

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday 9 November 2016 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.35 pm
Concluded 5.35 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
D Smith	Engel Shaheen Thirkill	N Pollard

Non-Voting Co-opted Members:

N O'Neill - Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group
Y Umarji – Education

Observer: Councillor V Slater – Portfolio Holder, Deputy Leader and Health and Wellbeing

Apologies: Councillor Tait, Chair of the Children in Care Council and Inspector K Taylor

Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

12. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency, Councillor D Smith noted that Meadowlea Residential Home was within his ward (Minute 15 refers).

13. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 July and 7 September 2016 be signed as a correct record.

14. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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



15. RESIDENTIAL REVIEW - UPDATE

Previous reference: Minute 12 (2015/16)

The Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) presented a report (**Document "E"**) which provided an update for Members on the progress made, to date, in respect of the on-going review of the Authority's residential care provision.

In presenting the report the following points were highlighted:

- Significant progress had been made in implementing the changes; recruitment to the dedicated Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS) team was now underway; Youth Service link workers had been allocated to all homes and the building work was progressing well with some homes now completed.
- Work was ongoing in respect of the input of the Virtual School, in particular on the specific service to be offered to the young people in the specialist homes. Work was also being undertaken in respect of the recruitment of foster carers to ensure that demand could be met in future.
- Training of staff was underway on the different elements of the model of care which incorporated PACE (Playfulness/Acceptance/Curiosity/ Empathy) and some staff would be able to access further training on DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy) with a smaller number also accessing the higher level. There would be PACE champions across the homes. Some staff would also be trained to enable them to train fellow practitioners.
- The aim was for staff to be able to be responsive to the needs of the young people in the residential homes without delay.
- The outcome of a bid to the Government Innovation Fund in relation to therapeutic support was still awaited.
- The Authority was undertaking a programme of self assessment to ensure that the right staff with the right skills were placed in the right homes.
- Young people had been involved throughout the process.

He responded to questions from Members:

- All staff would receive training on the PACE model and there would be PACE champions across the homes. There was a wish to develop expertise in each home and then to build on that in the future.
- The size of the workforce, amongst other reasons, meant that the training programme extended from June 2016 to March 2017.
- The provision of wider training for partner agencies was being discussed so that those people working alongside the young people had, at the very least, a knowledge of the approach being taken by the Authority.
- The age range at Meadowlea would not change but the range at the other homes was to be altered.
- The young people at Meadowlea had a very good record of attendance at school. The concern for a number of them was the length of their journeys to school but this was linked to the issue of maintaining as much continuity as possible. Each home now had a vehicle that could be used to take/collect the young people from school. This had made a huge difference both to the young people and staff making this much more like a normal school run.
- Staff were reacting very positively to the training.
- The desire for improved links with the local community for each home

encompassed the young people being able to access all the social activities/opportunities open to them in a particular area so that they did not miss out and the encouragement of friendships with other young people from that community. This could be activities such as Scouts or Brownies for example. A link youth worker would speak to the young people at each home to find out about their interests and look into how they might access a range of activities.

The Portfolio Holder said that the Children's Commissioner was considering the introduction of a stability index; changes to school would be one element of this. Best practice was to maintain as much stability as possible for a young person.

Members commented that:

- The feedback received on Regulation 44 visits from approximately 18 months ago had indicated staff concerns in relation to having the necessary skills to assist those young people with particularly complex needs; this was now being addressed and the feedback from recent visits was positive.
- The approach towards improving links with the community in which each home was based was welcomed.
- The Deputy Director was thanked for an informative report; the ongoing work and the difference it was making was welcomed.

Resolved –

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

ACTION: Deputy Director (Children's Social Care)

16. REGIONALISATION OF ADOPTION SERVICES

Previous reference: Minute 5 (2016/17)

A report was submitted by the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) in respect of the progress made in respect of the establishment of a Regional Adoption Agency (**Document "F"**).

Members were reminded that this issue had been discussed at the meeting of the Panel held on 13 July 2016.

