

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 22 November 2021 at 5.30pm in the
Council Chamber, Sunderland Civic Centre**

Present:

Members of the Board

Councillor L Farthing (in the Chair)	Washington South Ward
Councillor J Blackburn	Hetton Ward
Councillor C Burnicle	St Chad's Ward
Councillor M Crosby	Sandhill Ward
Councillor P Tye	Silksworth Ward
Catherine Hearne	Non-Exec Director, Together for Children

All Supporting Officers

Jill Colbert	Chief Executive, TfC
Linda Mason	Headteacher, Virtual School
Tracy Jelfs	Head of Service for Cared for Children, TfC
Kathryn McCabe	Service Manager, Cared for Children, TfC
Nikki Donaldson	Participation and Engagement Officer
Chantelle	Change Council
Caitlin	Change Council
Jo Morgan	Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Gillian Kelly	Governance Services

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Smith

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

12. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2021 be agreed as a correct record subject to an amendment to the fifth bullet point of paragraph five on page 3 to read 'Corporate Parenting *induction* training'.

Change Council Update

The Change Council report had been submitted to the Board and was presented to Members by Chantelle and Caitlin.

The Change Council had continued to meet face to face in a secure venue and both the 10-15 and 16+ group were meeting fortnightly.

Together for Children staff were starting to change language in line with the campaign being led by the Change Council and re-launched on 27 October 2021. Young people had received a lot of positive feedback and felt empowered and listened to. A second working group meeting had been held and a Key application was to be made for funding to support the delivery of workshops in TfC, the delivery of presentations to the National Network of Designated Health Care Professionals and work with the TfC Communications team.

The Change Council were working on an introductory workshop to be delivered to the Corporate Parenting Board in the New Year and would continue to develop a training offer for all elected Members and Corporate Parents.

Young people had also been creating an anti-bullying workshop to be delivered in schools around being cared for and with the aim of challenging stereotypes. The workshop was to be delivered during Anti-Bullying Conference Week. The Christmas event for cared for and care experienced young people would take place on Friday 17 December and would be a celebration of all young people rather than having an awards element.

The planned work for November to December was as follows: -

- Plan and hold the Cared for and Care experienced Christmas Event
- Engage young people in enriching holiday activities to celebrate their hard work and increase engagement.
- Corporate Parenting induction training
- Support the development of the corporate parenting strategy
- Give feedback on Health Assessments

Councillor Tye noted the plans for the Christmas event and asked if there was anything elected Members could do to support this. Nikki Donaldson advised that Hopespring were supporting the team in providing presents for those attending the event. She commented that there was a Christmas appeal through Together for Children for care experienced and children in need and suggested that this could be circulated more widely. Nikki added that the event would be a large party with lots of activities and would include a visit from Santa.

Catherine Hearne congratulated the Change Council on the images and videos which they had created around changing the language and she expressed a wish to see the number of social media followers growing.

The Chair reported that she had received a letter from the Change Council asking if the Board would consider meeting at the Sandhill Centre in the future. Young people

felt that the Sandhill Centre was a more comfortable setting, rather than the Civic Centre which was a formal and adult focused environment. Members were agreeable to this request.

The Chair thanked Chantelle and Caitlin for presenting the report and accordingly it was: -

13. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the Change Council update be noted; and
- (ii) future meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board be held in the Sandhill Centre.

Health of Cared for Children

The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children submitted a report providing an update on health activity for looked after children.

The purpose of the report was to: -

- Demonstrate the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children looked after
- Assure the Corporate Parenting Board that support and health services to children looked after were provided without undue delay or geographical prejudice
- Demonstrate the aim of the Looked After Health team for sustained improvement in the health and wellbeing of children looked after and care leavers
- Assure that the child's voice around health was included wherever possible
- Report on compliance with statutory targets from the Looked After Health Team for South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

The data being presented was for Quarter 2 of 2021/2022, July, August and September 2021 and the Board were advised that the health team had continued to offer face to face health assessments but the local rates of Covid-19 had continued to impact on appointments due to isolating carers and young people.

The Covid-19 vaccine programme was currently being delivered within local schools but at present there was no data regarding the uptake within the cared for population. Public Health England had produced a leaflet specially for young people about the vaccination and this had been shared with Together for Children.

Board Members had previously asked about dental appointments for cared for young people and the Designated Nurse advised that she met on a monthly basis with the Named Nurse and issues were raised with individual dental practices. Figures suggested that two thirds of children attending their Review Health Assessment had been seen by a dentist for a dental review. The Looked After Health Team had added dental appointments as an issue to the health care plan and would ask carers to contact their dentist.

There had been an average of 578 children cared for in quarter 2 which was a slight decrease from the previous quarter. 56 Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) had been carried out and there had been 96% compliance in the quarter. Two young people had refused to attend their appointment; the refusal pathway had been followed and a health care plan produced.

140 Review Health Assessments had been carried out in the quarter, however compliance had dropped to 85%. The issues were around non-attendance over this period and during September 47% of children and young people were not brought to their first appointment. This had been flagged to TfC and efforts were being made to raise awareness of this with social workers and carers.

There had been four out of area health assessments required during the period, with two being completed outside of timescale due to requests being sent out late. This had been due to administrative capacity which had now been resolved.

Eight Health Passports had been issued during the quarter however all had been just outside of timescale. All eight young people had engaged in the final health assessment and were seen by the Looked After Health team face to face.

The development of the Health Passport app was ongoing and the Designated Nurse was awaiting an invitation to receive views from the Change Council. The views of young people were also being sought on the Review Health Assessment paperwork with the aim of streamlining this and making it more young person friendly.

The Designated Nurse also reported that South Tyneside and Sunderland Foundation Trust had recently appointed four care experienced young people to roles in the Trust. It was hoped to broaden this out into the new Integrated Care Partnership. Jill Colbert added that the Prince's Trust had invited TfC to be part of the national roll out for targeting young people to be employed in the health and social care environment.

Councillor Tye referred to the uptake of the Covid-19 vaccination and felt that someone should have the data for cared for children as it was important to know that they were making informed choices on the vaccine.

Jo Morgan said that she understood that the information was not yet available because the programme was only just being rolled out but expected that Public Health England would be bringing forward figures. Jill commented that there was a blended model of access to the vaccination and it was taking some time to roll out, however the Sunderland Public Health team had reported that currently 42% of all 12-15 year olds had received their first dose of the vaccine.

The Chair queried the one third of young people who had not received a dental review and how many of these had been unable to get an appointment and how many had refused to attend. Jo said that she would look into getting that detail.

Councillor Crosby asked if there had been any cared for young people suffering long Covid effects or who had been shielding for a lengthy period. Jo said that this was

part of the main population data and there was nothing specific for cared for children. Kathryn McCabe highlighted that TfC had worked very closely with young people and carers in the early part of the pandemic so that any child who needed a home, had an appropriate placement. A number of carers were in the shielding category but ultimately the service had been able to provide a continuity of care for all young people.

Having considered the report, it was: -

14. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

CNTW Cared For Children Report

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

Virtual School – Headteacher’s Report

Linda Mason, Headteacher of the Virtual School submitted a report providing information about cared for children since the last report to the Board in September 2021.

At the current time there were 564 cared for children in the city, a reduction since September. There were 16 children in the early Years and Foundations stage, 147 in primary school and 211 in secondary school. 260 children attended school in Sunderland and 112 were outside of the local authority area.

School attendance since the return from the holiday was 93.43% and this continued to be scrutinised internally. All groups apart from Key Stage 4 children had average attendance of over 90% and this was something which would be worked on. The report set out a comparison between school stage and location.

There had been no expulsions of cared for children from school in the last three years and there had been 12 suspensions since the return to school in September, totalling 16 days and involving 9 children.

Quality assurance continued to be a key area of focus for EPEPs and it was the aim that more than 90% of these would be judged as Good. At the current time there were 240 EPEPs with a Green rating and 22 which were Amber and Linda advised that the reasons for the Amber ratings were usually related to a section of the EPEP not being completed or fully filled in.

Catherine Hearne asked how the Virtual School attendance compared with general attendance across the local authority and Linda undertook to provide that information.

The Chair asked if there were any patterns in relation to suspensions and Linda said that there was a story behind each one but they were not always able to be attributed to something happening in a young person’s life.

The Chair commented that Members wanted schools to be well informed and queried if they had a general understanding of how to support cared for young people. Linda said that this could be variable, depending on how informed they were about mental health issues. There had been due to be a conference on 9 November focusing on trauma and aligning this to mental health support in schools, unfortunately this had been postponed until Spring on public health advice. Linda stated that these issues would be picked up with Designated Teachers and Headteachers this term along with the idea of Mental Health Champions.

Councillor Crosby asked about the 94 cared for young people who were post-16 and Linda said that 85% were in education, employment and training and a small number were classed as 'NEETs'. These young people were monitored on a regular basis and had a robust programme around them to support them on to the next step.

Upon consideration of the report, it was: -

15. RESOLVED that the Virtual School – Headteacher's Report be noted.

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair