

## Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 27 April 2016 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced      4.30 pm  
Concluded        6.05 pm

**Present – Councillors**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
D Smith	Engel Tait Thirkill

**Councillor Thirkill in the Chair**

Apologies: Councillor Leeming

**34. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

**35. MINUTES**

**Resolved –**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2016 be signed as a correct record.**

**36. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

**37. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES**

Previous reference: Minute 13 (2015/16)

The Assistant Director Children’s Specialist Services presented a report (**Document “O”**) which provided the Panel with an update in respect of unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees in the district, as requested at the meeting held on 9 September 2015.



The report explained that Children's Services cared for a small number of children and young people who had arrived in the UK with no parent or guardian. These young people were assessed on referral to the department and become looked after.

In presenting the report the Assistant Director highlighted the following points:

- The numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees in the district had decreased over the past four years.
- Currently, the majority originated from Afghanistan and were male.
- These young people were generally well motivated in terms of education and training and a significant proportion went on to access higher education.
- General health was usually good but some young people could have issues with emotional health.
- Work had been undertaken to improve the age assessment process and to ensure that the assessment for each individual met the required standard.
- The service did its best to ensure that accommodation was appropriate for the young person's needs.

She also responded to questions from Members as follows:

- Discussions were taking place in respect of the possibility of the Authority accommodating additional young people subject to it being decided that this was the best placement for them. All the necessary systems were in place to meet their needs, subject to the necessary resources being made available and this was an issue that was being explored.
- Age assessments were undertaken by social workers using a range of information and had to be 'Merton compliant'. (This related to a legal judgement requiring assessments to reach a certain standard). There had been no recent challenges to any assessments but there were established procedures in place to do so and the service had good links to legal advice, if required.
- Interpreters were provided for the young people if necessary.

#### **Resolved –**

**That Document "O" be welcomed and that the Assistant Director – Children's Specialist Services be requested to monitor the situation to identify any increase in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees to ensure that the necessary resources and funding are available if required.**

***ACTION: Assistant Director – Children's Specialist Services***



### 38. EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Previous reference: Minute 17 (2015/16)

The Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services submitted a report (**Document "P"**) which provided the Panel with a summary of attainment statistics for looked after pupils for the academic year 2014/2015. The report related to school children and young people, who had been in care for one year or more on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and provided data on attendance, exclusions, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and end of Key Stage attainment.

The Virtual Head went through the information in the report in detail and the following points were highlighted:

- This data related to the academic year ending July 2015. The new structure at the Virtual School had not been in place for the majority of this time period.
- The Department for Education had not released the information in respect of Looked After Children (LAC) until 24 March 2016.
- When dealing with a small cohort the figures, and fluctuations within them, had to be assessed with care.
- Attendance was a high priority for the Virtual School.
- One of the two virtual teachers appointed in September 2015 was an expert in Early Years Provision and was working with schools and other providers to try and achieve improvement in this area.
- In Key Stage 1 attainment in reading and writing had improved but there had been a drop in respect of Maths.
- In Key Stage 2 Maths was a particular area of concern and the Virtual School was ensuring that this was addressed through each young person's PEP (Personal Education Plan).
- The Virtual School was taking an active role in the completion of PEPs; attending at least the first PEP meeting at each school to ensure that the correct approach was being taken and also in arranging training for the designated teacher at each school.
- At Key Stage 4 the methodology for recording results had been changed in 2014. For the 2014/15 academic year increases had been achieved but the figures were still significantly lower than the figures for all children at both district and national level. There could be a number of factors that affected these figures and creative solutions were being pursued. The aspiration was to achieve figures on a par with the national average for all children.
- Work was ongoing with schools to reduce the numbers of exclusions or to avoid them completely.

He responded to questions from Members:

- Schools were being asked to record pupil's current level of attainment and an aspirational target for what they should be expected to attain in the future. The PEP process aimed to ensure delivery of what was necessary to achieve this by the school concerned. At the end of the term the school would be asked to confirm if progress was on track.
- LAC should only be attending the schools performing at a high level; this could mean that some schools had a higher proportion of LAC in attendance which



could be an additional pressure on them. There were a few young people who were not placed at a school that was judged as either 'good' or 'outstanding' but were doing well.

- Attendance was addressed in various ways by the Virtual School; staff took part in strategy meetings on the issue involving various teams; social workers were asked to provide information to explain the poor attendance of a young person; the issue would be discussed with the young person; alternative provision would be explored if this was appropriate. The Virtual School received live data on attendance but unfortunately free school and academies did not use the same system. Some young people were monitored on a daily basis, others weekly. Attendance was an issue included within a young person's PEP and strategies to try and address it would be put in place; this could take different forms such as the provision of support and advice or direct help from behavioural support staff depending on the young person's needs. In some cases it was a matter of changing patterns of behavior or ways of thinking and this could take some time.

In response to a question Co-opted Member for the Bradford Achievement Service said that the changes to the grading system would make it more difficult to make comparisons with previous years. She also pointed out that in terms of value added the data for Early Years indicated that progress was being made. She commented that It would be very useful to track each child individually to follow their journey.

Members commented that the data provided was good and it gave a clear picture of the position. It was also suggested that the Schools Commissioner should be approached in respect of the delays in publishing the data relating to LAC.

#### **Resolved –**

- (1) **That Document “P” be welcomed and that the Panel looks forward to receiving further updates in due course.**
- (2) **That the Chair be requested to write to the National Schools Commissioner, with copies to the district's Members of Parliament, to express the Panel's concern about the delay in the publication of the outcome data relating to Looked After Children.**

***ACTION: Assistant Director – Children's Specialist Services***

### **39. RESIDENTIAL CARE REVIEW**

Previous reference: Minute 12 (2015/16)

A report was presented by the Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services (**Document “Q”**) which updated Members, further to the report to the Panel on 9 September 2015, in relation to the planned approach to deliver a residential review in Bradford.

The report explained that the review was now part of the wider 'Journey to



Excellence' programme and provided an update on the Authority's placement strategy and changes planned within Children's Homes locally.

In presenting the report the Assistant Director commented that:

- Significant progress had been made towards delivery of the new provision. Work to make the necessary changes to the homes was starting in May and was expected to take approximately three months to complete. Homes would be supported throughout this period.
- Training was being developed for all staff on the new model of care .
- The Placement Strategy would take between 6 and 18 months to be fully formed.

She responded to Members' questions:

- An active campaign was being undertaken to increase the number of foster carers in the district. (The Co-opted Member for the Health Service noted that this was also being done within the health sector.)
- There had been no significant loss of foster carers further to the changes in funding some 18 months previously. Further work was to be done in the development of a specialist payment scheme.

Members requested that a further progress report be submitted in due course.

**Resolved –**

**That the approach being taken to revise the placement strategy and develop a model of care in children's placements in Bradford be supported.**

***ACTION: Assistant Director – Children's Specialist Services***

#### **40. CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting that would be attended by Gani Martins in her role as the Interim Assistant Director for Specialist Childrens' Services and she thanked Gani for the work she had undertaken whilst with the Authority.

She also expressed thanks to Councillor Leeming who had been a valued Member of the Panel but was not standing at the upcoming local elections.

Chair

**Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.**

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

