

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday 8 March 2017 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.35 pm
Concluded 6.05 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
D Smith	Engel Tait Thirkill	N Pollard

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Chair of Children in Care Council
Ali Jan Haider
Yasmin Umarji

Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group
Bradford Education

Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

24. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest in matters under consideration.

25. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meetings held on 9 November 2016 and 11 January 2017 be signed as a correct record.

ACTION: City Solicitor

26. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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



27. RE-THINKING SOCIAL CARE INNOVATION FUND BID

The Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) presented a report (**Document "L"**) in relation to the award of £3.2 million for the district, further to a successful bid to the Department for Education's 'Re-thinking Social Care Innovation Fund'. The report explained that the resultant programme of work would link with the existing 'Journey to Excellence' Programme, a key aim of which was to reduce the number of Looked After Children (LAC) in the Bradford district.

The funding would cover a two year period and was expected to facilitate the Authority in reinventing its care provision for adolescent LAC. The programme was planned to begin on 1 April 2017.

In presenting the report the following points were highlighted:

- The focus of the programme was to establish how innovative ways of working might provide a better experience for children in care, reduce the length of time spent in care and prevent children entering care, with a particular focus on adolescents.
- A name was needed for the programme and any suggestions were welcomed. The decision on the name would be made in consultation with the Children in Care Council the following week.
- The outcomes for young people who entered care later in life were not as positive as for those who had done so when they were very young.
- The work would include an evidence based programme to support foster carers to work with adolescents. This was based on an established model called the Mockingbird Project which provided specialist training and the provision of peer support for participants. This would be undertaken on a voluntary basis and additional payments would be available. A more therapeutic regime would also be introduced within the residential homes for those adolescents with complex needs or who may have experienced trauma or distress. Three homes had been nominated and consideration was being given to use of the PACE (Playfulness Acceptance Curiosity Empathy) model, which was already in use in some homes, and DDP (Dyadic Developmental Practice)
- A large proportion of the funding was to be focussed on the development of a programme to address the issues associated with adolescents who were deemed to be on the 'edge of care' as entering care at this age could cause difficulties for the young person, have a number of negative impacts and was intensive in terms of resources. The aim was to assist in those cases where a family may have more complex needs or be less resilient to the conflict that most adolescents had with their parents. This work sought to replicate the success of a project that had operated in North Yorkshire – 'No Wrong Door' which had involved input from clinical psychologists, speech and language therapists and the Police. Using this approach, if a young person did enter a residential home this was termed as being for respite or assessment and full parental involvement would be retained.
- An Evaluation Partner would be appointed by the Department for Education in



order to undertake a cost benefit analysis of what was achieved with the funding. In North Yorkshire a similar process had established that this project had been very effective.

- A Programme Board had been set up and secondments were being discussed with the Care Trust and the Police. Adverts would be published shortly to appoint the necessary new staff.

In response to Members/Co-opted Members questions he said that:

- North Yorkshire had received funding from the Innovation Fund in 2014. Nationally the LAC population had increased by 5% whereas in North Yorkshire it had decreased by 16%; there had also been a significant reduction in terms of the length of time spent in care.
- If a young person was successfully prevented from entering care they would be allocated a key worker who would maintain contact with the family for a period of two years.
- Staff would have to have a range of skills to try and engage with families who might be at a difficult point and may not wish to do so. The North Yorkshire project had adopted a fairly assertive tone. Respite and assistance would be offered but the authority would not take over responsibility for the care of the young person. It was accepted that this approach would not work in every case.
- The official start date was 1 April but it would take some time for the programme to be fully operational.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the award of £3.2 million from the Department for Education’s Re-thinking Social Care Innovation Fund be welcomed.**
- (2) **That the Deputy Director (Children’s Social Care) submit a progress report to the Panel in six months time.**

ACTION: Deputy Director (Children’s Social Care)

28. IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

A report was submitted by the Deputy Director (Children’s Social Care) (**Document “M”**) in relation to a review of the support for young people in care/care leavers undertaken by members of Bradford Council’s Future Leaders Programme (FLP) 2016.

A document which set out the findings and recommendations arising from the review was appended to the report for Members’ consideration and was presented to the Panel by representatives of the FLP.

Members commented that:



- The report and recommendations were welcomed and it was now important to ensure that this work continued and recommendations were implemented.
- There was a need for clearer communication throughout the Council in respect of responsibility for the corporate parenting role.

In response to Member's questions the FLP representatives and the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) explained that:

- The brief for this review had been to look at the wider offer to young people in care other than relating to academic attainment. It was recognised that academic attainment was a hugely important issue but this was being addressed by Social Workers, the Virtual School and the Education Department.
- The review had adopted the approach of 'what would we do for our own child/children', for example by assisting in gaining work experience or accessing an apprenticeship.
- The focus of the work had been guided by the Children in Care Council (CICC).
- The report was intended to be the start of a process rather than a stand-alone document and it was hoped that it would form the basis of a conversation of how to move forward.
- The former apprentice with the Leaving Care Service had now secured a permanent post and the apprenticeship opportunity was to be advertised.
- It was considered that access to apprenticeships was an issue that should be further explored.
- In terms of Key Finding 7 it was believed that there was some lack of consistency in terms of communication with those young people who were leaving care. This had resulted from discussion with young people who felt that there were key gaps in the information provided to them, for example about what support was available to them, and there was a need for simple and accessible practical guidance to assist in navigating the wider world.

Members and Co-opted Members commented that:

- A certain level of academic attainment was needed in order to access an apprenticeship and it was very important to address the gaps in achievement. In order to access many facilities a young person would also have to have the requisite confidence and skills.
- The report was welcomed and how the recommendations would be progressed needed to be considered. It was felt that a number of the issues should be considered by the Head of Service who chaired the Care Strategy Group.
- Having observed an initiative in a local primary school whereby a list of former pupils was displayed for staff to see their destinations upon leaving school, it was considered that this could be inspiring and would be something that could be replicated for foster carers and the staff in residential homes.



- In terms of the views of the CICC; young people considered that they did not have sufficient information in respect of all the services that they were able to use and budgets/funding that they may be entitled to access. It would be helpful if they had someone to go through it with them and to ensure that they understood.
- Anecdotal evidence was given of a young person who had not known how to vote.

Further answers were given, by the Deputy Director and the FLP representatives, in response to these issues and additional questions:

- The purchase of an 'app' for young people leaving care had been discussed but it was recognised that not all young people had smartphones. The best way to provide information was something that was being explored. It was disappointing that an Election was something that had not been proactively discussed with a young person.
- It was noted that this may well have been done but a young person might become overwhelmed with the amount of information being provided and thus not retain it all.
- Data was kept in respect of education, employment and training for each young person up to the age of 21. Information was also recorded in respect of suitable accommodation. Information in respect of health needs such as having access to a dentist or mental health services was not recorded but each young person would have a key worker. It was noted that it may be possible to get this information from the Care Leavers Nurse.
- The challenge to the Local Authority was to ensure that opportunities were being made available to LAC across the wide range of jobs it encompassed for example through the provision of apprenticeships or 'taster days'.
- The events that it was proposed should be run by each Council Department were not intended to be of any particular format and there was an expectation that they would be guided by the views of young people. This recommendation was about ownership of the corporate parenting role by all.
- A specific aim was the development of a communications plan to determine the best mechanisms to use to communicate opportunities and information to young people. This was an important issue and work was in progress.

Further comments were made as follows:

- The Panel had looked at the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures in detail previously.
- Links should be made with other partners and the voluntary sector to see what they could offer in terms of work experience or mentoring opportunities.
- In terms of the cultural offer it was considered that some significant discounts and other offers could be achieved for LAC without the need for huge investment if co-ordinated by a small team, perhaps with the assistance of an Elected Member.



- The NHS co-optee said that a district wide group was currently looking at new entries into health and social care, one element of which was apprenticeships, she would feed the suggestion in respect of the potential to give priority to LAC into the process.
- This was an excellent report and represented a great step forward but was just the start. It was hoped that the new cohort of the FLP would take it forward.
- Cultural experiences helped young people in their education and could assist them in setting goals for the future. It was considered that any discounts and special offers would be well used.

The Chair expressed her thanks to all those involved in the production of the report. This was echoed by other Members and Co-opted Members.

Resolved –

(1) That the findings and recommendations set out in the document ‘Improving the Support for Young People in Care/Care Leavers’ (Appendix to Document “M”) be adopted.

(2) That the report be referred to the Executive for information and with a recommendation that Recommendation 7:

That a new section be included in Bradford Council’s Report template called ‘Implications for Corporate Parenting’,

be implemented.

(3) That the Deputy Director (Children’s Social Care) submit a progress report in six months time to allow the Panel to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

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

29. WORK PLAN 2016/17

The Panel’s Work Plan for 2016/17 was submitted for consideration (**Document “N”**).

Resolved –

That the following items be added to the Work Plan:

- **Progress report in relation to the Re-thinking Social Care Innovation Fund bid (September 2017).**
- **Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations**



contained within the 'Improving the Support for Young People in Care/Care Leavers' report (September 2017).

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

