

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Monday, 9 March 2020 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 6.00 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP
Farley Humphreys Tait Thirkill	Smith	Knox

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER

Sue Lowndes Bradford Education

Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

23. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

24. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

31. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

32. MINUTES

Recommended –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019 be signed as a correct record.

33. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

34. CHILDREN IN CARE - PERMANENCE

The report of the Strategic Director Children's Services (**Document "R"**) provided current information and future plans in respect of permanence planning for children in care. Permanence was the primary focus of Ofsted's Monitoring Visit on 25 and 26 February 2020. It was a key area for improvement identified in the Ofsted Inspection in 2018 due to the delays caused for achieving good outcomes for children.

The Head of Service, Social Work South was present and introduced the report to the Panel. He stated that the report provided data on the current children in care cohort and information in respect of new processes that were being implemented to ensure that permanence was achieved without unnecessary delays.

Following introduction, the following question and answer session ensued:

- Why had delays been caused for achieving good outcomes for children?
 - There were a long history of delays and inconsistencies due to a high turnover of staff;
- Was their in guidelines in which Social Workers and administration staff could follow in order to avoid delays?
 - Guidance on implementation strategies had remained the same and that it was the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff were adhering to guidelines;
- By the end of January 2020 there were 256 children subject to Care Orders. Was this considered as a high number in comparison to other local Councils?
 - The 256 that had been identified was an average sized number in relation to this authority and in comparison to other cities, whilst taking into account the demographics of the city;
- Did the authority try to ensure that children in care were kept together with their siblings?
 - Yes;
- When did this authority commence with using the new tracking tool to track permanence at child-level in each locality, with each Head of Service taking responsibility and being accountable for their own area?
 - This began a short while ago but data could be provided at a later date; and,
- Did the authority have sufficient GP's to assist the authority with children in care?
 - The assistance of GP's was never enough due to the fact that complex needs of children were continuously becoming difficult and therefore this factor being a constant challenge.

Resolved –

- (1) That the information contained in Document “R” and the importance of achieving permanence for children in care without any unnecessary delay be acknowledged.**
- (2) That an update report be provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel in 6 months that details the progress on the implementation of permanence planning for the Bradford District’s children in care and that the report includes a breakdown of demographical information of the children.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Children’s Services

35. CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH - UPDATE

The report of the Joint Mental Health Commissioner NHS (**Document “S”**) provided an update on progress to improve mental health support for children and young people.

The Head of Commissioning for Mental Wellbeing, Council and NHS was present and introduced the report to the Panel. She outlined that in October 2019 the Mental Health Partnership Board (MWPB) agreed that a sub group to focus on children and young people’s mental health would be formed to enable the system to focus on issues within children and young people’s mental health, a proposal which was supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Health and Wellbeing Board also commissioned the Centre for Mental Health to conduct a full System Review of Children and Young People’s Mental Health. The sub-group were tasked to maintain oversight of the review and ensure timescales were met to report back to the Health and Wellbeing Board in May.

It was also stated that the Assistant Director in Children’s Service at the Council, the Interim General Manager at Bradford District Care Foundation Trust and herself agreed to lead work with partners to scope the role of the new group and to work through urgent issues that have arisen within the delivery of mental health services for children and young people. The aim of the sub-group was to also to build on the good work done with Future in Mind and broaden out to be the governance for all things related to children’s mental health, reporting into the Mental Wellbeing Partnership Board.

A question and answer session ensued:

- How were referral procedures initiated?
 - This action was initiated by school nurses or a GP;
- Were there any other ways of dealing with referrals at the point of commencement?
 - The authority was at present setting up a central point of access, co-ordinated by resources or a single person;
- The report highlighted that at the beginning of the week, the average wait time from referral to assessment was 259 days. The target set for the team had been to reduce this to 21 days. At the end of the week, the team were

able to bring this down to 38 days and some further work is underway to continue to reduce this. What was the reason behind such a significant drop?

- At the point of receiving a referral, at present there was no real standard operating procedure (SOP) to oversee the wait time. However any further new referrals would be actioned under a SOP;
- Were all new referrals accepted?
 - According to a strict need basis;
- What was the purpose behind the pathway diagram proposed by the system? And,
 - This was a one page pathway diagram that was accessible to service users as well as professionals. Sitting behind this would be a description of services and included the proposal for a newly configured service around assessment and triage;
- Were children prioritised according to their vulnerable needs?
 - The authority followed the NHS guidance;

The Chair concluded the discussion of the subject matter by stating that it was paramount that for the Chair of the Children of Care Council to attend future meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Resolved –

- (1) That the action plan from the Mental Health Sub-Group for Children and Young people be noted and the current System Review be supported.**
- (2) That an update report be provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel in 3 months that provides-**
 - a. further data on children in care related to mental health;**
 - b. further emphasis on the transition from children to adults process in the Mental Health Service; and,**
 - c. a breakdown of socio-demographic of children in care with mental health.**

ACTION: Joint Mental Health Commissioner

36. CHILDREN IN CARE 16+ SERVICE

The report of the Strategic Director, Children's Services (**Document "T"**) contained current information on children in care who receive a service via the 16+ Service.

This report highlighted the current were reaching or aged 16 years above and entitled to a leaving care service, under the Children Act 1989 and as amended by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

Under Section 23 of the Leaving Care Act local authorities had a duty to allocate a personal advisor for young people aged from 15¾ years old, who must be provided with a pathway plan.

The Interim Head of Service 16+ was present and gave a synopsis of the report.

Following introduction, a question and answer session ensued:

- How were the needs of older children met who remained with the Children in Care Service (CIC)?
 - This would entail daily visits and occasionally a Social Worker would not stop visiting an older child until such time that the Social Worker was confident about the older child;
- How did the traffic light system work?
 - The system was based on a child's needs with green being an immediate transfer, following an introductory period. Amber allowing for a more complex transfer process with specific tasks requiring completion. Children categorised as red that were not yet transferred due to care proceedings or the complex nature of the child's needs and the specific social work role required;
- In relation to Section 23 of the Leaving Care Act local authorities had a duty to allocate a personal advisor for young people aged from 15 and $\frac{3}{4}$, who had to be provided with a pathway plan. What if no pathway plan was available? and,
 - It was also about ensuring that a young person was ready on a specific date to move on and when young people confirmed that they were ready.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the information contained in “Document T” be noted.**
- (2) **That an update report be provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel in 12 months that details information on the number of children in care who receive a service via the 16+ Service. That the report further provides a breakdown of information of children according to the traffic light system of green, amber and red status complexities.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Children's Services

37. WORK PLAN 2019/20

Resolved –

That the Panel's Work Plan for 2019/20, Document “U”, be approved.

LEAD: Assistant Director, Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships

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