

Corporate Parenting Board

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 7 April, 2014 in Committee Room No. 6,
Civic Centre, Sunderland at 5.30p.m.**

Present

Councillor P. Smith
Councillor Stewart
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Williams

Members of the Board

Silksworth Ward
Redhill Ward
Shiney Row Ward
Washington Central Ward

Young People

Carly Scott
Daniel Bensley
Lauren

Change Council
Change Council

Also in Attendance

Councillor P. Gibson
Councillor Tye

All Supporting Officers

Meg Boustead
Fay Wearmouth
Michelle Turnbull
Lynne Goldsmith
Julie Curtis
Kevin Yates
Dave Goldsmith

Head of Safeguarding
People Services
Sunderland CCG
Senior Manager, Children's Services
NTW
NTW
NTW

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Macknight.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

Councillor Tye stated that at the last meeting he had enquired which external agencies were involved in Pathway Plans as he had not heard anything back. The Head of Safeguarding agreed to chase up the response to Councillor Tye.

20. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February, 2014 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

IRO Annual Report 2012/2013

The Executive Director of People Services submitted a report outlining the exercise of the functions of Independent Reviewing Officers in Sunderland in 2012-2013.

The Head of Safeguarding stated that the report was required to be considered by the Safeguarding Management Team, Children's Services Leadership Team and would be subject to member scrutiny through the Children and Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Members were advised that the report had come before the Corporate Parenting Board rather late due to changes in staffing and that the next report would be submitted in July 2014.

Page thirteen of the report set out the legal functions and statutory context. This stated that Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced a new statutory role of Independent Reviewing Officer with responsibility for the process of reviewing children in care cases.

The Head of Safeguarding advised that every child must have a review and stated that the IRO must consult with the young person in advance of and in between each Looked After Review.

At the present time, it was confirmed that there were 492 children looked after and 271 subject to Child Protection Plans.

In terms of performance, Members were advised that in April 2012 there were 388 Looked After Children in Sunderland. A year later, at the end of March 2013 this number had risen to 449, an increase of 15.7%.

Members were informed that timeliness had slipped in the last year, with the percentage of children whose reviews were conducted within statutory timescales during the reporting period April 2012 – March 2013 stood at 87%. However, when compared to national performance, Sunderland was still classed as performing well.

The Head of Safeguarding stated that she would submit performance data to a future meeting to demonstrate the figures.

The large increase in the numbers of admissions during 2012/2013 as opposed to the previous year (242 compared to 154 in 2011/2012, an increase of 57%) meant a very significant increase in the number of reviews required to be timetabled at relatively short notice, and is a credit to the team.

It was reported that young people were positive about the work of their Independent Reviewing Officers and the role they had in their lives.

Areas for further development were outlined within the report.

Upon consideration it was: -

21. RESOLVED that the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report April 2012 – March 2013 be noted.

Work Plan for the Corporate Parenting Board

The Head of Safeguarding submitted a draft work plan for the Corporate Parenting Board. Members were advised that items for the July 2014 meeting included: -

- Annual Performance Report
- Adoption Performance and Annual Report
- Corporate Parenting Annual Report to Scrutiny

It was agreed that a report relating to young people offending would also be submitted to a future meeting.

Upon consideration, it was: -

22. RESOLVED to note the Work Plan and the topics due to be presented to the next meeting in July 2014.

CYPS Support for looked After Children

Kevin Yates from Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust was in attendance, accompanied by Dave Goldsmith and Julie Curtis to present information to Members regarding how referrals were managed.

Kevin advised that all referrals came via one single point of access and that each referral was screened and processed during an initial consultation / appointment. The Board was informed that some work to quality check the referral process was expected to be undertaken in the near future.

Information contained within the presentation covered data collected during the period April 2013 – January 2014. Throughout this time, it was confirmed that there

had been a total 1174 referrals from SCCS, of which 147 related to young people in Sunderland.

In terms of the referral source, Board Members were advised that under 50% of young people were referred by a social worker, 22.5% by a GP or paediatrician, 12.5% by a school, 2.5% by a foster carer and 2.5% were referred by a carer.

Councillor Gibson enquired why figures differentiated in Sunderland and South Tyneside. The Head of Safeguarding responded advising that referrals were carried out differently across local authorities and assured the Board that schools within Sunderland were aware how to refer pupils.

The Board was advised that pupil waiting times had reduced from 104 weeks two years ago to only 14 weeks and that every attempt was being made to continue to reduce these times.

In response to an enquiry regarding why routine referrals could not be treated as a crisis, Julie Curtis advised that varying levels of routine referrals existed. The service had a 'single point of access'. This was a duty system and was staffed 5-days a week from 9am until 5pm. Anyone was able to ring in, tell their story or obtain advice.

Julie explained that in terms of the risk levels, a child at immediate risk to themselves or others, suffering acute psychosis, rapid weight loss with physical symptoms or severe depression would be dealt with within 72 hours.

A priority of a maximum of fourteen weeks existed.

The Board was advised that often nurses were required to make a judgement call based on the child's mental health needs and the effect it was having on their lives. It was confirmed that the referral service could be accessed in Sunderland via the mental health service. The service was also linked into the initial response team and a psychologist would visit to carry out an assessment.

Councillor Tye enquired how one psychologist covered the entire area. Julie Curtis advised that three local areas covered south of the Tyne and that services were going to be aligned and an intensive service for Sunderland and South Tyneside would be allocated, with one psychologist each.

Waiting times were managed by a hub system, which was overseen by a senior clinician and client groups existed to ensure patients were categorised.

The Board was advised that there had been a phenomenal increase in referrals, 3,900 in a nine month period where a lot of high risk young people were coming forward. This was a national trend and was being tracked across all services in Sunderland.

Councillor Williams enquired whether there was any pressure nationally to acknowledge the increase in referrals and deal with them. In response, the Head of Safeguarding advised that there was heavy investment in the previous government, but there was no investment in the current government. Sunderland was ensuring that messages were fed upwards regarding increasing numbers.

Kevin Yates, Clinical Psychologist explained that he carried out a lot of work with carers and foster carers and stated that if a young person was not engaging, this would hopefully be picked up and recognised when a young person received individual therapy. However, it was confirmed that advice was given to people looking after young people to allow them to recognise when a young person was feeling sad or unwell.

Councillor Williams stated that families needed to be the focus, then there may not be as many breakdowns. She stated that early interventions were necessary.

Carly Scott, Change Council enquired whether a young person in care was categorised as a higher priority than a young person who was not. Kevin Yates responded advising that there was a collective responsibility to ensure that all children across the City were being looked after and that interventions were available, accessible and meet the child's needs in a timely manner.

Councillor Gibson stated that these discussions should be taken to the People Boards and Area Committees.

Julie Curtis welcomed any members that would be interested in visiting the service.

Upon consideration, it was: -

24. RESOLVED to note the presentation on the CYPS Support for Looked After Children.

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

At the instance of the Chairman, it was: -

25. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a likely disclosure of information relating to an individual, or information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual (including the Authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1 and 2).

(Signed) P. SMITH
Chairman

Note:-

The above minutes relate only to items considered during the time which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.

