
MEETING	CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
DATE	7 MARCH 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS SCOTT, BROOKS, CUTHBERTSON AND RUNCIMAN (VICE- CHAIR)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS FUNNELL, LOOKER, POTTER AND WISEMAN

18. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they might have in relation to the business on the agenda or other general interests they might have within the remit of the Board. None were declared.

19. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 3 December 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

20. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

21. **CARE LEAVERS CHARTER**

Members considered a report on the Care Leavers Charter which was published by the Department for Education in October 2012. The Practice Manager in charge of the Pathway Team, which helps young people who have left care or are about to leave care, was in attendance at the meeting. He advised Members that local authorities are expected to

undertake a commitment to working upon the Charter to achieve the best outcomes for young people leaving care and it is considered that this Board is best placed to consider the Charter and the implications of its endorsement by the Cabinet Member and the Director of Adults, Children and Education.

The Pathway Team's Practice Manager advised Board Members that the regional forum for care leavers had expressed general support in principle for the Charter but had felt it was important that young people were consulted on it, particularly with regard to the language used which the Forum had felt was too emotive in places. He suggested this could be reworded for a York or regional version of Charter. In terms of what can be achieved realistically he questioned the use of the term "lifelong champion" and Members agreed that, as with all young people, young looked after people also need to flee the nest at some point. Members stressed that the Care Leavers Charter needs to tie in with other charters and suggested it would be useful to see a copy of this Charter alongside the Charter for Disabled People.

The Practice Manager informed Board Members that it was his intention to bring the locally agreed Charter back to the Board in July once local consultation with young people and care leavers had taken place and it had been considered by the Show Me That I Matter Panel. Members suggested it may also be useful for the Schools Council and Youth Council to see a copy of the locally agreed charter and also a couple of schools and the head teacher of the Virtual School/ head teacher of Danesgate Centre.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the Board agrees to the endorsement by the Cabinet Member and Director of Adults Children and Education subject to local consultation with looked after young people and care leavers in York.
 - (ii) That a further report be received by the Board at its meeting in July 2013 following consultation.

REASON: The Council's commitment to achieve the positive outcomes for care leavers is in line with its corporate responsibilities outlined in the Looked After Children's Strategy 2012-15.

22. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ROLE

At the last meeting of the Board, Members had asked that an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) attend a future meeting in order that Members could get an understanding of their role. IROs undertake a critical role in care planning and chairing reviews for all looked after children. The IRO Manager and three further IROs were in attendance at the meeting to discuss their role and the challenges they face. The IRO Manager circulated a document which included the following information on the IRO service in York and the IROs responded to Members queries on information contained in the document.

- To provide increased independence from line mgt and resource allocation within Children's Social Care, it is proposed that the team be relocated within the City of York Safeguarding Board – this would allow improved scope for scrutiny of the wider multi agency corporate Parent Functions.
- Team comprises a manager, who holds a caseload, and 3 FTE permanent staff and 5 peripatetic staff. Team are responsible for undertaking child care reviews for all looked after children, alongside other key role of chairing child protection conferences on behalf of the Safeguarding Board. The Children's Rights and Advocacy Service is also part of the team.
- Key objective over the last two years has been to fully implement the new Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, implemented in April 2011 which enhanced the roles and responsibilities of Independent Reviewing Officers.
- Childrens and Young Persons Act 2008 increase the role of the IRO and the IRO Handbook which came into force in April 2011 further strengthens the their role and function, with key changes in their role and responsibilities taking place since this time.
- The IRO's primary function is to quality assure the care planning and review process for each child and to ensure that his/her current wishes and feelings are given full consideration.

The IRO Manger and IROs made the following comments:

- IROs perform the role of critical friend

- They need to balance needs of young person - this requires cooperation of the young person while working alongside social workers, foster carers etc.
- Important to challenge role of services – to drive up quality and ensure placements meet young person’s needs.
- Based within the local authority (LA) we can more effectively step back and challenge the LA than we could externally, even though we are employed by them. Also it is far easier to resolve issues within the LA before they become big issues.
- Charged with ensuring each child’s views and wishes are heard – have responsibility for each looked after child.
- Young people can rate their reviewers via website
- The Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) Panel are due to launch a website with contact details and photos of IROs to make it easier for young people to get hold of them.
- IROs try to visit as many young people as soon as possible after they become looked after to make introductions.

Members agreed that in addition to the information contained in annual report, it had been useful to see IROs as individuals and agreed that person to person contact is important to supplement the report, while keeping a professional distance. They expressed their support towards the independent role of IROs within the local authority. They acknowledged that the work of IROs was becoming increasingly important, noting that as young people become more aware of their rights, they will challenge the authority more. They noted that the IROs role was even more important due to increasing care in extended family groups. They welcomed the opportunity to speak to the IROs and thanked them for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: (i) That the information provided by the IRO Team be noted.

(ii) That the annual IRO report be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

REASON: In order that the Board is informed on the role and responsibilities of the IRO Team.

23. WORK PLAN

The Head of Services Resources advised Board Members that officers proposed to draw up a work plan for the 2013-14 municipal year and asked them to consider what areas they would benefit from receiving further information on. Members made the following suggestions:

- Children's rights and advocacy
- How the needs of children who do not communicate in standard ways are met

RESOLVED: That officers consider these issues when compiling the workplan for the forthcoming year.

REASON: To ensure that Members views are taken into account when compiling the Board's workplan.

Councillor C Runciman (Vice Chair) in the Chair
[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.20 pm].