only held a competition for the name but also played a vital role in the development and review stages.
- 9.2** The App has been developed in partnership with IT, I.R.O's, Health, LAC, Leaving Care, Participation (Bradford's Children in Care Council) and other Children/Young people. The Children in Care Council have had oversight of the App from inception to launch.
- 9.3** Children and Young People can use the App to find a place of safety in the city centre if they feel threatened, uneasy, afraid or worried.

9.4 Future development of the app will include:-

- Health; there will be a facility for storing health information (an electronic health passport)
- Participation; Direct links including the Children In Care Council's new Face book, Twitter, Webpage, contact details, events and meeting times.
- A personal space to store important personal information.

10. IRO Service Work plan 2016-17

1. The IRO service will support the review of all Sec 20 children as prompted by the Family Court to ensure that all Looked After children have the appropriate legal status.
2. The whole service will re-locate to Margaret McMillan Tower and will report to the newly appointed Assistant Director for Performance, Standards and Commissioning.
3. IRO Service will conduct further workshops across children's services to promote the understanding of the QA process as a tool for raising standards.
4. Signs of Safety will be introduced as the social work model across Children's Services. IROs will participate fully in the training in the new discipline and will introduce innovations in how they deliver Looked after Child reviews.
5. The IRO service will continue to provide oversight and challenge around children's care plans providing additional vigilance where there are issues of children going missing.
6. The IRO Manager will continue to be involved with the further development of the Bradford Young People's App to ensure that this innovative development can provide accessible, up to date information for Bradford's looked after young people.

**Safeguarding and Reviewing Unit
24-02-2016**

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Report of the Assistant Director (Children's Specialist Services) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 9th March 2016

M

Subject:

Update Report on the Single Point of Contact for the Leaving Care Statistics

Summary statement:

Update of the enquiry raised at the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 14th January 2015: It was noted:

'Members commented that:

- **If a single point of contact had proved to be effective then it should be provided. There was a need to make the most effective use of the resources available'.**

Gani Martins
Interim Assistant Director
(Children's Specialist Services)

Portfolio:
Children's Services

Report Contact: Vaughan Chapman
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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Children's Services



1. SUMMARY

Following a presentation regarding the NEET/ETE opportunities for young people leaving care, an enquiry was raised at the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 14th January 2015 relating to the loss of a single point of contact (for young people to access appropriate support) and it was noted:

‘Members commented that:

If a single point of contact had proved to be effective then it should be provided. There was a need to make the most effective use of the resources available’.

It was resolved –

That the Assistant Director, Children’s Specialist Services be asked to submit a further report to the Panel, in six months time, to update Members on any progress made in respect of the provision of a single point of contact for the Leaving Care Service for young people who are not in education, employment or training, to include any suggestions of how the Panel might support this provision.

This is an update report of the current situation.

2. BACKGROUND

A question was raised at the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 14th January 2015 regarding the loss of a single point of contact for ETE support to Care Leavers following the demise of the Connexions Service and the consequent impact on one-to-one support to young people leaving care.

3. REPORT ISSUES

- 3.1 Since the last update (January 2015) there has been no input from the Youth Service or associated services in relation to progressing the single point of access agenda from "Connexions" / Youth Service (NEET – ‘not in education, employment or training’ - Tier 1) provision towards the Leaving Care Service.

“Prospects”, however, have offered a Connexions Advisor who has been assigned to LEAP (Leaving Care training service: *Learning-Employment-Advice-Preparation*) for one day per week. This move has allowed very clear partnership working and a co-ordinated and consistent approach in assertively engaging the vulnerable NEET cohort.

Current statistical concerns, in relation to how NEET Tier 1 / Youth Workers engage vulnerable groups, continues to appear to be evident;

3.2 Below is sample information over the last 12 months, of 5 care leavers, which details;

a) The number of different PAs (Personal Advisers) a care leaver had over a 12 month period and the number of face to face interactions a care leaver had over a 12 month period,

From February 2015 to February 2016

Care Leaver	No of different PAs	Face to face interventions
1	3	3
2	8	6
3	5	3
4	6	1
5	6	5

The care leavers taken in this brief sample are NEET Tier 1 care leavers. There is a clear need for consistency and it would appear to be inappropriate for any vulnerable young person, falling under NEET Tier 1 support, to have several PAs approach them and for a care leaver to need to speak with a number of different PAs. In addition there is also a clear concern that over a 12 month period, there appears to be very little face to face engagement with this cohort of care leavers and instead letters / text messages and phone calls appear to be the primary mode of engagement, which is inappropriate to the needs of this cohort of (often) isolated, vulnerable and anxious young people.

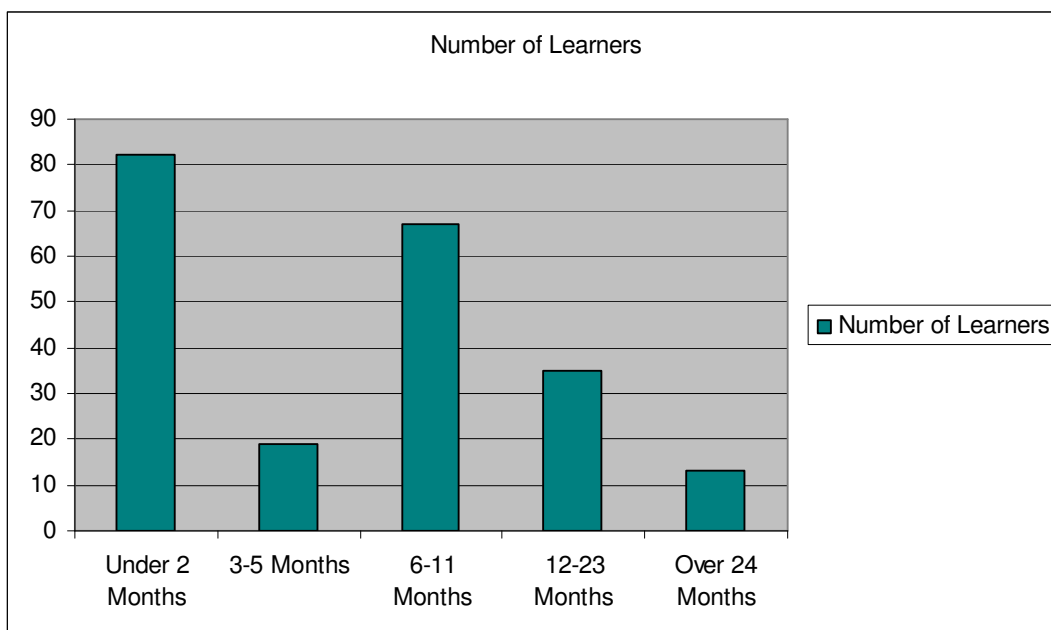
The Ofsted report "Reducing the Numbers of Young People not in Education, Employment and Training: What Works and Why (March 2010)" identified the following point;

"The Connexions Service was particularly effective on local authority areas where personal advisors had a single specialist focus to their work. This enabled them to concentrate on specific potentially vulnerable groups, such as care leavers...."

b) The time care leavers were NEET before coming to LEAP provision.

August 2008 to April 2015 – Time NEET prior to coming to LEAP

Time NEET	Number of Learners
Under 2 Months	82
3-5 Months	19
6-11 Months	67
12-23 Months	35
Over 24 Months	13



3.3 These figures indicate further the need to have a single point of contact in order to co-ordinate and manage NEET Tier 1 interventions to stop any young person being NEET for any significant length of time and to support them into the most appropriate ETE (Employment, Education or Training) opportunities.

3.4 It has not proved possible to fully integrate all services to provide a single point of contact, for young people leaving care, up to the current time.

4. **OPTIONS**

No options are given in this report.

5. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

5.1 The report relates to the Corporate Parenting responsibilities to young people leaving care and the support of those young people to best achieve positive outcomes.

5.2 The service contributes to two Council priorities, raising educational achievement and supporting vulnerable children.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to receive, consider and note the contents of the report.

7. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Reference the Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday 14 January 2015 in Committee Room 1, City Hall, Bradford

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. APPENDICES

None.

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Corporate Parenting Panel – 2015/16

Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem
Cllr Dale Smith	Cllr Carol Thirkill (Chair)	Cllr Tracey Leeming
	Cllr Sinead Engel (Dep Chair)	
	Cllr Angela Tait	
Alternates	Alternates	Alternates
Cllr Mike Pollard	Cllr Sameena Akhtar	Cllr Nicola Pollard
	Cllr Fozia Shaheen	
	Cllr Mohammed Shafiq	

Non-voting Co-opted Members	
Jonathan Pickles	West Yorkshire Police
Lynn Donohue	Senior Achievement Officer, Bradford Achievement Service
Nancy O'Neill	Bradford NHS
The Chair of the Children in Care Council	

Corporate Parenting Panel Date/Venue	Report/Author	Deadline for Reports to Secretariat
8th July 2015 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm Committee Room 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Appointment of Co-opted Members</i> ▪ <i>Changes to Quality Assurance Role and Responsibilities (Reg 44) and Member visits to Residential Homes – Suzanne Lythgow</i> ▪ <i>Work Plan</i> 	25 th June 2015
9th September 2015 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm Committee Room 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Performance Report on the Outcomes for LAC - to include a focus on the role of the YOT and their work with LAC and the Judgements for Children's Homes – Dave Preston</i> ▪ <i>Residential Care Review – Verbal report from David Byrom</i> ▪ <i>Work Plan</i> 	26 th August 2015
11th November 2015 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm Committee Room 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Educational Outcomes – to include a breakdown in the figures in respect of ethnicity and location (to constituency level) – Mike Latham</i> ▪ <i>Report on the Virtual School and how it operates, once the additional staffing is in place, to include an update in respect of the work being undertaken to improve the attendance of young people in Residential Care – Mike Latham</i> ▪ <i>Complaints (to include an update in respect of the implementation of the recommendations contained in Document 'C' – CPP 19th November 2014) Irina Arcas</i> ▪ <i>Work Plan</i> 	29 th October 2015
13th January 2016 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm Committee Room 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Progress report in relation to the Policy on the Adoption & Fostering of Sibling Groups six months after implementation – Patsy Burrows/Mary Brudenell</i> ▪ <i>Emotional wellbeing of LAC (Mental Health Taskforce & Transformation)- Cath Dew</i> ▪ <i>Journey to Excellence – Mark Anslow</i> ▪ <i>Work Plan</i> 	29 th December 2015
9th March 2016 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm Committee Room 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Independent Reviewing Officer Service, CSE and Missing Children – Frank Hand</i> ▪ <i>Further report on the Single Point of Contact for the Leaving Care statistics – Vaughan Chapman</i> ▪ <i>Work Plan</i> 	25 th February 2016

<p>27th April 2016</p> <p>4.30 pm – 6.00 pm</p> <p>Committee Room 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Update on refugee/asylum seeking LAC - Di Watherston</i> ▪ <i>Residential Care Review - David Byrom</i> ▪ <i>Further report on the Educational Outcomes for LAC (to include Dept for Education data; comparison with the national figures and those for LA's within the Yorkshire & Humber region; comparison with yp who are not looked after; the reasons why some yp are not entered for GCSE's; outcomes at 5,7,11 & 16; an assessment of whether LAC are catching up with their peers and, if so, by what point in their education – Peter Gibbons/Joanne Sutcliffe</i> ▪ <i>Work Plan</i> 	<p>14th April 2016</p>
<p>Items for Inclusion on the Panel's Work Plan for 2016/17 in due course</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Review of Exit Interview Process (2) Update on the Work of the Virtual School (3) Adoption & Fostering of Sibling Groups (once the Policy document is drafted and 6 months after implementation) (4) Emotional & Mental Wellbeing of LAC : Progress reports, including information on the allocation of the available finance (5) Journey to Excellence : Progress report 		