

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 8 June 2022 in Banqueting Hall, City Hall

Commenced 4.46 pm
Concluded 6.29 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Duffy Humphreys Thirkill	Knox

Non voting co-opted members

Sue Lowndes Bradford Council Assistant Director Schools (BC/ADS)
Jude MacDonald Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Group
Richard Paswell Wes Yorkshire Police (for Daniel Ware)

Young people

Presenters

3 presenters

Others

22 other young people

Carers (*surnames recorded where given*)

Dolores
Shirley Joseph
Mohammed Kafy
Anna May
Michael
Suekrane Tariq
Katrina Weston

Others

Alaia Alam Bradford Council Children's Services
Helen Cliffe Bradford Council - Service Manager, Safeguarding and Reviewing Team
Jonathan Cooper Head, Virtual School (HT/VS)

Nicole Grant	Bradford Council Children's Services
Amandip Johal	Bradford Council Children's Services
Mick Nolan	Bradford Council Children's Services
Helen Osman	Helen Osman Governance Services (Clerk)
Emily Rhodes	Bradford Council - Participation Co-ordinator, Safeguarding and Reviewing Team
Philip Segurola	Bradford Council - Assistant Director Safeguarding and Review, Commissioning & Provider Services (AD/SRCP)

Apologies received prior to the meeting

Cllr Alipoor – sub: Cllr Julie Humphreys

Cllr Mike Pollard

Cllr Dale Smith

Daniel Ware – sub: Richard Paswell

Councillor Duffy in the Chair

25. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022 be signed as a correct record (previously circulated)

26. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals.

27. AGENDA

5. Young Person led Corporate Parenting Panel

Action No.	Action	Person
1	Young people to let Emily Rhodes know if they are interested in being on an interview panel for social workers or managers. (see Item 5.2)	Young people
2	Young people to put their names down to attend the next meeting, which will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> on Wednesday 31 August <input type="checkbox"/> from 1.00pm to 4.00pm 	Young people

	□ at the activity centre in Baildon (see <i>Item 5.2</i>)	
3	Philip to follow up young people's suggestions on the new Care Leaver Entitlements document (see <i>Item 5.3</i>)	P Segurola
4	LA to put a clear and fair savings policy in place (see <i>Item 5.6</i>)	H Cliffe
5	Young people to send comments on the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy to Emily (see <i>Item 5.6</i>)	Young people
6	Philip to follow up on the four priority areas identified at this meeting (see <i>Item 5.7</i>)	P Segurola
7	Young people (15 to 19 years old) to let Emily know if they want to join the dragon boat race on 01 July 2022	Young people (15 to 19 years old)

The meeting was led by 3 young people

5.1 Introduction and welcome by Young Person

The Chairs welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending – it was great to see so many people here.

Emily said that a team of young people had been working on the presentation for tonight's meeting over the last few months, in between studying for their exams. They would welcome audience participation.

Housekeeping: Everyone was reminded to silence their mobile 'phones; move outside the room to take any urgent calls; not to talk over other people; to respect the meeting schedule and move on when the co-Chairs asked them to do so; and to speak slowly to allow time for the interpreter to translate what they said.

2 Feedback from March session led by Philip

Philip and Emily gave feedback on the three issues that they had been asked to look into at the 16 March 2022 meeting of the Young Person led Corporate Parenting Panel:

1. Overseas recruitment of social workers to be explored

Philip said that the Council is working with two agencies that specialise in recruiting social workers from outside the UK. It plans to recruit around thirty overseas social workers by the end of the year.

The Council is also working with Bradford University, which trains overseas social workers, to see whether any of their newly qualified

students would like to join Bradford's social work team.

This isn't a perfect solution, because overseas social workers tend to leave after completing a two-year contract, but it will help to reduce the turnover in social workers.

2. *Steps will be taken to re-involve children in care and care experienced young people in recruitment activity for social workers and managers*

Emily said that the Council has set up a system to let people who are recruiting social workers and managers indicate if they want to involve a panel of young people in the process. This new system has already been tried and worked well.

Philip said that this process applies to posts at all levels, including the Head of Service post which is being recruited to now. All social workers and managers need to be able to work well with young people.

Emily asked that any young people who are interested in being on an interview panel let her know at the end of this meeting.

ACTION: Young people interested in being on an interview panel to let Emily know

3. *Children's Services would confirm their position as to what age Bradford Council would allow young people a mobile phone while in care.*

Philip explained that there is no single answer to this question, though it would be unusual for a young person still at primary school to have a mobile 'phone. As with every parent, it depends on the carer's view of whether the young person is ready and their personal circumstances.

So, conversations about a young person having a mobile 'phone need to be part of the Independent Review process – young people should feed their views in through their social workers and carers.

Action from last meeting - It was suggested that the next August meeting should be held during the day and include more young people. Perhaps a sports day would be a fun setting.

Emily said that the next meeting will be held:

- At the activity centre in Baildon
- On Wednesday 31 August 2022
- From 1.00pm to 4.00pm

The meeting will include team building games, archery and discussions. Everyone is welcome.

ACTION: Young people to put their names down to attend the next meeting.

Feedback on the new Care Leaver Entitlements and suggestions for a Young Person friendly guide.

Young people presented their feedback and suggestions on the new Care Leaver Entitlements document:

- There are some good, forward-thinking new entitlements: eg holiday money, driving lessons, payments for festivals.
- The increase in some existing entitlements is welcome.

But:

- The document is confusing.
- The terms used in the document to categorise young people in care don't make sense to young people themselves, so it is hard to work out their entitlements.
- It is hard for a young person to identify what category they are in and what they should be receiving.
- Young people said that different people receive different amounts for festivals and it is hard to understand why.

Young people recommended that the Council:

- reformat the entitlements document as a flow chart to make it easier to understand;
- make the language as clear and straightforward as possible, without complex or specialist terms (such as “relevant care leaver”); and
- produce an online version of the entitlements document that lets each young person fill in their age and circumstances and then tells them their personal entitlement.

ACTION: Philip to follow up these recommendations.

Presentation on Savings Policy

The meeting split into table discussions of questions related to the savings policy. Each table gave feedback on their discussions, as follows:

Question 1: Why do we need savings as young people?

- To save for the future.
- To learn to budget and manage money effectively.
- To be able to buy nice things (supports mental wellbeing).
- To buy a house or a car.
- To cope with the unexpected: eg needing to buy things for a new baby.
- For household set-up costs and electricity, gas and water; furnishings, cooker, toiletries, curtains.
- To meet rising costs of food and fuel.
- For starting to drive.

- For holidays and travelling.

Young people also said that:

- it isn't clear why some people (eg children in foster care) receive more than others – this inconsistency is unfair on both young people and their carers.
- on pocket money, it isn't clear:
 - what pocket money they should receive;
 - whether it should come directly to them or to their carer;
 - whether they can decide for themselves whether to spend it (and what they spend it on) or save it; or
 - whether they can decide for themselves to take money out of their account.

This needs to be clarified and consistent.

- For older young people, who receive a bursary while they are in college, it isn't clear what will happen when college finishes for the summer, if they are unable to get a job.
- Young people in children's homes don't receive enough pocket money to save it.

Question 2: What do other LAs do?

Young people looked through the savings policies of Coventry, Hertfordshire, Derbyshire and Kirklees local authorities. Each table gave feedback on their discussions, as follows:

- Young people need to know that their savings are there for them when they need them.
- They need to be able to afford a few comforts, beyond the basic necessities, especially if they are parents.
- Savings give young people choices.
- Young people need to be educated in how to save, spend and manage their money.

An adult said that, when young people move into semi-independent living at the age of 15, they receive an allowance for school attendance and are supported to budget, understand the costs of living, learn how to work out a gas bill etc. The aim is to make sure that, when they leave care, young people understand all their costs, so that they can budget and not be taken by surprise when the bills arrive.

- There are big differences between the allowances and other support that different local authorities provide. For example:
 - Some pay a top-up allowance for young people who can't manage on Universal Credit.
 - Some pay Council Tax until the Young Person reaches 25.

