

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 29 January 2018 in Committee Room 2,
Civic Centre, Sunderland at 5.30pm**

Part I

Present:

Members of the Board

Councillor L Farthing (in the Chair)	Washington South Ward
Councillor B Francis	Fulwell Ward
Councillor I Kay	Millfield Ward
Councillor L Lauchlan	Washington Central Ward
Councillor C Marshall	Doxford Ward
Councillor P Smith	Silksworth Ward
Councillor W Turton	Houghton Ward

Young People

Blaine Richardson
Rhiannon Parkinson

Also in Attendance

Councillor P Gibson	Silksworth Ward
Councillor M Turton	Copt Hill Ward

All Supporting Officers

Debra Patterson	Director, Children's Social Care, Together for Children
Sharon Willis	Service Manager, Together for Children
Sheila Lough	Service Manager, Together for Children
Gavin Taylor	IRO Service, Together for Children
Kim Roberts	IRO Service, Together for Children
Annette Parr	Support and Intervention Officer, Together for Children
Loren Nergaard	Participation and Engagement Officer, Together for Children
Maurice Davis	Foster Carer
Kay Dixon	Foster Carer
Janet Thomson	Assistant Director, NTW
Angela O'Dell	CYPS NTW
Kelly Haslem	CYPS NTW

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davison and Oliver.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

11. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

Change Council Update

Councillor Smith queried the progress regarding looked after children accessing activities as this had been flagged up for some time.

Debra Patterson advised that officers had been working hard on this matter and a new, invigorated approach was being developed across the 12 North East local authorities for a similar offer for looked after children. Sheila Lough had been working on this and it was intended to bring a report forward for the next meeting. Information had been pulled together about what was already on offer, the provider had not been willing to provide free gym access but discussions were taking place with the Council as they were the commissioners of the service.

Councillor Farthing said that she and Councillor Kelly, the Portfolio Holder, had met with the Change Council and had been negotiating with the Leisure Joint Venture around getting free passes. It was a question of looking at what the actual demand was as not all young people wanted gym provision.

Blaine commented that Max Cards which foster carers received offered more than what was available through Everyone Active and may be more cost effective.

Change Council Update

Blaine Richardson presented the report of the Change Council and advised that the second regional children in care conference had been held on 3 November and had been a very successful event. Sunderland had led a workshop on mental health and the care system which had been well received. The Chair commented that she had attended the conference and been very proud of the professionalism of the young people involved in the workshop.

The Regional Children in Care Council had been nominated for the Children and Young People Now award and Billy, Loren and Donna had travelled to London to

attend the award ceremony. Although they returned empty handed, they were very pleased to have attended the event.

The second LAC Celebration Event had been held on 8 December 2017 and had been another great success. Over 200 people had attended and there was excellent feedback from carers, young people and social care staff.

Mark from Washington Mind had been invited to attend the Change Council meeting and he had started a drop in at the Next Steps building for young people who wanted to talk or if they were on a waiting list for CAHMS/CYPS. Mark would attend some Change Council meetings to provide updates and advice.

A Mental Health Conference had been held at the Stadium of Light on 16 January and during the event, the Mental Health Charter mark which had been supported and designed by Sunderland Youth Parliament was launched. Blaine and Loren presented the mental health workshop which had previously formed part of the regional children in care conference.

The Change Council was pleased to welcome some new members to its January meeting which had focused on revisiting the Change Council Agreement and working on the annual action plan. Themes and actions to focus on included:

- Finance
- Accommodation
- Storage units
- Mental Health services
- Training for newly qualified social workers
- Apprenticeships for care leavers
- Fostering training
- Access to files
- Local offer for care leavers
- Promises/commitments (formerly known as the Pledges)

12. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Future Work Programme 2018/2019

A proposed work programme for 2018/2019 was presented to the Board. Debra Patterson highlighted that issues had been grouped together in themes in line with the suggestions made by the Change Council.

Additions could be made to the work programme as matters were raised with the Corporate Parenting Board during the year.

13. RESOLVED that the proposed future work programme be noted.

Health of Looked After Children

The Safeguarding Children Lead and the Designated Doctor for Looked After Children submitted a joint report providing an update on health activity for looked after children.

There had been a steady improvement in compliance with the requirement for Initial Health Assessments to be completed within 20 days of a child becoming looked after. Compliance had been 80% in Quarter 1, 90% in Quarter 2 and 98% in Quarter 3. Compliance with Review Health Assessments had dropped from 94% in Quarter 2 to 87% in Quarter 3. This was due to children who had been placed outside of Sunderland not having their health assessments completed within timescales by the host LAC health teams.

Councillor Smith queried if there were major differences in how local authorities dealt with health assessments and Debra stated that Designated Nurse and her colleagues worked hard to get the assessment information from other areas, however some localities were not as robust in their processes as Sunderland. If health assessments were not completed following two requests from the Sunderland LAC team to the host area, cases would then be escalated to the Head of Safeguarding at City Hospitals Sunderland and the Designated Nurse to investigate other means of completing health assessments.

The first two quarters of 2017/2018 had shown 100% compliance for the issuing of health passports, however this had dropped to 73% in Quarter 3. There had been a total of 11 health passports due to be issued, eight had been completed but three were not due to young people refusing to attend appointments. Follow up appointments had been offered.

A Consultant Child Psychologist was providing half day weekly sessions for professionals in residential care homes to offer scaffolding, support and guidance. This was proving to be successful and was greatly valued by the staff.

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

CYPS Data Dashboard

The Board received a report presenting the data for looked after children currently accessing services from CYPS.

In relation to the referrals received, it was highlighted that referrals which were not accepted were referred back to managers to confirm the decision. Following the initial referral, secondary referrals identified that pathway for each client and it was noted that an individual may have more than one secondary referral.

The Chair commented that it would be useful to have more information about what each pathway was and Councillor Kay added that further information about diagnosis and treatment offered would also help the Board to understand the issues. He also

asked what the trigger point would be for an urgent referral and representatives from NTW undertook to provide a copy of the priority criteria.

The Board were provided with a breakdown of the age groups accessing CYPS and it was noted that the greatest proportion of clients were from the 6-13 year old age range. Turning to the waiting bands, it was reported that there had been an increase in young people waiting between 18-30 weeks from referral to treatment. Over the summer period there had been staffing issues in CYPS, however two new clinical psychologists had been recruited purely for looked after children.

Councillor Kay commented that there was a good breakdown of quantitative data available now for elected Members but in order to move forward more qualitative information was required to understand more about the reasons for referrals and the treatment programmes available.

Debra Patterson stated that if along with the reasons why a young person had been referred to CYPS, it would be good to know where that young person was living, i.e. in foster care or residential accommodation. She noted that for young people living outside of Sunderland, they would be referred to another CYPS service and the CCG would be recharged. It would also be interesting to know how many young people were being supported outside of Sunderland. Janet Thomson stated that Margaret Clouston was meeting with commissioners and may be able to get this data.

The Chair said that it would be helpful the Board to know what sort of treatment was available. She had recently taken part in an 'attachment' workshop at the CAMHS conference and felt that something like that would be useful for elected Members.

15. RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers

The Strategic Service Manager submitted a report providing the Board with an update on supported accommodation for care leavers.

The range of accommodation available had remained unchanged since the last report and there were currently 11 vacancies across all provision. The Board were advised that commissioned provision at Harbour View, Holmewood and Lewis Crescent had previously been funded by Adult Services as part of the housing contract but this had ended in July 2017. Together for Children had agreed to continue to commission this provision for a further twelve months and all of the current commissioning arrangements were due for review in July 2018.

In addition to the available accommodation, spot purchases could be made from the YMCA and Centrepont and at the present time there were two young people who had chosen to access YMCA provision due to its location.

The Commissioning Officer undertook monthly monitoring visits to all commissioned providers and Sharon Willis advised that she chaired a weekly panel to consider all

referrals. Northumbria Police and the Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) Coordinator attended the panel meetings on an ad hoc basis.

Work was taking place with the Communications Officer to advertise the supported lodgings scheme to generate interest from young people. The Board were informed that the Trainer Flat Scheme was now back in the management of Together for Children and was running more smoothly as a result. The trainer flats were currently full and young people were able to convert their tenancies to general leases if feedback was positive.

Young people had been asked to provide feedback on their accommodation and comments were overwhelmingly positive.

Councillor Francis asked if attendance at the panel meetings was good and Sharon advised that it was, and that if providers could not attend then they would submit a report.

Councillor Kay noted the joined up work with the Police and the MSET Coordinator and expressed his concern about children who were not from Sunderland but where placed in the city and to what extent the local authority worked with the Police to keep them safe. Sharon stated that at panel meetings, each provider would run through an update for each young person in the provision so the commissioner would be aware of any issues and would potentially contact the young person's local authority commissioner. Even if the Police or the MSET Coordinator were not in attendance, intelligence shared at the meeting would be passed on.

16. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Virtual School Performance

The Board received a report outlining the activity of the Virtual School and the unvalidated 2016/2017 educational outcomes for Sunderland looked after children. The performance data was for those children who had been in care continuously of the local authority for a period of at least 12 months.

Annette Parr, Support and Intervention Officer, was in attendance to present the report and informed the Board that during the 2016/2017 academic year it had been agreed to implement a Governing Body management structure for the Virtual School. It had been felt that governance arrangements needed to be strengthened and the first meeting of the Governing Body had been held in November 2017.

Details of the population of looked after children in the city were set out within the report and it was highlighted that 540 children had been in the care of the local authority during the academic year. However, 220 children and young people in the cohort were in care for at least one year as of 31 March 2017 and between the ages of five and 16 and this number was therefore used for statistical purposes.

Section 7 of the report outlined the Virtual School Roll and its characteristics including the Ofsted categories of schools which were attended by looked after

children. The Chair noted that some children were attending schools which were judged to either 'require improvement' or were 'inadequate' and asked if this was appropriate.

Annette Parr advised that one of the key elements of visits to schools from the School Improvement Service was provision for looked after children and sometimes it was found that the support given in schools which 'required improvement' was very positive.

In March 2017, 58% of Sunderland's looked after children attended schools in the city. 24% of the cohort had Special Educational Needs with an Education and Healthcare Plan and approximately 59% had Special Educational Needs which was significant in terms of challenges to services and schools in terms of attainment and progress. 11.5% of the primary school cohort attended a special school and 26.8% of secondary school age children were attending specialist provision.

Turning to attainment and progress, six out of seven children in the Early Years Foundation Stage had achieved a good level of development and the phonics screen had showed a three year improving trend with the pass level standing at 66% against the national average of 84%.

At Key Stage 1, the expected standard in reading had dropped but there was an increase in pupils achieving greater depth. Work was taking place to analyse and create profiles for every Year 2, Year 6 and Year 7 child and the Virtual School staff were receiving a lot of training looking at raising expectations of what children should be doing.

Improvements were being seen in KEY Stage 2 and attainment had risen in reading, writing and maths. Progress rates for children in Sunderland had been better than those for the looked after population nationally.

Key Stage 4 was a significant issue for the Virtual School and the local authority as a whole. Of the Year 11 cohort, 58% had Special Educational Needs. The report showed the previous three year performance trend, however this was not comparable with the 2017 outcomes as GCSE gradings had been changed. Annette stated that Level 2 was equivalent to grade C and above and Level 1 grade D and below. Data on the Progress 8 measure would be reported when available.

Of the young people currently in Years 12 and 13, 13.5% were identified as not being in employment, education or training, this was in comparison with the estimated national average of 33%. All of the 'NEET' young people are supported and encouraged to re-engage with education and training in collaboration with social workers, foster carers and semi-independent or care home staff.

The Board were informed that in 2016/2017, 39 looked after children had been subject to fixed term exclusions from school. There had been a decrease in the number of fixed term exclusions (82) but an increase in days lost (219). Protocols had been reviewed in order to support young people and the Virtual School had intervened to reduce the chance of permanent exclusion. There were a number of

challenging young people in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the Virtual School Headteacher attended the complex placement panel to advocate stable educational placements.

The Virtual School had subjected Personal Education Plans (PEPs) to regular quality assurance and the number of PEPs judged to be of high quality was improving. The new ePEP was to be introduced during January 2018 and further training would be planned for this as it was rolled out.

During the academic year the Virtual School had been delivering a pilot tutoring offer to ten young people which aimed to support the PEP process for these looked after children. Relevant stakeholders would receive monthly updates on pupil progress and feedback would be provided to all pupils and tutors to improve the quality of tuition.

Young people from the Virtual School had also take part in the Choices Together Programme operated by the North East Raising Aspiration Partnership which allowed young people to find about what Higher Education could offer them. The Virtual School was involved in partnership projects, the Cultural Pledge for looked after children and apprenticeship placements.

The recommendations for development for the 2017/2018 academic year were as follows: -

1. Refresher training to be arranged for designated teachers on target setting and the use of Pupil Premium funding and, for those for whom it is relevant.
2. To make more effective use of data collated on a termly basis.
3. To further refine and quality control PEPs.
4. The Virtual Headteacher would continue to work more closely with local organisations to raise awareness of the value of the ePEP, the Pupil Premium funding in identifying needs, targeting resources and monitoring outcomes and how to support learning at home.
5. Refine attendance monitoring by the implementation of “welfare call” to provide daily attendance analysis.
6. Close the attainment gap with peers of children looked after and young people within Sunderland by collating on a termly basis pupil progress data from the ePEP to inform robust conversations with schools on the outcomes for looked after children.
7. Ensure that the newly established Virtual School Governing Body provides greater support and robust challenge to the Virtual School Head.
8. Ensure the effective use of Pupil Premium in raising the standards of attainment and progress for all looked after children.

The Chair thanked Annette for the comprehensive report and commented that the DfE had recently issued a consultation about virtual headteachers and queried the response which had been made by Sunderland. Annette undertook to check this.

The Board therefore: -

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

Regulation 44 Visits

The Independent Reviewing Officer Team Managers submitted a report providing the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on findings in relation to Regulation 44 visits.

It was a statutory obligation for monthly Regulation 44 visits to be made to all five of the Sunderland's Children's Homes by an 'independent person'. Within Together for Children there were two Foster Care Review/Reg 44 Officers who took responsibility for conducting the visits to children's homes.

Gavin Taylor guided Board Members through the report highlighting the current Ofsted ratings for each home and the outcomes of the Regulation 44 visits. The first of these was Colombo Road which was judged to be outstanding in three areas by Ofsted and had consistently demonstrated evidence of good practice. The Regulation 44 visits also looked at the internal and external fabric of the home, as well as any incidents which had occurred over the period, including 'missing' incidents and use of restraint. Within the reporting period there had been no recommendations from the Reg 44 officer and it was particularly highlighted that two of the five young people engaged in education within the home had achieved 100% school attendance.

Monument View continued to be a stable home which had been judged to be outstanding at its most recent Ofsted inspection. This home had also demonstrated good evidence of practice, although recommendations had been made relating to the external maintenance of the home and the need for a fire drill to take place.

Grasswell House had been through a difficult time in recent months and had moved from a 'good' to 'inadequate' Ofsted rating. The home had recently been judged to be 'good' but requiring improvement in some areas and the Reg 44 Officer was working intensively with the home manager and staff to address outstanding issues.

Eight recommendations had been made during the reporting period, there had been one sanction applied and nine critical incidents. Three young people in the home were engaged within education and three were in work based training.

Councillor W Turton highlighted that there was some land adjacent to the home which needed some attention. The Chair suggested that the local ward members should monitor this.

Revelstoke Road had one Ofsted judgment of 'good' and two of 'requires improvement' and the Reg 44 Officer had made 21 recommendations during the reporting period.

Sea View Road was a short break residential care home which had received a 'requires improvement' Ofsted rating in two areas in 2016 and 'inadequate' in one area which had all moved to 'improved effectiveness' in 2017. A full inspection had taken place recently and the setting had been judged to be 'good'. Seven recommendations had been made during the reporting period and these had been acted upon by Management and achieved.

Gavin highlighted that the scope of Regulation 44 visits had been considered and it was noted that elected members had been involved in visits to the homes and it was queried whether one councillor should be linked to one specific home.

The Chair stated that Members had undergone training in the past and they might like to think about what they wanted to do. It was her view that local ward members should have a general awareness of what was happening at the home in any event.

Councillor Smith commented that she had been linked to Revelstoke Road for a number of years and had found this meant that she could pick up on changes more easily because she was so familiar with the home. Sharon Willis added that a lot of different people visiting the home could have a negative impact and it was preferable to have some consistency in visits.

The Chair suggested that elected members be invited to take up Reg 44 training and that this also be offered to new councillors after the election in May.

A number of areas had been highlighted for service development including: -

- To consolidate and use the skill and experiences of the new Foster Carer Review/Regulation 44 Officers.
- Strengthen the use of advocacy for young people in residential services.
- To develop a schedule of themed audits in order to enhance the rigour of the independent visit.
- To revisit the Reg 44 report format and use SMART recommendations that evidence the impact of the Reg 44 visit.
- Support all five homes to their journey to achieve a good to outstanding rating from Ofsted.
- Support residential managers in meeting and exceeding the implementation of Ofsted and Reg 44 recommendations.

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

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

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair