

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

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 6.10 pm

Present – Councillors

| CONSERVATIVE | LABOUR | LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| D Smith | Tait Thirkill | N Pollard |

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Children in Care Council representatives

S Thompson – Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group

Y Umarji – Bradford Education

Observers: Councillor V Slater, Portfolio Holder – Health and Wellbeing
C Holloway – Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group

Apologies: Councillor Engel and Inspector Taylor (West Yorkshire Police)

Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

16. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency, Councillor Dale Smith disclosed that he was a Trustee of the Canterbury Imagination Library which was in discussion with the Virtual School in respect of funding.

17. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2017 be signed as a correct record.

18. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

19. **ONE ADOPTION WEST YORKSHIRE (REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY) - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) submitted a report (**Document "J"**) which reminded Members that, alongside Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield, Bradford's adoption functions (as specified in the relevant Partnership Agreement) had been delegated to Leeds City Council on 1 April 2017 and the Regional Adoption Agency – 'One Adoption West Yorkshire' (OAWY) had been formally established. The report summarised the developments in this service in the first six months of operation.

The OAWY Service Delivery manager highlighted the following points:

- Work had been undertaken with the ATiD group for adopted teenagers to obtain their views on communication issues and the improvement of services.
- All staff had now been trained in objective assessment techniques
- High quality assessment was recognised as a very important issue
- A large number of recruitment/information events had taken place across West Yorkshire and larger venues were currently being sought.
- The progress made to date was encouraging although it would take a while for the full benefit to be seen.
- Efforts were being made to improve the matching process and make it more efficient.
- More tracking of children was being undertaken and this would assist in providing a quick response in the event that it was decided that a child was to be adopted.
- Two Adoption Panels were held every month in Bradford and there were seven Panels across West Yorkshire that could be used if necessary.
- A lot of links were being developed with Health and Education colleagues.
- The IT was a significant challenge as there had been five separate systems in use previously.
- OAWY was leading a pilot in respect of the administration of the Adoption Support Fund and was also developing a Centre of Excellence, using a multi-agency/partnership approach, in relation to the assessment of needs and the provision of support.

The Portfolio Holder expressed her deep concern in respect of the issues with IT facilities as this had been raised as an issue at an early stage and assurances had been given that it could be resolved.

The Service Delivery Manager responded to Members' questions:

- Staff had relocated to a different floor in the same building as a temporary solution to issues with wifi access. At present Bradford staff were having to undertake double entry recording due to issues with connectivity and it was anticipated that this would take some time to resolve. All OAWY staff used the MOSAIC case recording system which had been used by Leeds and which had a bespoke section for OAWY.
- Refreshment was provided for those sitting on the Adoption Panels and the



agendas were now restricted to no more than five cases.

Members expressed concern about the additional stress on staff due to the IT situation.

The Deputy Director noted that the Agency was a pathfinder and the combination of IT systems from different authorities was always likely to be problematic; he assured Members that this issue was being progressed.

The Portfolio Holder reported that an excellent video, about being in care, which had been made in conjunction with the AT-iD group, had been shown at a recent Board meeting

Members welcomed the comprehensive report on the progress of the Regional Agency.

Resolved –

- (1) That the progress made in respect of the development of the Regional Adoption Agency: ‘One Adoption West Yorkshire’ be noted and that the progression of these arrangements be endorsed.**
- (2) That a further progress report be submitted to the Panel in April 2018, to include an update in respect of the Information Technology issues.**
- (3) That the Deputy Director (Children’s Social Care) be requested to make arrangements for Members of the Panel to see the information video produced by One Adoption Yorkshire and Humberside in conjunction with the AT-iD Group and Post Adoption Centre UK.**

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

20. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN - UPDATE

The report of the Deputy Director (Children’s Social Care)(**Document “K”**) provided information for the Panel in respect of the work currently being undertaken in the district with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

He explained that there had been some significant changes since the last report to the Panel in April 2016. The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) had started in July 2016 and there were currently 32 UASC being supported in the Bradford district, 20 of whom had been placed through the NTS.

A young person was in attendance and gave Members of the Panel an insight into his personal experience as an UASC.

A representative of Horton Housing, a provider of supported accommodation,



explained that the young people were taught a large number of different practical skills to encourage successful independence and were provided with a wide range of useful information on subjects such as first aid, sexual health and life in the United Kingdom. They were also given the opportunity to take part in cultural experiences such as visiting the coast, shopping, playing football and visiting museums. They were encouraged to learn or improve their English skills and to attend college.

The Deputy Director responded to questions from Members:

- Statutory guidance had been published by the Department for Education which clearly indicated that planning for the future for these young people must be undertaken in the same way as for all looked after children, whilst being mindful of safeguarding and trafficking issues. This needed to be undertaken alongside the immigration system process; with young people being advised honestly that they may or may not be able to stay and being assisted to try and prepare for either eventuality.
- Migration Yorkshire undertook a central co-ordinating role and the Through Care Team liaised with this agency.
- To date, Bradford had only taken young people over the age of 16 due to the available placements being more appropriate for this age group. Work was being done in respect of the recruitment of foster carers for younger children.
- Migration Yorkshire held meetings, covering the whole of West Yorkshire, every two to three months in York.
- The Home Office was undertaking a review in respect of funding with Local Authorities being asked for their views. It was believed that the existing payment structure was broadly reasonable in respect of the care of 16/17 year olds.
- Migration Yorkshire was looking into how health needs could be better funded as these young people were quite likely to have additional health needs.
- There was an extra requirement in respect of notifying the Home Office if any of these young people went missing.
- When the National Transfer Scheme had been established a calculation had been made for the number of UASC each local authority could take in principle and for Bradford this had equated to 90. Apart from Kent no local authority had taken the full amount. Bradford had taken 23% of its quota, which was broadly equivalent to that taken by the other local authorities in the area, and it now appeared unlikely that the authority would have to take the full amount. It was stressed that Bradford had never refused to take an UASC and would continue to work with Migration Yorkshire to accommodate these young people when necessary. It was considered that the Authority should be proud of its contribution.
- The vast majority of UASC were aged 16 to 17 but some were younger, even as young as 11, perhaps when travelling with a sibling group.

Members thanked the young person for attending the meeting and sharing his experience and wished him good luck for the future. They commended officers for the work being undertaken to support these young people.



Resolved –

- (1) That officers be thanked for the work that has been done and continues to be done with unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the Bradford district.**
- (2) That the Panel notes the importance of adequate funding being made available to the authority in order that the needs of these young people can be met.**

ACTION: Deputy Director (Children's Social Care)

21. VIRTUAL SCHOOL - ANNUAL REPORT

A report was presented by the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) which constituted the statutory Annual Report of the Authority's Virtual School (VS) (**Document "L"**). The report used data for those children who had been in the care of the authority continuously for a year or more as of 31 March 2017.

The report highlighted the work undertaken by the Virtual School, the Local Authority and its partner agencies to improve outcomes for children in care from Early Years stage up to targeted care leavers aged 25. The report included information in respect of progress and attainment for all key stages, it also reflected on the achievements of the Virtual School and identified areas for future development to try and achieve the best outcomes for the children in the Authority's care.

In presenting the report the Virtual School Head highlighted the following points:

- This was the first full year of the VS being placed within the remit of the Deputy Director - Education, Employment and Skills and this had given a greater degree of stability and allowed the VS to pursue more strategic aims and priorities.
- The numbers of looked after children (LAC) had continued to rise. 494 had been of school age and continually looked after during this period. At the time of the Panel there were 596; 140 of whom were educated in out of authority schools and 286 having some form of Special Educational Need (SEN).
- In Reception there had been a strong rise in those achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD); this was considered to be as a result of the work undertaken in schools and also the support provided by the VS team which had included a focus on Personal Education Plans (PEPs).
- In Key Stage 1 there had been a good rise of 11% in the numbers of children achieving the combined Reading, Writing and Maths standard. The number achieving the Year 1 Phonics standard had remained fairly stable.
- For Key Stage 2 there had been a rise of 7% in respect of the combined RWM standard.
- For Key Stage 4 the parameters for assessment/measurement had been



altered and would change again next year so it was not possible to compare like for like outcomes.

- There had been a strong focus on PEPs this year and 96% of the children had a PEP. A significant amount of training had been provided on the production of a good PEP and quality assurance had been undertaken. It was considered that the quality of PEPs had improved significantly.
- The proportion of Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) grant that was retained by the VS was used for a number of purposes including: supporting social workers at PEP meetings; ensuring a consistent PEP format; ensuring that an initial PEP meeting took place within ten days of a child coming into care; supporting designated teachers; and the provision of Associates to support educational and pastoral needs.
- The number of Associates had been increased, some of whom were teachers and some teaching assistants. The Associate provision permitted a rapid response to be provided to schools or individual children when required. This service had received 100% positive feedback.

In response to Members' questions he explained that:

- A LAC could not be placed in a school that was classed as 'inadequate' and, only in exceptional circumstances, one classed as 'improving'. If a school entered one of those categories whilst a LAC was in attendance a decision would have to be made about what was best for that child. More regular monitoring of the child's progress would be put in place and if it was considered that there was a problem the child would be moved; the priority was ensuring that LAC received the best possible education outcomes. This also applied to academies.
- The child's opinion would be taken into account but, usually, if their needs were not being met at a school the child would not be happy anyway.
- Although the VS could direct a maintained school to take a LAC, an Academy could refuse to take them and any dispute would then have to be taken up with the Secretary of State. However, the VS did have a very good relationship with the academies in the district.
- The role of the VS was just the same for those LAC placed out of area and local associates had been commissioned when necessary.
- A number of other local authorities had shown an interest in the Associates programme and how it operated.
- The production of PEPs was quite a specialist area and came within the remit of the designated teacher.
- New statutory guidance on the role of the designated teacher was expected to be published in due course.
- When PEPs became a statutory responsibility academies would be held accountable for their completion.
- The VS Head undertook to send a link to Members in respect of the on-going Government consultation in respect of 'Promoting the Education of LAC and previously LAC'.
- If a school was unaware that a child was adopted they would obviously not claim PPP; a parent had the right not to disclose this information.



Members briefly discussed the issues associated with disclosure that a child was adopted in order that a school could claim PPP for them; it was noted that a child may not wish to be identified as an 'adopted child' and that as the funding was associated with a particular child it had to be spent directly on them.

The Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) commented that:

- The VS was providing great support to those young people in residential homes.
- Foster carers were trained on the role of PEPs.
- The attendance achieved for LAC was something to be proud of. Foster carers did a great job and the authority was very grateful for their contribution; some foster carers had to travel long distances on a daily basis to maintain young people's attendance.

Resolved –

That the Virtual School Head and his team be thanked for the work they do and the impact that this is having in improving educational outcomes for the district's looked after children.

NO ACTION

22. B POSITIVE PATHWAYS

A report was submitted by the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) which provided a summary of the developments in respect of the B Positive Pathways Programme (**Document "M"**) with an emphasis on the progress made since the last report to the Panel in July 2017.

He reported that:

- The programme had officially launched on 2 November and this had been a very positive and successful event. It had included a visit to one of the residential homes by the Minister of State for Children and Families who had been shown around by some of the young people.
- A Project Manager had now been appointed.
- Recruitment to the health roles was on-going.
- A number of meetings had taken place with the Oxford University Evaluation Team.
- The Hub had been established at The Willows.
- Work was on-going to recruit to the post of Hub Home Manager; it was recognised that appointing the right person was essential.
- Hollybank Road should be open by Christmas.
- A number of good applications had been received from foster carers in respect of participation in the Mockingbird fostering model. The Liaison Worker post had been advertised and it was hoped that the two constellations would become operational in early 2018.
- The new model of care was starting to become embedded and to have an



impact.

Resolved –

That Document “M” be noted and that the Deputy Director (Children’s Social Care) be requested to submit a further progress report to the Panel in April 2018.

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

23. WORK PLAN 2017/18

The Panel’s Work Plan for 2017/18 was submitted (**Document “N”**) for Member’s consideration.

Resolved –

That the Panel’s Work Plan for 2017/18, Document “N”, be approved subject to the following additions:

- **B Positive Pathways – Progress Report (April 2018)**
- **One Adoption West Yorkshire – Progress Report, including IT issues (April 2018)**

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

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