The Deputy Director explained that:

- The proposal would be submitted to the Executive in early December for ratification.
- A great deal of work had been undertaken since the report in July.
- There was now a draft Partnership Agreement which included details in respect of budget and funding formulae and governance arrangements. Bradford Council had contributed to the development of this documentation.
- The Joint Committee was due to commence working in April 2017 and a Lead

- Member would need to be appointed by Bradford.
- The first Shadow Management Board meeting was due to take place the following week and he would be involved in this body.
 - 28 staff would be transferred to Leeds City Council (as the lead authority) via the TUPE regulations and negotiations were ongoing with the Trades Unions.
 - The staff with responsibility for family finding would still be based locally and office space in Bradford was being sought.
 - A budget for the first year and Bradford's contribution of just under £1.3 million had been established; this would cover everything except Adoption Allowances. A new scheme would be introduced for recipients from 1 April 2017 but existing agreed allowances would continue to be paid by Bradford.
 - The Partnership Agreement covered a term of 10 years (with a review at 5 years) and had the potential to continue after that time. There was a facility to withdraw with a notice period of 18 months.
 - There was great co-operation between the partner agencies and all the individual elements of the work the service undertook were being examined in an effort to establish best practice standards and to ensure the effective measurement of outcomes.
 - The Head of Service post had been advertised and it was hoped that someone would be in post from January 2017.

He replied to questions as follows:

- Approval from the final partner agency would be sought on 21 December 2016.
- In terms of the role of the NHS; as the young people would remain the responsibility of this Authority the arrangements in respect of medical assessments would remain very much the same. There was a strong wish to develop the links with the NHS and CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service).
- It was considered that the new arrangements meant that there would be much greater potential for young people to be placed within West Yorkshire rather than further afield. This would lead to a cost saving as inter-agency fees would no longer be payable to partner agencies.
- It was believed that the economies of scale that would be gained by the regional organisation of the service would lead to more effective recruitment and training and would bring forward matches that were more local to the child concerned and in a more timely way. It should also facilitate the delivery of a better level of support to the children as they would be less likely to be placed at a distance.
- The decision to place a young person for adoption and the final decision about the match of a young person with a family would remain the decision of Bradford Council.
- Recruitment by the constituent agencies for potential adopters was still ongoing but any adopters recruited at this point would become part of the pool to be used by the Regional Agency.
- The Adopted Children's Group, and the Adopter's Voice Forum had been involved in the process of the development of the Regional Agency and the Forum would feed into the Management Board.

- If a young person was placed outside the region as long as they remained a looked after child negotiation would be undertaken with the Virtual School in terms of input to their education. Once adopted a young person was treated the same as every other child apart from the payment of Pupil Premium. This was an issue that was being looked at for the future. (The Virtual School Head said that this had been discussed at regional level and all Virtual School Heads were aware of this issue. The statistics indicated that adopted children struggled more in settling into education however, currently, they did not receive the same level of support as looked after children).

The Co-opted Member representing the NHS said that there would be no saving to the NHS from fewer young people being placed outside the district as there was an agreement that cross-charging did not take place for medical assessments. However the Commissioning Group would have to monitor whether it became a net importer or exporter of this service. She noted that if the new arrangements led to a faster process in terms of adoption this could raise issues with capacity to meet demand in terms of undertaking medical assessments. The organisation would do its best to work together with the new Regional Agency.

The Portfolio Holder noted that the issue of the governance arrangements may need to be considered by the Council's Governance and Audit Committee.

Members commented that the suggestion of a minimum of one meeting of the Joint Committee per annum did not give the right message in terms of responsibility.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the arrangements for the new Regional Adoption Agency be endorsed and that the submission of the recommendations set out in Document "F" to the Executive be supported.**
- (2) **That the Panel considers that one meeting per annum of the Joint Committee is not sufficient and asks the Executive to give consideration to this issue.**

***ACTION: Deputy Director (Children's Social Care)
City Solicitor***

Chair

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

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