

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on remotely Monday, 20 July 2020**

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Commenced 4.30 pm  
Concluded 5.40 pm

### **Present – Councillors**

<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>CONSERVATIVE</b>	<b>LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP</b>
<b>Thirkill Farley Tait</b>	<b>Smith</b>	<b>Knox</b>

### NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Jude MacDonald

Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group

Apologies: Sue Lowndes

### Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

#### **48. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

#### **49. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No appeals to remove the restriction on a report or background paper had been received

#### **50. EU SETTLED STATUS AND CITIZENSHIP FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS**

The report of the Deputy Director, Children's Social Care (**Document "H"**) provided information on the issues regarding addressing EU Settled Status for Children in Care and Care Leavers and also their applications for passports and citizenship.

Members were advised that since the last report to the Panel there had been a change in focus because of Brexit in order that the correct documentation was in place for all children in care to ensure that they had settled status by the June

2021 deadline. This had proved difficult when children did not have the required documents and had required considerable input to secure the relevant documentation. The complex process of obtaining settled status for children of a number of nationalities was outlined by way of illustration. It was noted that other Local Authorities were also experiencing the same difficulties as Bradford regarding the complexities of the process. I was noted that new guidance had been published in April which involved more rigorous tracking process and that a member of staff was now in post to help with applications for settled status. It was noted that an alternative was to apply for British citizenship which was a more straight forward process but cost £13,000. There were 10 children who had gained British citizenship and a number of cases were pending.

The Chair stressed the need to ensure that all 81 looked after children had settled status by the June 2021 deadline.

A member referred to the route to apply for settled status where there are no documents and was advised that Rotherham had been successful in pursuing this approach and that Bradford was following their lead. It was noted that UK-Butterflies, a non-profit organisation that works with Eastern European families, was pursuing the issues that the Polish Government did not recognise British Care Orders to assist in resolving this issue.

It was noted that there was now someone in post and that time was not wasted trying to find documentation and a paper route was started straight away if there was no documentation.

A member asked for reassurance that documentation would be kept for all looked after children so that their status could be permanently documented. The importance of being able to document the status of looked after children was acknowledged and it was noted that every child was reviewed every 6 months by the Independent Reviewing Officer. Government guidance required that a track be kept of all records.

A member stressed the importance of sharing best practice with other Local Authorities. She sought clarification on the financial implications of the additional work for Social Workers and was advised that a small amount of funding had been made available to Local Authorities.

The Children and Families Portfolio Holder asked for assurance that Bradford would be compliant by June 2021. The Deputy Director Children's Social Care confirmed that finance had been allocated and that centralised dedicated resources had been put in place. He accepted that progress in Bradford had been slow but he assured members that it would move more quickly and that it was a high priority on their Management Team agenda. The Chair thanked him for this reassurance but stressed that members needed to know that the June 2021 deadline would be achieved.

#### **Resolved –**

- (1) That the Director of Children's Services be asked to ensure that a thorough paper trail is kept that documents the journey of all Looked**

**After Children pursuing EU Settled Status or British Citizenship.**

- (2) That partnership working with other authorities be continued, sharing best practice.**
- (3) That a progress report be presented to the Panel in January 2021.**
- (4) That the Deputy Director Children's Social Care send a summary by letter of the report, to all of the District's MPs, so that if they receive any information or queries about this matter they are aware of the work being carried out in Bradford and the relevant deadlines.**

ACTION: Director of Children's Services  
Deputy Director Children's Social Care

**51. ONE ADOPTION WEST YORKSHIRE ANNUAL REPORT**

The report of One Adoption West Yorkshire (**Document "I"**) provided an overview of the adoption service activity from April 2019 to March 2020. The key issues in the report were highlighted for members.

The following questions were asked by member and answers given:

- Should the letterbox service be picked up more frequently than fortnightly ?
  - The letterbox was now being picked up weekly but the vast majority of correspondence was by email and there had been no impact or delay.
- The time taken to do medicals had been raised before by the Panel but while appreciating the Covid19 had made an impact members required more than an assurance that discussions were taking place with CCG's to get back to normal.
  - The frustration in getting medical appointments was acknowledged and it was noted that virtual medicals were being accepted. GP's were not seeing this as a priority piece of work which had been raised with CCG's and they in turn had agreed to circulate the concerns to GP's
- Were the issues regarding accommodation not anticipated and will they be resolved?
  - The issues were due to increased staffing capacity, however since 18 March staff had all worked from home and looking ahead it was unlikely to be an issue as home working continued.
- What progress had been made in enabling information to be shared with Kirklees through the portal?
  - Portal work with Kirklees was not moving at a significant pace but information was able to be accessed when needed.
- Are virtual medicals robust enough?
  - Virtual medicals were for adopters not children and were considered robust. Children's medicals posed an on going challenge in terms of capacity, however confidence was expressed that they were not holding up children with an adoption plan. The Health Co-opted member added that long standing work was being undertaken on medicals for adults and children and that Covid 19 had presented

challenges. She noted that a meeting would take place shortly to investigate what could be done to speed things up and that avenues were being explored to meet demand and reduce timescales in the future.

- 12 children have been waiting for last 18 months for adoption since March 2020 how many of them are subject to placement order (free for adoption) and how long they have been subject to placement order- what are the ages of the children waiting for adoption? And How old are the children?
  - All 12 are subject to placement orders. Their ages could be provided for members. 11 of the 12 were hard to place ie over 5 years old, sibling groups, having a disability of BAME.
- OFSTED had expressed concern about long drift and delays in adoptions, what was being done to ensure that no further drift and delay occurred?
  - Monthly tracking meetings were being held with One Adoption and Bradford to identify any cases that drift and delay.
- When will training be live and what has been the uptake?
  - Virtual adopter preparation training had taken place the previous week. Early adopter training and sibling training were scheduled to take place in July and August. There had been a backlog from March to May but there had been a 54% increase in the last 3 months and early indications were that uptake was good.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That One Adoption West Yorkshire be thanked for the report.**
- (2) That the report to the Panel on the Performance Tracker update include information on drift and delay for Bradford children.**

ACTION: Deputy Director, Children's Social Care

**52. WORK PLAN 2020/2021**

Members discussed the Work Plan for 2020/2021.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That Children Placed out of Bradford Report be moved to 7 September 2020.**
- (2) That the remaining agenda items for 7 September be discussed with the Chair with a view to facilitating the attendance of young people at the meeting.**

ACTION: Assistant Director Performance Commissioning

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