

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 23 May 2022 at 5.30pm in the
Conference Room, Sandhill Centre, Grindon Lane, Sunderland, SR3 4EN**

Present:

Members of the Board

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

Observing

Councillor J Price	Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills
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All Supporting Officers

Jill Colbert	Chief Executive, TfC
Linda Mason	Headteacher, Virtual School
Tracy Jelfs	Head of Service for Cared for Children, TfC
Majella McCarthy	Director of Children's Social Care, TfC
Helen Monks	Strategic Service Manager, TfC
Gavin Taylor	IRO Team Manager
Lauren Nesbitt	IRO Team Manager
Nikki Donaldson	Participation and Engagement Officer
Chantelle	Change Council
Caitlin	Change Council
Jo Morgan	Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Angela O'Dell	CNTW
Gillian Kelly	Governance Services

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Laws, McKeith and Tye.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Chief Executive, Together for Children, delivered a presentation on the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and in doing so advised that there was a good outline plan emerging and young people had spent a lot of time thinking about what they wanted corporate parents to do.

It was proposed that good corporate parents would: -

- Be well trained, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their role
- Accept responsibility for children and young people who were cared for or care experienced
- Ensure that their needs, interests, physical and emotional needs and wellbeing were met as a priority
- Seek for them the same outcomes any good parent/carer would want for their children
- Campaign to change the language when people are talking about cared for children

All employees and Members within Together for Children, Sunderland City Council and other partner agencies shared the responsibility to promote the needs of cared for children. Key responsibilities of all corporate parents were: -

- To promote the life chances of cared for children and care experienced young people
- To consider the impact of all decision making for cared for children and care experienced young people
- To ensure that services were in place to meet the needs of cared for children and care experienced young people.

It was proposed that the Board would take action to fix the things which mattered to children and would work together which children's interests at the heart of everything. The Board would also keep a close eye on whether it was making a difference to children.

The presentation set out some priorities around health and care, employment, education, leisure, housing and transport and what would be needed to succeed with these and how Members would know that they were making a difference.

The Chair commented that corporate parents had been looking at the same sorts of things for a long time and there were universal requests that society should provide for all. The Change the Language campaign was very important and all Board Members needed to be ambassadors for this; the development of a glossary for the new language would be useful.

Councillor Smith noted that progress had been being made with transport issues but this had stalled since the pandemic. Councillor Burnicle referred to some of the upcoming changes to bus services which would impact on all young people.

With regard to employment it was noted that some employers could be put off when they saw that a person was care experienced. The Chair stated that this should be tackled as a city council and there should be a strategy for care experienced young people to achieve employment in Sunderland businesses. Jill said that it might be useful to review how many care experienced young people had accessed work experience or employment.

Jill suggested that the Board could look at how reports were presented to show that a difference was being made in relation to the priorities and to place the emphasis on corporate parents.

The Chair commented that the Change Council had expressed that they were experiencing time pressures and corporate parents needed to look at how they could support this. Catherine Hearne noted that there was a role for the Board to play in supporting children and young people and the Change Council to raise their voice.

Kathryn McCabe advised that the foster carer consultative groups were back up and running and it should be considered how the Board could utilise this input, suggesting that some case studies could be brought to meetings with foster carers attending to describe what it feels like for them.

Consideration had also been given to the name of the Board with 'Here for Me Board' and 'Supportive Parenting Partnership' being two suggestions. These would be taken away for further discussion.

Having considered the presentation it was: -

2. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

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 in their designated space and both the 10-15 and 16+ group were meeting fortnightly.

Members of the Change Council had delivered their presentation around the Change the Language campaign during Social Work week and had received excellent feedback on this. It was intended to book in more dates to deliver the half hour workshop to professionals and a presentation had recently been delivered to professionals who were part of Fostering Panels and Family Time Workers. The Chair suggested that the Joint Leadership Team may benefit from receiving the presentation.

Young people had come together to wish Martin Birch well as he had left Together for Children for a new role at Sefton Council. The Change Council would continue their work with support from Majella McCarthy as the new Director of Children's Social Care.

The Change Council had taken part in activities in relation to the Holiday Activity and Food Programme and enjoyed preparing healthy meals as part of the programme. Young people had also attended a regional meeting in Durham to give an update on what the Change Council was doing and to discuss plans for a regional conference this year.

The Change Council had been successful in a key application to celebrate Foster Care Fortnight and were making an application for Children's Home Fortnight. Young people were also looking at raising money to work with Care to Dance on a programme that they run.

Members of the Change Council spoke on video for the Mind of My Own Conference which was held remotely on 18 May 2022.

The planned work for January to June 2022 was as follows: -

- Drive forward the Change the Language campaign, including working groups and workshops
- Corporate Parenting induction training and support the development of the corporate parenting strategy
- Children's Home Fortnight – Key project
- Recruitment and selection
- Engage young people in enriching activities to celebrate their hard work and increase engagement
- Consult and involve more cared for and care experienced children and young people.

With regard to the Care to Dance programme, Jill Colbert stated that around £4,500 was needed and Catherine Hearne suggested that Cultural Spring might be able to offer some support. The Chair noted that each area committee would also have funding available and would welcome funding applications. Jill commented that she would take back these suggestions and highlighted that young people had been discussing things they could do themselves to raise money.

Councillor Smith asked if there were any particular themes from the regional meeting and Nikki Donaldson highlighted that transport was continually raised and there was also discussion about a North East regional approach to council tax.

The Chair noted that care experienced young people up to the age of 25 had reduced council tax and it had been on the agenda for some time that this should be transferrable if a young person moved out of the local authority area.

Councillor Crosby queried if young people received any help for fuel costs and Jill explained that there were a range of financial support measures in place and care experienced young people remained eligible for a number of these although these

had not been removed in light of increasing fuel costs. Jill suggested that Sharon Willis could be asked to talk the Board through the allowances and support which were available for care experienced young people.

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

3. RESOLVED that the Change Council update be noted.

Health of Cared for Children

The Designated Nurse for Cared for Children submitted a report providing an update on health activity for cared for children.

The purpose of the report was to: -

- Demonstrate the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of cared for children
- Assure the Corporate Parenting Board that support and health services to cared for children 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 cared for and cared experienced children
- 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 report provided an overview of the last financial year and it was noted that there had been a steady decline in the average number of cared for children during the year but the number was still above the national average.

197 Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) had been carried out for cared for young people living within a 30 mile radius of Sunderland which represented 90% compliance. 483 Review Health Assessments had taken place and 93% were within timescale. For young people placed outside of the 30 mile radius, there were five IHAs with 60% being completed in the timescale and 35 RHAs with compliance of 89%.

There were different reasons for the dip in compliance for out of area health assessments and Jo Morgan advised that the team had provided support to other areas to increase their capacity. It was intended to look at the caseload model during this year and the team was reaching out to care homes and being more visible with foster carers.

There had been an issue with getting Health Passports out to young people for their 18th birthday and the development of the regional Health Passport app was ongoing.

The dental care pathway used in East Riding had been taken to the local Dental Network but there had been no further update. Jo advised that the team had reached out to Public Health England a few times and been told that they were looking into it; it was felt that a pathway would be a positive development.

The Chair commented that she had recently attended a meeting on the forthcoming Integrated Care Partnerships and suggested that this matter could be raised with Dave Gallagher as the Accountable Officer. Jill suggested that the Chair could also ask the Director of Public Health to provide a note on access to dental treatment for cared for children.

Jo stated that the SLA for the health team was focused on health assessments and young people were being asked what they wanted from the health team. The Chair noted that the local team could also provide links on opportunities for employment within the NHS for care experienced young people. She highlighted that there was a lot of discussion about social prescribing at the current time but this had not yet been developed for children and young people. Jo advised that she had reached out to the CCG lead on this issue.

Having considered the report, it was: -

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

CNTW Cared For Children Report

The Board received a report covering the period January – March 2022.

In January eight referrals had been seen from a total of 12, there were ten referrals in February, nine of which were seen and in March nine of 11 referrals were seen. All urgent referrals had been seen and the CYPS Intensive Community Treatment Service (ICTS) offered a 24/7 service.

Angela O'Dell highlighted the reasons for referrals being discharged without being seen and explained that, where limited information was one of the issues, the team would always try multiple times to contact the referrer for more information. The Chair noted that if the referrer was a social worker then this would be concerning and Kathryn McCabe felt it would be useful to understand more about this issue through a separate meeting with CNTW.

There had been a slight increase in waiting times across all pathways and referrals in to CYPS as a whole had significantly increased. The service had extended its clinical hours to 8.00pm in the evening and 9.00am-5.00pm each Saturday.

Linda Mason highlighted that when children and young people stopped attending school due to social, emotional and mental health difficulties, they may be referred through school but then not engage with CYPS. She queried if there was any linkage through the SEND process and any challenge to young people coming through.

Angela said that cared for young people were seen as part of that pathway and the team would try to engage with young people in whichever way they could. Consultations were offered with professionals making referrals.

5. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Regulation 44 Visitor – Annual Overview

The Board received a report providing a summary of the findings of Regulation 44 visits undertaken between April 2021 and March 2022.

There were five registered children's homes run by Together for Children and Regulation 44 visits were now being completed in person unless there was a known case of Covid-19 in the home. The visits involved undertaking key tasks such as: -

- A visit to the home
- Speaking with the young people who lived there to gather their views regarding their standard of care
- Speaking with the young people's carer, parents, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officer to collect their views on the standard of care being provided
- Reviewing and evaluating records such as young people's files, critical incident logs, medical records and any notifications to Ofsted.

Colombo Road was a home for up to six young people and had been judged to be Outstanding by Ofsted in December 2021. There was one requirement and three recommendations arising from the inspection and these had been complied with. Feedback from young people and carers was positive.

Councillor Smith noted that one of the Ofsted requirements was about refresher training which she would have expected to take place in the home. Lauren Nesbitt advised that on this occasion it was that one member of staff had not undertaken the review restraint training.

Grasswell House provided care for up to six young people and had received an Ofsted judgement of Good in June 2021. There had been one requirement and three recommendations from Ofsted and the Regulation 44 Visitor had made 11 recommendations during the year which was an increase on the previous year.

Councillor Burnicle asked how young people would raise complaints in a children's home setting and Lauren said this would be through Mind of My Own or using forms available in the office.

Revelstoke Road was a home for up to six young people and had been found to be Good following a visit from Ofsted in January 2022. Ofsted had made two requirements and one recommendation and young people within the home felt respected and carers commented that staff were doing a brilliant job.

Councillor Crosby asked about the second requirement which was around recruitment procedures and Lauren advised that this was around ensuring that all staff were appropriately skilled for the role they were appointed to. Majella McCarthy added that there was a young person with some special needs and the statement of purpose for the home was updated to reflect this, whilst ensuring that staff had the necessary level of knowledge.

Gavin Taylor said that safer recruitment was in place at the setting, there had been a different process under the pressures of Covid but it was confirmed that the home was operating within the processes.

Nook Lodge was a new home registered in October 2020 and provided care for up to three young people. Ofsted had inspected the home in September 2021 and issued a judgement of Good with five requirements and two recommendations.

Councillor Smith queried the requirements in relation to the Independent Visitors and the effectiveness of leaders and management. Gavin advised that it had to be made clear that the Regulation 44 visitor was not doing any other corporate work and as it was a relatively new home, Ofsted had been looking for further detail about leadership and improvements were being seen through the Regulation 44 visits.

Councillor Burnicle referred to the requirement about window restrictors and queried if this had any impact on the fire risk assessment. Gavin stated that the homes would have gone through the fire risk regulations and restrictors would be tested to ensure they complied.

Monument View catered for up to six children and was currently judged to Require Improvement following an Ofsted inspection in January 2022. The home had recently been re-inspected but the outcome was not yet available, however Majella indicated that it would be published before the next meeting.

The home had had an entirely new staff team since last year and Reg 44 visitors were optimistic that management was effecting a positive change and young people spoke passionately about the home.

Councillor Smith commented that this was one of the reasons why she advocated for elected Members visiting the homes, to see in person if improvements were being made. It was noted that young people had said that they did not just want people to turn up at their home and visits should only be by invitation.

The Chair suggested that it could be made known through Sharon Willis that elected Members would like to have the opportunity to visit the homes and that if young people were interested they could get in touch through her.

6. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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

7. 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 any individual or information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1 and 2).

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair