

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

AGENDA

Meeting to be held on Monday 21 November 2022 at 5.30pm in the Conference Room, Sandhill Centre, Grindon Lane, Sunderland, SR3 4EN

Part I

| ITEM | | PAGE |
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| 1. | Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest | |
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| | Minutes of Meeting held on 26 September 2022 (copy attached). | |
| 4. | Change Council Update | - |
| | Report of the Change Council (copy to follow). | |
| 5. | Supportive Parenting Partnership – Draft Terms of Reference | 11 |
| | Attached. | |
| 6. | CNTW Cared For Children Report | 15 |
| | Report of CNTW (copy attached). | |
| 7. | Virtual School – Headteacher’s Report | 19 |
| | Report of the Headteacher of the Virtual School (copy attached). | |

- | | | |
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| 8. | Ofsted Inspection of the Fostering Service | 27 |
| | Report attached. | |
| 9. | Work Programme | 37 |
| | Report attached. | |

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

The following is not for publication as the Committee is considered likely to exclude the public during consideration thereof as it contains information relating to any individual or information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (Local Government Act 1972), (Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, (Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1 and 2).

PART II

- | | | |
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| 10. | CNTW Cared for Children Report – Case Study | 39 |
| | Report attached. | |

ELAINE WAUGH
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

City Hall
SUNDERLAND

11 November 2022

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 26 September 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 J McKeith | St Peter's Ward |
| Councillor P Tye | Silksworth Ward |
| Catherine Hearne | Non-Exec Director, Together for Children |

Observing

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Councillor J Price | Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills |
|--------------------|---|

All Supporting Officers

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Tracy Jelfs | Head of Service for Cared for Children, TfC |
| Majella McCarthy | Director of Children's Social Care, TfC |
| Anita Swales | Acting Headteacher, Virtual School |
| Kathryn McCabe | Service Manager, Cared for Children |
| Gavin Taylor | IRO Team Manager |
| Nikki Donaldson | Participation and Engagement Officer |
| Chantelle | Change Council |
| Caitlin | Change Council |
| Jo Morgan | Designated Nurse Looked After Children |
| Samantha Diston | CNTW |
| 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

9. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022 be agreed as a correct record subject to the addition of Kathryn McCabe to the list of attendees.

The Chair advised that 'Supportive Parenting Partnership' was the preferred new name of the group and the terms of reference would be reviewed prior to the changes being made for the next municipal year.

With regard to access to dental health treatment, it was noted that Jill Colbert had taken this away and Jo Morgan advised that there was buy-in from Public Health on the health working group and this issue was being pushed forward.

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, however both groups had a six week break for the summer holidays.

The Change Council had held their first Children's Home fortnight and all five homes had taken part with an awards event being held at Grasswell for all of the homes to come together. It was planned to hold another next year and the group would ask the homes for ideas on how they would like to celebrate.

The Change Council had supported Pride and created a short video for social media with messages of support.

The group highlighted their involvement in recruitment and selection and the Board heard that they had been involved in interviews for the Head of Service for Children's Social Care, two team managers, one RSHE worker, two Participation and Engagement Workers, two Prevention Bus and HAF workers and one IRO Manager. It was noted that a lot of these interviews were held during the day, and it was not always possible for young people to be involved if they were in education.

Inspired by a short film created by young people in Hull, the Change Council had started to plan their own film on education.

Two workers had visited the Change Council from Sefton Council to talk to the young people about the campaigns the group had worked on and they had been very interested in the Change the Language campaign. It was hoped that the Change Council could visit Sefton in the future.

The Change Council had been nominated for a Young Achievers Award and would be attending the event on 30 September. The Cared for Christmas celebration would be held in the City Hall this year and the group were currently planning the event.

The group had continued to work on the training for Corporate Parents and this was nearly complete. A date for training would be arranged in the near future.

There were three new members attending the 10-15 years group of Change Council and potentially two new members for the older group. The Change Council continued to encourage young people to join the group.

The Change Council was working with Together for Children on Life Story work and later life letters and had also participated in the Summer Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF).

The planned work for January to December 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.

Catherine Hearne asked if any progress had been made in relation to the Care to Dance programme and Nikki stated that this would be picked up again now that summer holidays were over.

Catherine also offered her assistance with the development of the Change Council's film as she had worked in the industry and might be able to help.

The Chair asked if the University or College might be able to offer some resources for the film; Nikki said that she had approached the University before and not had much luck, but any contacts Members might have would be very useful.

With regard to encouraging more young people to become part of the Change Council, Councillor Tye asked if there were any informal drop-in type arrangements where young people could see what it involved. Nikki said that young people could come along to sessions or meet with a group of Change Council members or meet with Nikki herself prior to coming along to a formal meeting. The door was always open to new members and every effort would be made to make them comfortable in coming along.

Councillor Crosby asked about later life letters and it was explained that these were given to cared for young people at a certain age and were intended to help the young person understand the reasons why they were cared for and something of their history.

Nikki informed the Board that she was moving on to a new role and a new Participation and Engagement Officer would be in post in October.

The Chair thanked Chantelle and Caitlin for presenting the report and wished Nikki well in her new post. Accordingly it was: -

10. 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 Cared for Health team for sustained improvement in the health and wellbeing of cared for and care experienced young people
- Assure that the child's voice around health was included wherever possible
- Report on compliance with statutory targets

Work was ongoing to develop a Health Group for partners to work together to ensure that the health needs of cared for young people were met. The group would monitor and enable access to a range of health services which promote and support the emotional, physical and mental health of cared for children. A draft terms of reference had been developed and it was hoped to get more partners to join the group.

The first draft of the Health Passport app was now available and it was hoped that this was something which young people could use for guidance. There had been some discussion about reflecting local pathways and these were now in development.

Jo Morgan highlighted the regional task and finish group which was aimed at raising awareness of care experienced young people and improving outcomes. One of the areas of work was the development of a digital training tool for health services which would be implemented across the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board area.

The Chair referred to the large footprint which the NHS now had across the area and suggested that the Change Council might look at engaging with partners in the wider area.

Jo noted that it would be great to have a regional approach to the Change the Language campaign and Majella queried whether this was on the regional agenda. Nikki advised that it had been discussed in the regional group and she was aware that Durham were working to change their language but it was a varied picture across the region.

The Chair reported that Cumbria County Council had recently passed a Notice of Motion for 'care experienced' to be a protected characteristic. Any suggestion of this kind would only be a local consideration and the Change Council would be consulted before any proposal was made.

Jo said that she sat on a national committee for cared for and care experienced young people and the language she used had been commented on; it was important to continue to push the campaign. Gavin Taylor added that all North East regions were changing their language and the Change Council had been instrumental in this and should be rightly proud.

Councillor McKeith enquired about the timescale for the Health Passport app and Jo said that the draft was being shared with young people across the region but realistically it would not be available until the new year. She would share the prototype app in due course.

Having considered the report, it was: -

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

CNTW Cared For Children Report

The Board received a report covering the period May – July 2022.

In May ten referrals had been seen from a total of 12, there were ten referrals in June, seven of which were seen and in July all 13 referrals were seen. There had been two urgent referrals by the CYPS Intensive Community Treatment Service (ICTS) within the period.

Samantha Diston referred to previous concerns about limited information being provided for referrals and advised that there were some actions arising from a joint meeting which was held to look at this.

The waiting list for treatment had fluctuated and this reflected the large caseload of CYPS. Cared for children made up a quite small percentage of the overall caseload (5.5%) but did take priority.

Samantha highlighted the case study which had been included as part of the report and the positive outcomes which had been achieved for this particular young person.

The Chair noted that CAMHS was a community service and queried why cared for young people were referred to CYPS. Samantha stated that this was likely to be due to the level of complexity of the cases, the level of risk involved and also the knowledge of the professionals.

The Chair was interested in the case study and noted how this linked to the Virtual School. Anita Swales commented that the Virtual School would link in with mental health services when there was potential drift for a young person.

Samantha asked if there was anything which Board Members would like to see in future reports and Jo suggested it would be useful to have some information on transitions and the move to adult services; there were young people who were currently accessing CYPS but did not meet the criteria for adult services.

Majella McCarthy commented that sometimes circumstances did not allow for work to be done with a young person and consideration had to be given to how young people could be best supported if their placement was not stable. Samantha agreed that a collective response was needed and specialist therapies were difficult when a young person did not have a stable placement.

The Chair suggested that officers could meet with Kimm Lawson who was commissioning the 'I Thrive' emotional health and wellbeing model.

Councillor Tye asked for clarification about referrals for cared for children and whether these all went straight to CYPS. The Chair highlighted that the contract for children in care was with CYPS but she had asked officers to ascertain what was available through CAMHS. There had been an issue in Sunderland that there was no single entry point in Sunderland and this was something Kimm was tackling.

Samantha commented that there was a daily interface between CAMHS and CYPS and there was work ongoing in relation to the single point of access model which would make it easier for families and schools to access services.

12. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Children's Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report

The Board received the Annual Report for the Independent Reviewing Service for the period April 2021 and March 2022.

Gavin Taylor was in attendance to present the report and in doing so directed Members to the highlight summary of the report. All of the independent reviewing officers had attended national training on their roles and responsibilities and this had supported the strength base of the practitioners.

The service had continued to implement the signs of safety model and had revisited and adapted the signs of safety conference agenda so that it was more in line with a strength-based model. Parents felt more included and more young people were attending their conferences now that this model was in place and were also chairing their cared for review.

The service had continued to perform above national and local benchmarks despite the challenges caused by the pandemic and Sunderland was a regional lead in post Covid-19 service delivery.

The service had moved into new premises in December 2021 and this was being received positively by families who found the meeting spaces more inclusive and engaging.

The tracking of children's plans had been strengthened meaning that the continuing and progressing of actions could be clearly evidenced. Ofsted had mentioned that the footprint of the Independent Reviewing Service was visible throughout the young people's files. The use of Mind of My Own had also been strengthened and this had resulted in a stronger voice being evidenced in a child's records about their views being gathered, considered and recorded in care for meetings.

In terms of what the service was worried about, there was not always a plan for permanency at a young person's second review and there was a shortage of resources in terms of foster carers and children's homes. The impact of children living in poverty was also being seen and it was anticipated that there would be a rise in the use of the category of 'neglect'.

The report also highlighted what the Independent Reviewing Service would do next which included looking at what could be done differently to improve the timeliness of a permanency decision being made. IROs would continue to work with colleagues and commissioning to seek the best homes possible for young people and also in the implementation of Young People's Child Protection Plans, embedding learning from how services need to work more constructively with young people who were exposed to risks outside the family home.

The annual report included case studies and real experiences and examples of young people and their families.

The Chair commented that the final reference to children at risk from outside the family home was very important. There were more young people in the 10-15 age group than any other and Together for Children had done a lot of work in the last 12 months for children on the edge of care.

Regarding the timeliness of reports, the Chair noted that the Police had improved their performance considerably but other professionals had not. Majella stated that this was an area which was targeted and although some delays had been caused by the impact of Covid and staff sickness, this was not fair on children and families. Communication between the IRO service and Social Care was frequent.

Councillor McKeith asked if timeliness had increased since March 2022 and Gavin said that there were ongoing challenges with reporting.

Councillor Crosby referred to a case where a child had to wait for dental treatment and Gavin explained that the Dispute Resolution Procedure (DRP) had been raised appropriately and that the required funding was agreed for the young person to get the relevant dental treatment. Councillor Crosby asked if eye care was covered by Social Care and it was confirmed that this was the case.

Councillor Tye asked if the wider DRPs were counted within the figures for complaints and compliments. Gavin advised that DRPs were raised as a professional challenge to call into question the progression of a child's plan. They were used as a communication method and showed a healthy organisation which was open and transparent.

There had been a reduction in the number of DRPs raised and these were done in the best interest of the child in order to get the desired result for them. Majella said that it was embedded in the culture of Social Care to pick up the phone and have a conversation if it was felt that a plan was drifting.

Having thanked Gavin for presenting the report, it was: -

13. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Virtual School – Headteacher’s Report

Anita Swales, Acting Headteacher of the Virtual School submitted a report providing the Board with updated information about the education of cared for children.

The number of cared for children as of 15 September 2022 was 515 and of these 71 were pre-school age, 23 attended nursery or early years provision, 338 were school age and 106 were post 16. It was noted that a high proportion of cared for young people were in Key Stage 4 and not all were educated in Sunderland; the majority of children were in good or outstanding schools.

There was an improving three year trend in attendance across all key stages following a dip in 2019/2020 and was an average of 94% across the board, however attendance in Key Stage 4 remained stubbornly low and had been identified as a key area of action for the Virtual School. The Chair suggested it would be useful to further detail on the reasons for Key Stage 4 attendance being lower than other year groups.

Fixed term exclusions continued to reduce year on year and there had been no permanent exclusions for cared for children in five years. The Chair noted that of the 11 children with an EHCP who had received suspensions, seven attended specialist provision and felt it was unusual for young people to be suspended from those settings. Anita said that it unfortunately did happen and not all specialist provisions were outstanding.

EPEPs were being maintained at a high level and over 91% had been assured as Good with current statutory compliance standing at over 97% The production of an initial PEP within 20 days of a child becoming cared for was the most difficult element of the process as the timeframe did not take school holidays into account. A young person would have their PEP updated each term and every six months once they were post-16.

There had been a decline in the number of young people who were seeking employment, education and training and this was now 23% of cared for children in the Year 12 and 13 bracket, an improvement from 50% in 2019.

The Chair was pleased to see that statistic, knowing the amount of work which had gone into this. Anita commented that it was about retaining young people on their pathway and a pilot grant from the DfE had enabled mentoring support, 1:1 tuition and incentives to support Year 11 students as they transitioned to post-16 provisions.

Councillor Burnicle noted that Anita was Acting Headteacher and asked whether this was a temporary arrangement. Councillor Tye expressed confusion as to how this arrangement could provide greater stability.

The Chair highlighted that the Headteacher role had expanded and now included young people under child protection or who were a child in need and tuition services. The Virtual School had a very new structure and it had been felt that bringing in a new person with a new team to induct might be destabilising. It was the goal to have a permanent appointment.

Councillor Crosby asked if the Virtual School had a special relationship with the careers service and Anita said that post 16 workers had strong links with their colleagues in careers.

As it was Anita's first report to the Board, she asked if there was anything which Members would like to see as part of the report and the Chair suggested signs of safety, a deep dive in to Key Stage 4 attendance and further information on work to reduce suspensions.

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

Fostering Service Annual Report

The Board received the Fostering Service Annual Report for information. Members were advised that it was in a specific format for Ofsted and Kathryn McCabe was in attendance to take questions.

The service was working well and had recently launched two Mockingbird Family Model constellations. There was expert peer support and guidance for carers but recruitment remained a challenge.

Ofsted had recently conducted an inspection of the service and the outcome was awaited.

Catherine Hearne referred to page 11 of the report and that there were no Schedule 7 notifications in relation to complaints but there were in relation to allegations of abuse or neglect. Kathryn said that there were different elements of Schedule 7 and Gavin explained that this was related to the LADO function and if concerns raised with the LADO were substantiated, these would result in a notification under Schedule 7.

15. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Adoption Annual Report

The Board received the Adoption Annual Report for information and Kathryn was again able to take questions.

It was reported that recruitment was doing well and there was an officer employed by the regional agency to oversee recruitment. There were 16 potential adopters at stage two of the process and 12 at stage one.

Kathryn highlighted that the recent Somerset Judgement had resulted in delays in the making of Placement Orders, but this did not stop plans progressing for children.

16. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Other Business

Tracy Jelfs advised that she had identified an officer from housing to attend future Board meetings and asked if Members would agree to invite them to attend the next meeting.

17. RESOLVED that a representative from housing services be invited to attend the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Minutes Part II

18. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022 Part II be agreed as a correct record.

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair

Appendix 1 | Terms of Reference (to be agreed and approved)

Supportive Parenting Partnership- Terms of Reference

Together for Children and Sunderland City Council

1. Purpose of the Supportive Parenting Partnership

- 1.1 The Supportive Parenting Partnership is the vehicle to demonstrate the commitment of Together for Children, Councillors, Sunderland City Council and partners to deliver improved outcomes to cared for and care experienced children and young people
- 1.2 The Partnership is the process which ensures that services meet the needs of cared for and care experienced children and young people
- 1.3 This includes:
 - A high standard of education, which meets the needs and abilities of children
 - Opportunities to access further education, employment and training including work placements and apprenticeships
 - Access to services that provide high quality care, that develop self-esteem, confidence and growth, including suitable health resources
 - Support with the transition for young people into adulthood so that they are able to care for themselves, which includes the provision of suitable accommodation

2. Responsibilities of the Supportive Parenting Partnership

The Partnership will:

- 2.1 Provide clear strategic and political direction in relation to corporate parenting
- 2.2 Receive relevant reports on the range and quality of services provided to cared for and care experienced children and young people and consider areas for improvement
- 2.3 Receive reports on agreed performance and quality indicators (as set out in the data and performance framework)
- 2.4 Engage with and support the work of the Change Council, Vokel and Stars groups
- 2.5 Take into consideration the views of children, young people and their carers and involve them in the development of services
- 2.6 Champion the provision of dedicated council based, and wider employer work placements and apprenticeships for cared for and care experienced young people
- 2.7 Meet Ofsted inspectors (where required) for their input into inspections
- 2.8 Report formally to the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee every six months
- 2.9 Agree an Annual Work Plan based on agreed priorities each year

3. Membership

3.1 Membership will be reviewed annually as follows:

- For the council by the relevant political groups, at the commencement of each municipal year
- Nominations to the Board will be received annually at the commencement of each municipal year

3.2 To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, the chair and members of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee shall be prohibited from being members of the Supportive Parenting Partnership

3.3 All ?? elected members appointments to the Board will be made on a politically proportionate basis

Chairing the Partnership

3.4 The Partnership shall be chaired by Sunderland City Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

3.5 Consider co-chairing with a member of the Change Council, (Vokel or Stars)

3.6 Vice chair will be confirmed at the commencement of each municipal year by the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Voting members

3.7 The Partnership will be made up of voting members

3.8 The Partnership will always seek to reach a consensus; however, should the need arise, the members of the Partnership that can cast a vote on any matter shall be as follows:

- The council's Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills
- ?? councillors
- Chief Executive – Together for Children
- Director of Childrens Social Care
- Sunderland City Council rep e.g. Chief Executive
- Head of Service Cared for Children
- Up to 3 Change Council Representative
- Head of the Virtual School
- Housing Lead, Sunderland City Council or representative
- Northumbria Police representative
- Designated Nurse Cared for Children
- CNTW Representative
- Transport Lead Sunderland City Council or representative
- When required Service Managers for Children's Social Care

3.9 The quorum of the Board shall be a minimum of three voting members

3.10 If a vote is called, and there are equal votes for and against the vice chair will have a second and casting vote

4. Operation of the Partnership

Meetings

- 4.1 The Board will meet a minimum of 6 times per year
- 4.2 Each meeting will consider the progress on the agreed plan
- 4.3 Each meeting will be updated about the work of the Change Council, Vokel and Stars groups
- 4.4 The agenda for each meeting will be agreed by the Director of Children's Services and the chair of the Supportive Parenting Partnership

Administration

- 4.5 Administrative support will be provided by Sunderland City Councils Democratic Services Team, who will arrange the meetings of the Partnership; maintain the Work Plan, circulate and publish the agendas and minutes of the meetings. Agendas and papers will be circulated five working days before the meetings
- 4.6 An officer from the council's Democratic Services team will be responsible for minuting the meetings
- 4.7 Attendance at the meetings and access to the minutes will be restricted to members of the Partnership and those listed under voting and non-voting members, as noted in section 3 above

Accountability and Governance

- 4.8 The Board will provide a child friendly response to any issues raised by the Change Council, Vokel or Stars Groups that require a formal response to be taken back to their groups. This will be completed within 14 working days of the meeting taking place
- 4.9 The Board will provide a report twice per year to the Children, Education and Skills Committee setting out the work within the Board.

Review

- 4.10 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive of Together for Children and Chair of the Supportive Parenting Partnership
- 4.11 Any revisions must be agreed by the Partnership



Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Trust

Sunderland Children Cared for Report

November 2022 (July 2022 – September 2022)



Caring | Discovering | Growing | **Together**

Sunderland Children Cared for Report. July 2022 – September 2022

1) Activity

| | July | August | September |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|-----------|
| Referrals | 13 | 13 | 9 |
| Referrals discharged unseen | 0 | 2 | 5 |

Referrals discharged unseen

The following provides narrative in relation to reasons why the young people were not seen by the service.

July

All referrals seen.

August

Young person was referred by their social worker, however decided to withdraw due to feeling they no longer needed the service.

Young person was referred to CYPS, however due to relocation out of area the referral was closed.

September

Young person was detained under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983 and so the referral was no longer appropriate.

Young person is approaching their 18th Birthday, and so referral was forwarded to IAPT services.

Due to recent changes in the Young Person's life, it was decided that they are currently too distressed to engage appropriately with the service. Alternative support was sourced.

A transfer was requested from Tees, Esk, and Wear Valley Trust, further clarity was sought around the Young Person's location and regarding need, however no information was received, and Young Person was subsequently discharged.

Young person was seen for an initial appointment, however, was unable to attend their second appointment. From discussions with carers, Young Person had advised they no longer want involvement from CYPS at this time, and so was discharged.

2) Referral Urgency

All young people referred to CYPS are either by phone and email or in written format are reviewed on a daily basis by a Clinical Lead. The purpose of this initial review is in order to signpost any cases that have been inappropriately referred and to ensure any cases that require an emergency or urgent response are highlighted and actioned immediately. Senior members of the Cared for Children Pathway triage any appropriate referrals weekly.

CYPS Intensive Community Treatment Service (ICTS) offer a 24/7 service 365 days per year. ICTS will respond to the young person via telephone to offer a telephone triage within 1 hour.

Any young person requiring an emergency appointment will be offered an appointment within 4 hours of referral being received and for urgent referrals the young person will be offered an appointment within 24 hours

| | July | August | September |
|-----------|------|--------|-----------|
| Emergency | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Urgent | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 |

3) Waiting Times (All Referrals)

Current Waiting Times to Treatment are detailed below. (Treatment is defined as second attended contact)

| | July (Weeks) | August (Weeks) | September (Weeks) |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Wait to Treatment | 9 | 8 | 9 |

Referrals

During COVID the service has continued to accept all referrals and complete assessments and interventions. New Ways of Working have been fully embraced by the Team to facilitate contact with young people and their families / carers such as online consultation and phone contact. Young people can be seen in their school environment if this is their preference.

Children who are Cared for Pathway

This Pathway has recently been reviewed, it specifically undertakes direct therapeutic work with children and young people, along with Foster Carers where appropriate.

Consultation is provided in conjunction with Together for Children, and CYPS continue to scaffold and support to Residential Homes.

Young People are offered priority appointments within CYPS and following assessment will access treatment usually within 10 weeks. The Pathway is a multi-disciplinary team consisting of nursing, Social Workers, Psychologists, Child Psychotherapists and are able to access Psychiatry if required.

The team have all completed specific formal training to deliver psychological therapies to meet the needs of the young people and their carers.

4) Current Caseload

| | July | August | September |
|----------------------------|------|--------|-----------|
| Total Children Cared For | 84 | 85 | 90 |
| Total CYPS Caseload | 1519 | 1527 | 1510 |
| Total % Children Cared For | 5.5% | 5.6% | 6.0% |

5) Positive Case Study

Further detail on a positive case study is included in Part II of the agenda.

| TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD | |
|--|--|
| DATE: | 21 November 2022 |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | Anita Swales ACTING HEAD TEACHER Virtual School |
| SUBJECT: | Head Teacher's Report |
| PURPOSE: | FOR INFORMATION |

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with updated information about the education of cared for children since the last report on 26th September 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Board is requested to receive the report for information

3. COHORT

Currently as of 11th November 2022 we have 498 Cared for Children

Historical cohorts (when report written)

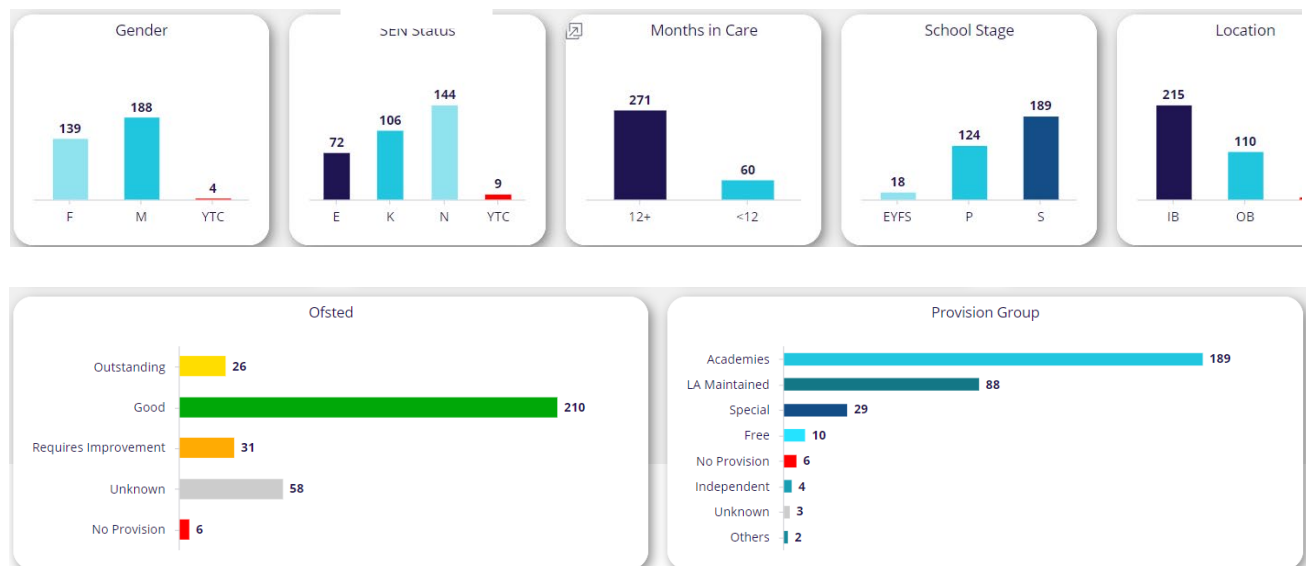
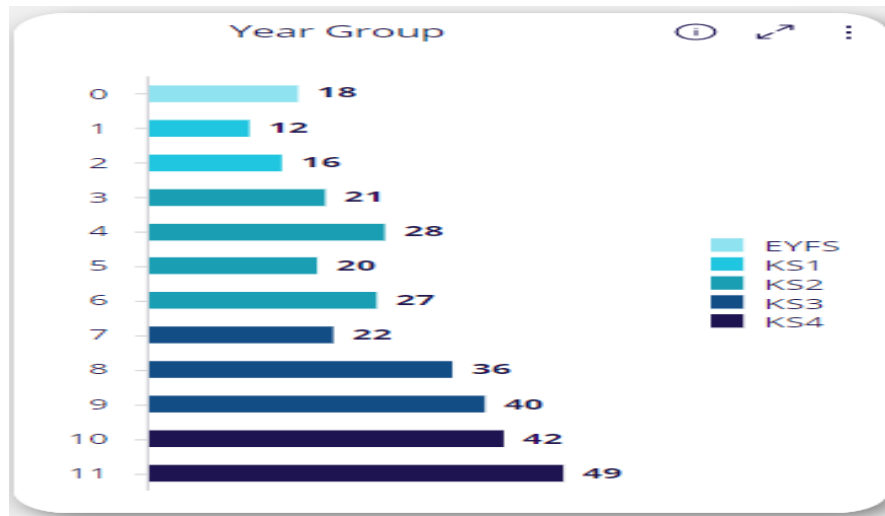
| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Current November 2022 | 498 |
| September 2022 | 515 |
| July 2022 | 550 |
| February 2022 | 561 |
| November 2021 | 564 |

3.1 COHORT

Of the 498:

- 46 are Pre School (0 – 2 years)
- 18 attend nursery or early years provision (2/3 and 3/4yr)
- 142 are school age Reception to year 6 (Primary)
- 189 are school age Y7 to Y11 (Secondary)
- 103 are Post 16

3.2 Statutory School Age Children (Reception to Year 11)



4 Attendance and Absence monitoring

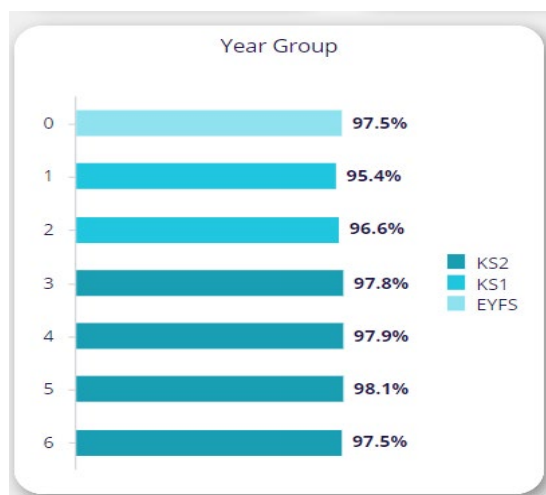
Overall attendance across all keystages is at 93% is above that of the same period last academic year at 91.5%.

Three year trend across all keystages for the academic year has shown an improvement in attendance since the dip in 2019/20 due to school closures during COVID-19 and has now returned or is above that of pre-pandemic levels.

| Keystage | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | Current 2022/23 | Trend |
|-------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| Early Years | 94.3% | 95% | 98.4% | Improving |
| Primary | 93.3% | 96.9% | 97.8% | Improving |

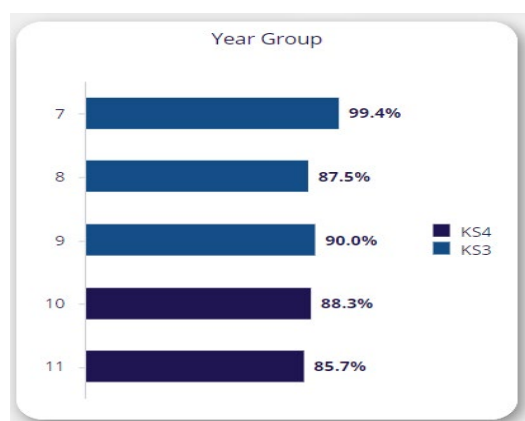
| | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Secondary | 84.7% | 87.9% | 89.6% | Improving |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|

Primary attendance at 97.8% this term is above that of all primary children in Sunderland (94.2%) and is on an improving three year trend. There are no primary age children without a school place.



| % Attendance | No. Of CfC | % of Cohort |
|------------------|------------|-------------|
| 100% | 79 | 56% |
| Above 95% | +35 | 80% |
| Above 90% | +17 | 91% |
| Below 90% | 11 | 9% |
| Serious Concerns | 0 | |

Secondary attendance is currently at 89.6% and just below all children in Sunderland (90.7%). At Keystage three (Y7 – 9) is 92.3% and at Key stage 4 (Y10 and 11) this drops to 87%.



| % Attendance | No of CfC | % of Cohort |
|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 100% | 75 | 40% |
| 95% | +56 | 70% |
| Above 90% | +15 | 78% |
| Below 90% | 33 | 17% |
| Serious Concerns | 10 | 5% |

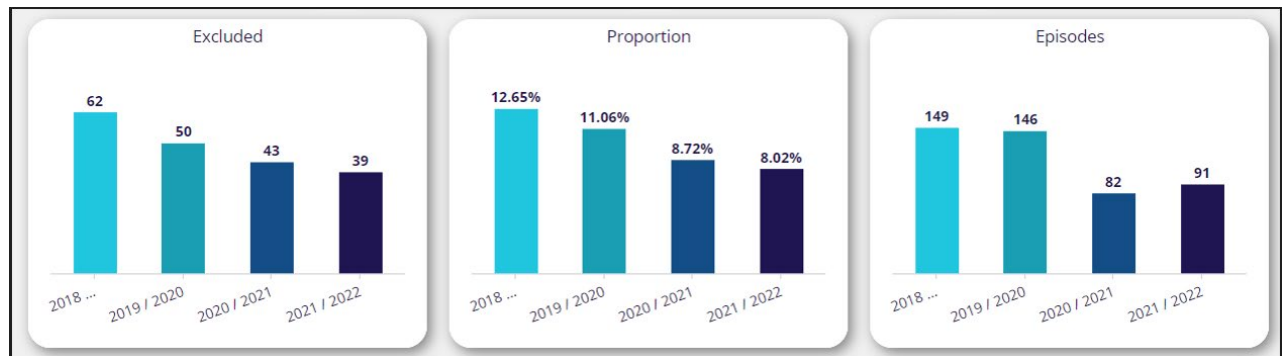
The Virtual School monitors attendance daily through Welfare Call and contacts carers to ensure attendance at school is a key priority should concerns arise. Analysis of the detail behind the data occurs termly and VS staff work closely with schools, carers and social workers to ensure attendance is improved through the ePEP. DfE guidance 2022 states that ***'attendance which drops below 50% without valid reasons should now be seen as a safeguarding concern for any child/young person'***.

Case studies of children with serious attendance concerns can be discussed at the Corporate Parenting Board meeting on 22nd November.

5 Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

As reported at the last meeting, suspensions are showing a declining trend.

The proportion of young people who have experienced one or more periods of fixed term suspension has fallen from 12.6% in 2018/19 to 8.02%. For this academic year to date 10 individual children have been suspended and 16 individual episodes, which equates to 2.7% of our cohort experiencing one or more suspensions, broadly in line with the same period last year.



Caseworkers continue to monitor exclusion data to ensure fixed term suspensions occur as infrequently as possible. The Virtual School caseworkers liaise closely with schools, carers and social workers when suspensions occur to understand the antecedents and to ensure appropriate support and plans are put in place to prevent further suspensions. This includes the use of the SEND ranges to ensure needs are identified and resources are put in place, but also referrals to other agencies are aligned such as CYPS, CAMHS for example. Alongside our partners we explore strategies which can be employed as an alternative to suspension wherever possible.

Permanent Exclusion - The Virtual School will intervene at the earliest opportunity when informed of a possible permanent exclusion. Working with school leaders, carers and our partners we avoid this course of action at all costs, ensuring the school can reconsider or that the young person is placed in an alternative and appropriate education setting as quickly as possible to meet their ongoing needs. This situation has arisen three times since September with all young people moving to more appropriate education to assess and meet needs. As a result of this partnership, it remains that we have had **no Permanent Exclusion** of a Cared for Child/Young Person in Sunderland in five-years.

6 EPEPS

PEP meetings take place termly for statutory age and early years children and 6 monthly for Post 16 young people. EPEP compliance with statutory timeframes **remains consistently over 97%**. All PEPs are quality assured by the VS caseworkers to ensure they are fit for purpose. So far this term there have been **452 PEP meetings** taken place in **185 provisions** across **29 authorities**.

Quality assurance continues to be a key area of focus this year. Each section of the EPEP will be assessed and this is fed back to schools using a RAG rating. The average number of days from PEP meetings being held to completion of the PEP Plan is now 11.8 days, this is a significant improvement on 17 days from last academic year, and closer to the target for completion within 10 days or less.

Objective 8 of the virtual school development plan is to evaluate our Management Information Systems to align them with education and social care systems. To this end we are reviewing new modules from our existing providers Capita and Liquid Logic to see if either is suitable for PEP delivery and the work of the Virtual school. Liquid Logic have brought out a new suite of education modules which complement the existing social care modules. Capita Solutions have also developed their Virtual School modules to incorporate aspects of social care to assist the VS in conducting its functions. Analysis of both systems is ongoing with key personnel within TfC to establish a way forward.

7 VIRTUAL SCHOOL STAFFING

The new structure has been in place since May 1st and affords for greater capacity and reduced caseloads with the average caseload dropping from 80 in 2021/22 to 60 for the coming academic year 2022/23, although some of the staff (highlighted) in the table above have only recently been appointed. This has enabled a stronger focus on attendance and also on working with our carers. Middle leadership is a key area of development for us this year with all staff new to this role.

In October we successfully recruited four additional associate teachers to our Tuition Team, all on PVH contracts to support the VPP referrals and also to contribute to the intervention programme for Cared for and Care Experienced young people. We also appointed a part time teaching assistant to work within the Young Mums provision.

8. VIRTUAL SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

The Virtual School continues to have a strong support from the Governing Board with representation from all sectors of education provision. The first governing board of the year was held on 8th November to consider the Virtual School Development Plan for 2022/23.

Governors have assigned themselves to at least one of the 8 Outcomes we have highlighted in the plan and will meet with the Virtual School staff member who leads on the outcome to discuss progress throughout the year.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Virtual School Development 'Plan on a Page' is attached to this report and aligned to the objectives within the TfC Development Plan for 2022-2025.

10. CONTACT

Name: Anita Swales
Position: Acting Head Teacher Virtual School
Email: anita.swales@togetherforchildren.org.uk
Tel: 07880 080285

Virtual School Development Plan 2022-23

'Putting the Child First'

Development Plan on a Page

| Outcome 1 Improved Key Performance Indicators and Outcomes for Inclusion | Outcome 2 Improved Key Performance Indicators and Outcomes for Attainment and Progress | Outcome 3 Enable Greater Retention at Keystage 5 Through the Post 16 PP+ Pilot | Outcome 4 Empower Children & Young People to use their Voice and Influence |
|--|---|--|--|
| Funding Source: Pupil Premium Plus | Funding Source: National Tutoring Programme, Catch up Funding And Pupil Premium Plus | Funding Source: Funding Received Sept 22 Grant of £33,120 - approx. £18K Staffing, £1.4K incentives and £13K tuition | Funding Source: Pupil Premium plus |
| Ref: TfC Plan 2022 -25 <i>'Inspiring creative and innovative practice'</i> | Ref: TfC Plan 2022 - 25 <i>'Inspiring creative and innovative practice'</i> | Ref TfC Plan 2022 - 25 <i>'Inspiring creative and innovative practice'</i> | Ref: TfC Plan 2022 - 25 <i>'Empowering children and young people to use their voice and influence'</i> |
| Objective: Improve attendance, inclusion and engagement of young people in appropriate quality education provision leading to greater outcomes at KS4 and beyond | Objective: Improve outcomes of attainment and progress for Cared for Children and Young People across all key stages which meets national and regional levels and closes the gap on all children in Sunderland | Objective: Raise the profile and improve retention and participation rates on appropriate P16 pathways leading to better outcomes and life chances for our young people through effective multi agency working practice | Objective: Ensure the influence of children and young people's voices, and those of their carer's, are evident in the development and implementation of virtual school and wider education services |
| Outcome 5 Review Management Information Systems | Outcome 6 Comprehensive Development, Induction, Training and Communication Programme | Outcome 7 Improved Systems and Outcomes for Tuition Services and Young Mum's Provision | Outcome 8 Strategy for the Improvement in Outcomes for Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) |
| Funding Source: Pupil Premium Plus | Funding Source: Pupil Premium Plus | Funding Source: High Needs Block and Recharges to Schools | Funding Source: DfE CiN Grant received 2021/22 £100K and £2022/23 £100K |
| Ref: TfC Plan 2022 - 25 <i>'Inspiring creative and innovative practice'</i> | Ref: TfC Plan 2022 - 25 <i>'Supporting our workforce and making the best use of resources'</i> | Ref: TfC Plan 2022 - 25 <i>'Inspiring creative and innovative practice'</i> | Ref: TfC Plan 2022 - 25 <i>'Leading and influencing future policy and direction'</i> |
| Objective: Improve data and intelligence gathering, ensuring quality ePEPs drive improvement in attainment and progress, are fit for purpose, and remain statutorily compliant | Objective: Greater awareness of the issues affecting Cared for and Previously cared for children in education, promoted through effective training, development, awareness raising and guidance Programme. | Objective: Provision of effective tuition service for those children and young people unable to attend school due to medical conditions, including school anxieties. | Objective: Promote a culture of high aspirations amongst all professionals involved with CWSW's leading to improved KPI's |

Together For Children Fostering - Sunderland

Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Sandhill Centre, Grindon Lane, Sunderland SR3 4EN

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Together For Children Fostering - Sunderland registered as an independent fostering agency in March 2017 under a trust arrangement. The service operates from an office in Sunderland.

The agency offers a range of foster placements, including respite care, permanent, long-term and short-term placements and connected carers arrangements.

The staff team comprises of a responsible individual, the registered manager who registered with Ofsted in February 2020, an agency decision-maker, two assistant team managers, 13 supervising social workers, one panel advisor and a business manager who leads a team of several business support workers.

At the time of this inspection, the agency had 209 fostering households that were caring for 275 children and young people.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 12 to 16 September 2022

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | good |
| How well children and young people are helped and protected | good |
| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | good |

The independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy trusted and stable relationships with their foster carers and connected carers, who know them well. These adults have a clear understanding of the children's needs. This helps the children to settle and feel part of family life. One carer said, 'It is tough at times, but love conquers all. We love him.' The children's positive experiences help them to make good progress. One child said, 'This is my family. I love living here. I'm doing really well, and they help me with everything.'

Children say that they feel listened to and their views are understood and taken into account. Children are offered independent advocacy, which improves the way that the children's views are considered. The agency also seeks the children's feedback to inform the foster carers' and connected carers' annual reviews. This ensures that the children's voices are heard and considered. Children are encouraged to join the Children in Care Council, and they have the opportunity to meet with the corporate parenting panel. The children are also involved in interviewing new staff and initiatives such as 'Language that cares'. The participation of children helps them to feel valued and respected.

Specialist support is available for foster carers, connected carers and children when they require additional support. The appointment of a clinical psychologist and a therapeutic social worker, who are based in the agency, enables specialist support to be given in a timely way. Foster carers say that they value this support. When placements break down, the clinical psychologist, in conjunction with the child's social worker and supervising social worker, provides additional support to the new carer to avoid further placement breakdown. This supports successful transitions for the children.

Prospective foster carers who contact the agency feel welcomed. One foster carer said that despite them being the only person who attended a welcome event, the agency still delivered their presentation, which made them feel especially valued. There is a clear process in place for assessments, which are undertaken in a timely way. Assessments of foster carers and connected carers are of good quality. Vulnerabilities that are identified at stage one of the assessment process are thoroughly explored during stage two of the assessment, which supports the agency's recommendations to the panel. The panel's scrutiny of the quality of assessments undertaken means that only suitable carers are approved to care for children.

Effective matching of children with their foster families leads to stability for children. The matching process of children with their foster families is informed by a clear understanding of the child's individual needs alongside the skills and experience of the foster carers. Additionally, collaborative work between the child's social worker and the agency ensures that all of the children's relevant information is shared with the foster carer before any decisions are made.

The agency provides good-quality support to foster carers and connected carers, which children benefit from. Children's day-to-day experiences are enhanced because of the continued support that is provided to foster carers and connected carers. A carer said: 'I can pick the phone up at any time and speak to someone. Even if it's not my own supervising social worker, there is always support available. I cannot fault them.'

Children and foster families that are part of the 'Mockingbird' group benefit from the nurture and support that the programme brings. The groups help foster families to build resilience through extensive practical and emotional support. The programme improves children's experiences by extending their foster family networks and their peer friendships. At times of difficulty, children and foster families can readily access respite care and support from people that they know and trust. This enables the children and carers to safely pause and rebuild any frayed relationships, which reduces the risk of children's placements breaking down.

Children do make good progress from their starting points. However, the agency has missed an opportunity to illustrate how they help the children to recognise the areas where they have made progress and where they require ongoing support. This is because the agency does not have an effective monitoring system in place which tracks this.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children are better protected because the supervising social workers and foster carers understand their safeguarding responsibilities. As such, the agency's safeguarding procedures are consistently followed. This promotes the children's safety and welfare.

Children receive positive and clear messages from the agency, the staff and their carers that their safety and well-being are a high priority to them. When children do go missing, which is infrequent, the agency's missing-from-home policy is followed. Carers are prepared and supported to respond to children that may go missing from home or may be at risk of harm from exploitation. Once children are found and returned home safely, they are provided with an opportunity to speak to an independent adult. This helps to better inform safer arrangements and planning for children.

Safer recruitment processes are followed when each carer is assessed and then again before their annual review. This provides assurances to the agency that all of the carers are properly vetted and only suitable carers provide care to the children. There is a clear monitoring and reviewing system in place, which ensures the ongoing safety and well-being of children. This includes a regular review of the carers' health and safety checks, such as Disclosure and Barring Service checks, medical checks and at least twice-yearly unannounced home visits. Furthermore, there are regular opportunities for the children to speak to the supervising social workers without their carers being present. This offers an added level of protection to children at different intervals.

The implementation of the therapeutic reparenting model of care and the clinical psychologist's support means that the children's positive behaviour is promoted consistently. Foster carers use effective de-escalation techniques and alternative strategies which are specific to the children's individual needs. This is effective as there has been no need to use physical holds on children. Therefore, children continue to flourish and maintain positive relationships with their foster families.

On the whole, risks to children are identified, understood and managed well by the foster carers and connected carers. However, some safer care policies have not been updated following emerging risks being identified for the children. Not providing clear guidance in safer care policies has the potential to lead to inconsistent responses to children.

When allegations are made against foster carers, the agency takes immediate action to safeguard the children until both the police and internal investigations have been completed. Safeguarding procedures are followed and the carers are provided with ongoing support. However, the manager has not consistently notified Ofsted of these events or updated Ofsted when a child protection enquiry has commenced or been concluded. Furthermore, there was a significant delay in notifying Ofsted on one occasion. This oversight has prevented Ofsted from evaluating the agency's response in relation to safeguarding incidents and from being assured that the agency has responded appropriately.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have an ambitious vision for the service. There is a culture across the service of high expectations and innovative practice with a continual focus on children. The manager is very well supported by senior leaders and together they share a vision to support ongoing improvements in the service.

Effective collaboration of the agency working with other departments and external agencies improves children's outcomes. The agency works innovatively to track children who may require foster placements. Early identification of children that require foster placements helps to better support children through early placement planning. This supports the good matching of children with their foster families, which is successful, as it provides children with stability.

The agency is proactive in the support that they provide to foster carers. For example, foster carers and connected carers are encouraged to join support groups and access training. This helps them to meet the needs of the children in their care. Support groups provide the foster carers with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, as well as an opportunity to access peer support.

Panel minutes provide a clear appraisal of the panel's business. The panel provides feedback to the agency about the quality of assessments discussed. This process supports the agency to make continual improvements to practice. The panel chair describes how there is a positive culture in the agency to learn and improve practice.

This helps to maintain a focus on delivering a good service to foster families and children.

All staff receive regular supervision. However, the quality of these records is variable. Some supervision records are brief and do not evidence reflective discussions. This means that there is an inconsistent approach to the quality of staff supervisions, which does not meet the requirements of the agency's own supervision policy.

Some foster carers report that they receive good-quality supervision and that they value the opportunity to reflect on their practice. However, this is not consistently evidenced in all foster carers' supervision records. While some supervision records are detailed, others are of poor quality and do not consider the progress of the children or the training and development needs of foster carers. Therefore, a recommendation that was made at the last inspection to address this has been reissued.

The agency has clear systems in place to monitor practice through performance data. However, managers do not routinely quality assure all aspects of the supervising social workers' practice. Consequently, the leadership team has missed an opportunity to review the quality of the staff's practice to ensure that it continually meets the needs of foster families, connected carers and the children.

What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement | Due date |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>If any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 7 takes place in relation to a fostering agency, the registered person must without delay notify the persons or bodies indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table.</p> <p>Any notification made in accordance with this regulation which is given orally must be confirmed in writing. (Regulation 36)</p> | 14 October 2022 |

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they implement a proportionate approach to any risk assessment. In particular, ensure that safe care policies are reflective of children's emerging needs and known risks. Children's risk assessments should explicitly reference where risks to children reduce or increase. ('Fostering Services: national minimum standards', 4.5)
- The registered person should ensure that foster carer's supervisions have a clear purpose and provide the opportunity to supervise the foster carer's work, ensure that the foster carer is meeting the child's needs, taking into account the child's wishes and feelings, and ensure they offer support and a framework to assess the carer's performance and develop their competencies and skills. Foster carers' files should include detailed records of supervisory meetings. ('Fostering Services: national minimum standards', 21.8)
- The registered person should ensure that they regularly monitor and quality assure all records kept by the service to ensure that they are compliant with the service's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Ensure that immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. ('Fostering Services: national minimum standards', 25.2)
- The registered person should ensure that the staff's supervision evaluates the staff's practice and fostering activity to ensure that it is consistent with the 2011 regulations, national minimum standards and with the agency's own policies and procedures. ('Fostering Services: national minimum standards', 25.3)
- The registered person should ensure that information about a child is recorded clearly and in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files

now or in the future. In particular, ensure that when tracking children's progress, there is a clear evaluation of the progress that children make from their starting points. ('Fostering Services: national minimum standards', 26.6)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: 1254786

Registered provider: Together for Children Sunderland Limited

Registered provider address: Stanfield Business Centre, Addison Street,
Sunderland SR2 8SZ

Responsible individual: Majella McCarthy

Registered manager: Daniel Kenny

Telephone number: 0191 561 2223

Email address: Majella.McCarthy@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Inspectors

Jacqueline Tate, Social Care Inspector

Paula Shepherd, Social Care Inspector

Louise Hollick, Social Care His Majesty's Inspector

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21 November 2022

WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

Report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform the Corporate Parenting Board of the work programme for the municipal year 2022/2023 and forthcoming agenda items.

2. Work Programme

| Meeting Date | Agenda Items | Officer Responsible |
|----------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 9 January 2023 | Change Council Update | Alex Bowey |
| | Health of Looked After Children | Jo Morgan |
| | CYPS Data Dashboard | Samantha Diston |
| | Annual Report of the Virtual Headteacher | Anita Swales |
| | Review of Children with Disabilities Living in Residential Accommodation | Jill Colbert/Majella McCarthy |
| | Adoption Inspection Report | Kathryn McCabe |
| | Update from Next Steps | Sharon Willis |
| 6 March 2023 | Change Council Update | Alex Bowey |
| | Health of Looked After Children | Jo Morgan |
| | CYPS Data Dashboard | Samantha Diston |
| | Education for Cared for Children | Anita Swales |

3. Recommendations

The Board is asked to note the work programme and suggest any additional topics which may be discussed at a future meeting.

