

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held remotely on Monday, 12 April 2021

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 6.00 pm

Present – Councillors

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

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Chair of Children in Care Council
Jude MacDonald

Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group

Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

82. HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The Panel observed a minutes silence as a mark of respect following the announcement by Buckingham Palace that His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh had sadly passed away.

83. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in items under consideration were received.

84. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

85. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBER

Resolved –

That it be recommended to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee that Chief Inspector Daniel Ware be appointed to the Panel as a non-voting co-opted member representing West Yorkshire Police.

ACTION: City Solicitor

86. MOCKINGBIRD MODEL OF CARE – FOSTERING

The report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "AC"**) provided members of the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update on the implementation of the Mockingbird Family Model in Bradford. The Mockingbird programme delivers the Mockingbird Family Model. This centres on a "constellation" where one foster home acts as a hub, offering planned and emergency sleepovers and short breaks, advice, training and support, to six to ten satellite households.

Members were advised that the authority had previously operated the Mockingbird Family Model but that it had not been sustained. Lessons had been learned and foster carers had been involved in every aspect to make sure that the model was fit for the district and sustainable. Recruitment had been undertaken, all posts were part of the full time establishment and a project lead had been appointed with a wealth of experience in Mockingbird. The first hub had been launched in March 2021.

The Home Hub carers Steven and Dean Sagar-Watson attended the meeting and spoke about what had happened since the launch. Families had been asked for their thoughts on what they wanted to get out of Mockingbird which would be kept and put in a scrap book. They had phone calls, Zoom sessions and texts to get to know all the families. Since the launch they has held a bingo night, days out at St Ives Estate, a Grand National competition and a quiz night. The first Home Hub Carers meeting had been held. Members were pleased to note that all families in the constellation had been fully engaged in the events which had been very inclusive and families were keen to participate.

It was anticipated that the second constellation would be launched in September 2021 and a third in December. There had been a lot of interest from carers to get involved and there was a desire to keep up the momentum and also grow the first constellation.

Members were impressed with the work being undertaken by the Home Hub carers in supporting other carers. Members who attended the launch were very impressed with the success and looked forward to more constellations being introduced.

The Home Hub carers had met the Children in Care Council as part of their training and it was agreed that an update be presented to the Children in Care Council on progress since then.

Resolved –

That Hub Carers, Steven and Dean Sagar-Watson and officers be thanked for the successful launch of the Mockingbird Family Model and that the future launch of more constellations be looked forward to.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

87. **REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL ON EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN CARE WHO ARE NOT IN EDUCATION, PRE AND POST 16**

The report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "AE"**) presented an overview of the education provision for children in care who had not accessed their education provision through mainstream (including special school) settings during the past 12 months. This included children who may have had accessed remote provision during the COVID crisis and those post 16 who were not in education, employment or training. It was noted that since September 2020 the number of children not in education had reduced significantly from 3.9% to 2.5%. Protocols had been put in place with the Admissions Team, the SEND Team and social workers so that cases were processed quickly. Overall the number of Children in Care had increased but those not in education had reduced. It was noted that a significant amount of Pupil Premium Plus was allocated to support children who are not in education with 1:1 tuition. The number of post 16 who were Not in Education or Employment (NEET) had decreased over the last 3 years and was 5.3% in November 2020 which represented 2 children. It was reported that 64% of Children in Care continued to attend school during the second lockdown.

Members questioned the Virtual School Head and responses were given:

- How do you work with schools that are academies?
 - Engagement with schools had been positive. There had been no requirement to direct any school to take a child. Links with the Bradford diocese and BDAT were good.
- What was the pressure on places going forward?
 - There was always pressure for specialist school places. 3 independent Special schools had been opened the local area, 2 of which were in the district and this had reduced pressure on places. Oastlers school had increased its capacity.
- Regarding children out of area, how many other authorities do we deal with and is there a particular problem with one or is it a cluster?
 - Difficulties are sometimes experienced with particular local authorities. Some have struggled with capacity in their teams because of Covid but they have been short term issues. Most children are in neighbouring authorities.
- Those 16 – 17 year olds who are NEET is below 10% but the figure of 17 – 18 year olds is disappointing, what are the reasons for this?
 - Young people successfully transition onto a course but then become disengaged if the course is not what they expected. Support is

provided through Connexions in year 11 and a priority in the strategy is to have a similar level of support in year 12.

- Has the number of children waiting for an EHCP become worse because of Covid?
 - This is a success story and the SEND team have been focussed on reducing the timescale for providing an EHCP and are now 85% compliant compared to the national average of 65%

Resolved –

(1) That the Virtual School Head be thanked for the report and its contents and that members look forward to further reductions in the number of children in care who are not in education pre and post 16.

(2) That a further report be presented to the Panel in 12 months.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

88. LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S HOMES AND REGULATION 44 ACTIVITY

The report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "AF"**) provided the Corporate Parenting Panel with a summary of Regulation 44 activity in the previous twelve-month period and an update on our eleven children's homes.

Members were advised that the last face to face visit took place in March 2020 and that during the period of this report no face to face visits had taken place. Inspections had been undertaken through virtual tours, consolation and monitoring of records. It was noted that Ofsted had suspended face to face visits unless they had concerns. Discussions were now taking place on how to engage in face to face visits once lockdown was lifted.

Officers expressed their gratitude to the children's homes on how they had coped during the pandemic and were pleased to note that during the Covid pandemic none of the children's homes have had to close and no placements have been lost. It also was recognised that staff and children had been ill and had to self-isolate.

It was noted that the three homes for disabled children (Valley View, Clockhouse and Wedgewood) were now line-managed by the Head of Service / Responsible Individual within Provider Services which provided for greater oversight and consistency and was thus far is working well.

The Regulation 44 post had been regraded and this has enabled the additional vacancy to be filled . It was intended to extend the role of the Regulation 44 Officer to include Quality Assurance visits for Post 16 "unregulated" placements. This would provide more assurance regarding quality of provision in that sector.

Members were pleased to note that the Regulation 44 post vacancy had been filled and that their role would be extended to include "unregulated" placements

which was seen as a step forward. It was noted that, in the interests of consistency each of the Regulation 44 officers would work with the same homes to avoid inconsistency with the homes and with Ofsted.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Regulation 44 Officer be thanked for the report and the progress made be noted.**
- (2) That a report be presented to the Panel in 12 months including information on unregulated private sector placements.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

89. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS TO ACCESS ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

The report of the Director of Health and Wellbeing (**Document "AG"**) provided the members of the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview of current offers available to care leavers from the Department of Health and Wellbeing.

Members were advised that Adult Services would be included in the Children in Care Partnership that was looking at ways to strengthen corporate parenting and the outcomes for looked after children. There was a need to ensure that there was a smooth transition between children's and adult services for children with significant disabilities which could prove difficult to navigate. The Preparation for Adulthood Service worked closely with teams in Children's Services.

Children leaving care were offered a 6 month paid work placement and it was noted that recently two former children in care had been recruited to apprenticeship roles in social care.

Members requested information from children and parents on their experience of the transition between Children's and Adult Services. It was noted that there were significant challenges for children in care and care leavers and that parents had said that the transition between children's and adult services was confusing and slow.

Resolved –

- (1) That officers be thanked for the report.**
- (2) That a joint report from Adult's Services, Children's Services and Health be presented to the Panel in the next municipal year on transition arrangements for young people moving from children's to adult service.**

ACTION: Strategic Director Children's Services
Strategic Director Adult Services

90. WORK PLAN

Resolved –

That the Work Plan be updated to include the further reports requested at this meeting and be kept under review.

ACTION: Assistant Director of Children's Services, Safeguarding and Review, Commissioning and Provider Services

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