

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 7 March 2018 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.40 pm
Concluded 5.45 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
D Smith	Thirkill Tait

NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

S Thompson – Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group
Inspector K Taylor – West Yorkshire Police
– Bradford Education

Apologies: Councillor Engel and the Children in Care Council

Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

30. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest in matters under consideration.

NO ACTION

31. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2018 be signed as a correct record.

ACTION: Interim City Solicitor

32. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

NO ACTION

33. THROUGH CARE SERVICE

Previous references: Minutes 7 and 12 (2017/18)

The Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) presented a report (**Document "R"**) in respect of the Through Care Service which had been established in July 2017 following a merger of the Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services.

The report included information on issues, specifically requested by the Panel at previous meetings, such as preparation for independence and financial management.

The following points were highlighted by the Deputy Director:

- The Service now supported young people up to the age of 25.
- A young person came within the remit of the Service once they had a Permanency Plan.
- The Service was needs led and relationship based. The aim was for a young person to retain the same key worker.
- The Service was currently working with 395 young people up to the age of 16, 512 care leavers, and 51 homeless young people. It was noted that 16/17 year olds were counted twice within these figures.
- The various specialist teams and roles had been retained.
- The aspiration in terms of accommodation was to give care leavers choice.
- Young people were accommodated in Bradford wherever possible.
- A framework that would respond to need was being developed which would include a range of accommodation provision facilitated by partnership working.
- A five year contract had been agreed with 'Centrepoin't'.
- Work was being undertaken in relation to preparation for independence.
- A Taster flat was available which was a good assessment tool.
- Pre-tenancy work was undertaken and Care Leavers were given priority in bidding for housing post 18.
- Suitable accommodation outcomes had improved.
- There was a trend for young people to stay in supported residential accommodation longer than in the past.
- 30 to 40 young people were 'staying put' post 18; this would usually be for a period of approximately 12 months.
- The Council Tax exemption that had been agreed for Care Leavers between 18 and 21 was very much welcomed and would have a significant impact. An exemption also applied to single foster carers in terms of the retention of their 25% discount
- The Service was working with the Department of Work and Pensions and, although there was still progress to be made, the issues were now being addressed at national level. Improvements had been seen over the preceding six month period.
- The LEAP (Learning, Education, Advice and Preparation) programme supported those in employment and provided a support worker for those young people attending University. It also aimed to provide a stepping stone in access to College courses.
- Aspirational events with Bradford College were planned for those aged 14 plus.
- The Service had two ESOL trained workers to help with Maths and English skills.
- A particular focus in the current year was to try and establish details of the barriers that existed in terms of certain young people accessing education/training.
- Traditionally asylum seeking children had been well motivated in terms of education and had usually been educated previously. Currently many of these young people had had less experience of formal education which was a challenge for the Authority.
- A target had also been set in relation to increasing apprenticeships and/or work experience opportunities within the Council

The Deputy Director responded to questions from Members:

- Looked after young people automatically got an interview for any Council apprenticeship. Although it was understood that there may be reasons why it may not be possible it was hoped that in the future a percentage of such apprenticeships

could be ring-fenced for care leavers.

- 111 young people were accessing foundation training.
- The Service was aiming to identify the potential of each young person to try and provide a focus and avoid them drifting from one course to another.
- LEAP did make efforts to work with those who were disengaged.
- The 'health passport' was a document held by each young person which provided basic information on health care such as the young person's GP and dentist and recorded medical details such as immunisation dates.
- Historically, Social Care had funded 4 full time equivalent staff in CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) but there had been a gap in provision for those who may be struggling but were not at a level where referral was appropriate. These staff had now been brought into the Through Care Service and would be co-located from May 2018. They would provide solution focused consultations and there had already been a positive impact and a reduction in the number of referrals to the specialist provision at CAMHS. This also worked well alongside the use of the Be Positive Pathways (BPP) model in the residential homes.
- The length of time a young person had to wait for a tenancy depended on where they wanted to live.
- Work was in development in respect of the potential use of housing voids.
- Care Leavers were not penalised by Housing Options for refusing offers.
- Culture Fusion was working alongside another agency in respect of the provision of a 'crash pad' for young people.
- There were a number of 'peer landlord' schemes around the country. The 'Jump Start' Scheme trained young people to act as a lead tenant and support others in living with them. They were offered reduced rent as part of this role.
- The Rotary Club had expressed a wish to work with young people; and this had led to the Midland Hotel being offered as a venue for the Christmas Party. It was hoped that this link would lead to further benefits in future.
- Issues in respect of immigration status, leave to remain and having no recourse to public funds were live issues for the Service and linked with the problems in respect of passports that Members had briefly discussed at a previous meeting and had included within the Panel's future work plan. It was an issue that had arisen more frequently in recent years.
- A staged response/approach was being taken in respect of the over 21s service. A lot of the need revolved around basic things such as education or housing and many could be dealt with on a drop in/advice basis with no need to re-open a case. However a case would be reopened if this proved necessary. In terms of the resource implications for the extension of the Service to the age of 25 it was not yet clear how much funding would be provided by the Government.
- In relation to the national challenge from Ofsted about 16 plus supported accommodation; this was a very relevant issue for all authorities at present and clarity was needed on the definition of 'unregulated provision'.
- Care Leavers were not referred to food banks although food would be collected for them through this resource to supplement the support already provided at the Services' Resource Centres where they could get a hot meal, a shower and clean clothes as necessary.
- The Service worked closely with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Police.

He also commented that the Christmas Presents initiative had been very successful as had the Christmas Party and Care Leavers Celebration Event.

Members commented that:

- Although it may be difficult to ring-fence apprenticeships this should certainly be possible in terms of work experience opportunities.

- GPs had commented on the usefulness of the 'health passports'.

The Chair undertook to write to the Secretary of State, on behalf of the Panel, in respect of the issues around passports and citizenship.

Further to which it was:

Resolved –

That a further report on the Through Care Service be submitted to the Panel in late 2018, to include information in respect of:

- **Bradford's Local Offer for Care Leavers.**
- **An update on progress in relation to apprenticeships.**
- **An update in relation to the national challenge from Ofsted regarding 16+ supported accommodation being a regulated care setting.**
- **The impact on the Service's resources as a result of the requirement, under the provisions of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, that a service is provided to care leavers up to the age of 25.**

ACTION: 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.

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