

## ***Corporate Parenting Board***

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 13 September 2010 in  
Committee Room No. 2, Civic Centre, Sunderland at 5.30 pm**

### **Present:**

Councillor P. Smith (Chair)  
Councillor Speding  
Councillor Trueman  
Councillor A. Hall  
Councillor D. Smith

### **Members of the Board**

Executive Member, Children and Learning City  
Executive Member, Healthy City  
Executive Member, Sustainable Communities  
Coalfield  
Copt Hill

### **Also in attendance:**

Phil Taylor  
Helen Fay  
John Arthurs  
Alan Caddick  
Jane Hedley  
Debra Dorward

### **All Supporting Officers**

Residential Services Manager  
Fostering Review Manager  
Independent Reviewing Manager  
Head of Housing  
Senior Solicitor  
Democratic Services Officer

### **Young People**

Craig Clifford  
Kallam Addison  
Konnar McCully  
David Lamb  
Daniel Johnson  
Daniel Bensley  
Tiffany Johnson  
Shanice Sykes

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Ball, Gofton, Maddison, I. Richardson, Walker, L. Walton and D. Wilson.

Apologies were also submitted from Meg Boustead, Nick Murphy and Alyson Boucher.

## **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **Minutes of Meeting held on 5 July 2010**

9. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010 be agreed as a correct record.

John Arthurs, Independent Reviewing Manager updated Members that since the last meeting, the young people had held a workshop to look at priorities to be included in the Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) such as accommodation, education, health, contact issues/placements, finance, jobs and bullying.

## **Update on Housing Issues**

Alan Caddick, Head of Housing provided a verbal update in response to the accommodation issues the young people had raised at a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 12 January 2010. During the update he referred specifically to the Corporate Parenting Board minutes where the young people had delivered a PowerPoint presentation detailing their concerns regarding accommodation.

Having reflected on the points that the young people had raised, the Head of Housing clarified that work was underway on plans to work more closely with young people in relation to their moving and/or leaving care. Access to an appropriate range of housing was regarded an important issue by both the Council and young people and in future it was intended that there would be a simplified way for young people to access appropriate housing.

The Head of Housing stated that the Council intended to work with landlords and in future would underwrite bonds, rather than supply the landlord with the bond upfront. The Council would begin to offer a service focused on the individual and the type of accommodation that could best meet their needs.

In response to a series of questions put forward by the young people, the Head of Housing clarified that in relation to the number of 16-17 year olds staying in bed and breakfast accommodation, at the moment across the ages there were four young people residing in bed and breakfast accommodation compared to 19 young people two years ago.

The young people were assured that work was underway with landlords regarding allowing visitors into their homes. He also stated that work would continue with accommodation providers generally in relation to the creation of more accommodation for young people and assisting young people with costs.

One of the young people in attendance enquired what options young people had if they wished to live outside of Sunderland. In response the Head of Housing stated

that Sunderland City Council did work closely with other Local Authorities and by continuing to do so would improve the chances of young people being able to reside elsewhere. He admitted that sometimes it was difficult placing young people in the exact location that they specify, however that every effort was made to accommodate their needs.

Mr. Caddick responded to an enquiry regarding the type of accommodation available for young people aged 16. In doing so he advised that the type of accommodation offered depended upon the individual's needs and that these would be determined during an assessment review process to identify support requirements. He stated that the Council wanted to allow young people the independence that they require whilst providing them with adequate support.

In relation to private landlords, Mr. Caddick explained that some private landlords did not accept tenancies from young people. However work was underway to overcome that and every effort was being made to get more private landlords on board. He clarified that 157 young people were recorded last year as residing in privately rented accommodation. The reason for the numbers being so high was because there were few social landlords available.

Councillor A. Hall enquired if Mr. Caddick had held discussions with private landlords regarding the issue of the bond not being supplied at the beginning of the tenancy. In response, Mr. Caddick explained that these discussions had indeed taken place and that some landlords had been more receptive than others.

Councillor P. Smith and the young people in attendance then thanked Mr. Caddick for his attendance.

### **Children Looked After: Performance Report**

The Head of Safeguarding submitted a report providing Board Members with information about performance in relation to key performance indicators and targets for Children Looked After.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Phil Taylor, Residential Services Manager outlined the report. In doing so he informed Members that final performance information was submitted to the DFE annually in June.

The information contained within the report was based on data from 01/07/09 to 30/06/10. A summary of the key points was then provided, during which the following corrections were made:-

- “7 CLA were privately fostered” was to be reworded. Privately fostered young people would not be classified as Children Looked After.

- “Almost all CLA had a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) at the end of June 2010”. The word ‘almost’ was considered inappropriate for a statistical report.

Councillor Speding referred to NI148 which measured that less than half of care leavers aged 19 were in education, employment or training. Councillor Speding enquired how this compared generally. In response, John Arthurs, Independent Reviewing Manager advised the figures contained within the report were low and that the September figures were higher due to enrolments. Nonetheless, for young people, sustaining employment and training cannot always be maintained as it depended on what other issues they had going on. He reinforced that support mechanisms for young people were very important.

Councillor P. Smith in referring to NI71 raised concern regarding the numbers of Children Looked After who go missing from home/care. The Independent Reviewing Manager responded advising that work was underway with the Police to tackle this. Members were informed that there was a balance to be struck and without removing independence from young people, a register would be taken. This system would be robust, and would assist in identifying at what point young people are reported missing.

Members were advised further that the risks would be greater for some young people, particularly because it was often the same young people that go missing time after time. The performance indicator in question had already been flagged up in the Children and Young People’s Plan in order to try to identify procedures to meet the needs of runaways, including why they go missing, protocols for responding to urgent/out of hours referrals and local procedures including effective needs assessment protocols.

Jane Hedley, the Solicitor in attendance then clarified upon questioning that the summary containing numbers of missing instances by month meant that each number showed the number of episodes during that particular month e.g. 60. That did not mean that 60 children had gone missing. The exact numbers of missing young people would be submitted for the next meeting.

John Arthurs, Independent Reviewing Manager then provided Members with an update on young people’s participation in reviews. In doing so he advised that in future performance data would be broken down into seven categories. The most recent information was broken down as follows:-

- PN0 - Child aged under 4 at the time of review – 20%
- PN1 - Child physically attends and speaks for him or herself – 55%
- PN2 - Child physically attends and an advocate speaks on his or her behalf – 2%
- PN3 - Child attends and conveys his or her view symbolically (non-verbally) – 3%
- PN4 - Child attends but does not speak or convey views non-verbally, does not ask an advocate to speak for him – Zero

- PN5 - Child does not attend physically but briefs an advocate to speak for him or her – 35%
- PN6 - Child does not attend but conveys his or her feelings to the review by a facilitative medium – Very small number
- PN7 - Child does not attend nor are his or her views conveyed to the review – currently being monitored

Upon consideration, it was:-

10. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

### **Independent Advocacy for Looked After Children**

The Head of Safeguarding submitted a quarterly report concerning the Independent Advocacy Service for the year 2009-2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

John Arthurs, Independent Reviewing Manager, outlined the report and in doing so advised Members that the number of young people accessing the service was the equivalent to the Advocacy Service's highest take-up year.

During the current year, eleven new cases had been picked up by the service.

Members were informed that all but one referral during the year had been in respect of children or young people in foster care, including children and young people placed outside of Sunderland.

In terms of the Contract Review, due to various changes in the arrangements for Corporate Commissioning and changes in personnel at Corporate Procurement, the re-issue of the service for tender had been delayed.

Nonetheless, arrangements had been agreed with the current provider to continue the service provision to individual young people as required, pending the completion of the re-commissioning process.

Upon consideration, it was:-

11. RESOLVED to note the continuing development of the service and the due arrangements for re-commissioning the contract.

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

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

12. 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 is 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).