- o Some decorate and fit out accommodation for care leavers (eg furnishings, TV)
- o Provision of driving lessons varies widely.
- The care leaver's allowance paid by Bradford isn't enough to pay for hygienic accommodation with basic equipment such as a washing machine.

Philip said that Bradford has no formal savings policy for looked after children. This is a huge gap, and the Council will put a clear and fair policy in place very quickly.

ACTION: Helen Cliffe

Question 3 – what is a “substantial” amount of money to leave care with?

Each table gave feedback on their discussions, as follows:

- Enough to set up home and lead a decent life.
- Enough for a house. About £3k.
- £15k.
- More than we currently get.
- £20 per month savings.
- £2k.
- £3.5k
- Young people needed to know where to get advice, for example, on where to buy necessities at a good price.

An adult said that the average appeared to be around £2k to set up home. Another adult said that the leaving care allowance was due to increase shortly.

Break

Question for discussion over refreshment break: How do we make it fair?

Discussion over sandwiches concluded that Bradford needs a clear savings policy to ensure consistency and fairness.

Discussion around effective engagement of children and young people towards the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy

Philip said that every local authority should have a corporate parenting strategy that sets out how it will act as a good parent. His team has started work on a strategy and wants to know what young people in Bradford think about the early draft – they don't want to create a big and boring document doesn't mean anything to the people it is about. The strategy needs to work for young people as well as for the local authority.

Philip asked each table to look at the document that set out what Bradford planned to do under each of the priorities in the strategy, discuss it and then feed back their views.

Each table gave feedback on their discussions, as follows:

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General

- The language is confusing: it needs to be simplified, condensed and not repeat itself.

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Priority 1

- Paragraph 2 should be the priority.
- Where the paper says that young people who are placed with extended family will have the best chance in life, it would be better to say that they **should** rather than **will** have a better life, because that is not always guaranteed.

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Priority 2

- An adult said that the young person beside him feels heard, valued and spoken to with respect. Her setting has residents' meetings, which are encouraged by the setting. She feels important, and feels it is important that young people in care have their voices heard.

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Priority 3

No feedback.

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Priority 4

- Some young people in their GCSE year have been out of school for several months because they can't get a placement. Young people have potential and these are the most important years, yet they are sitting at home instead of being in school. The document shouldn't say that Bradford takes education of young people seriously, because it doesn't look as though it does.

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Priority 5

- A young person who is in home schooling said that it had taken the local authority six months to arrange formal education, and he had then received five hours of home schooling. This was useless.
- An officer said that, at another meeting today, the price of living had been identified as the top priority for young people, with education second. A young person said that, to deal with the price of living, young people needed an education.
- Young people were not sure what "a strong sense of self" means. This should be replaced with "a strong sense of who you are". This suggestion received lots of "yes" responses from the room.

Priority 6

- Access to data needs to be sorted out. Giving young people laptops is fine, but not much use if they are blocked from all the sites they need to get onto, or if the wifi connection is poor quality. Young people need this to be sorted out so that they can do their revision or other work.

There had not been time to consider Priorities 7 or 8.

Amandip asked that young people let her have any more comments before they leave, or take the document away and send comments to her or Emily.

ACTION: Young people

Take away themes

The meeting agreed that Philip and his team would take away these three priorities to work on:

- Re-write the entitlements document in clearer language and with a flow chart and/or online interactive version so young people can easily see what they are entitled to.
- Write a Bradford savings policy that is consistent across all care settings and clear about how much a young person will receive and how much control they have over saving or spending it.
- Clarify the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy priorities and language so they make sense to young people.

ACTION: Philip Segurola

The meeting the theme for the next young person-led meeting would be the educational entitlement of Bradford's looked after young people.

Helen said that a dragon boat race would take place for 15-19 year olds on 01 July 2022. Anyone interested in taking part should let Emily know. Public transport costs would be paid for and there was no need to be able to swim.

ACTION: Anyone interested in taking part should let Emily know

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