
Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date	26 September 2016
Present	Councillors Rawlings (Chair), Cuthbertson (Vice-Chair), S Barnes and Runciman
Apologies	Councillors Brooks and Gunnell

8. Declarations of Interest

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

9. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 27 June 2016 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

10. Public Participation

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

11. Show Me That I Matter Annual Report 2015-16

The Board considered a report that detailed the issues identified by the Children in Care Council, how these concerns were being addressed and which issues were still to be taken forward.

Members noted that Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) was the name of York's Children in Care Council that gave young people the opportunity to raise and discuss issues that were important to them, with the aim of shaping and improving services for children and young people in care.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of SMTIM were in attendance to present the Show Me That I Matter Annual Report and to update Members on their achievements and ongoing projects.

Board Members congratulated SMTIM on their accomplishments and questioned the young people on a number of issues including the sub groups I Matter Too and I Still Matter. It was noted that some children & young people had concerns regarding the impending changes to their Independent Reviewing Officer and Social Worker following the restructure that had taken place in Children's Social Care. Officers present agreed that communication with young people was vital to ensure a smooth transition.

The provisions for care leavers was also discussed and officers agreed to investigate if the free bus pass that was currently offered to post 18 year olds, who were still in education, could be extended to include those care leavers who were actively seeking employment.

- Resolved: (i) That the Annual Report be noted.
(ii) That the provision of a free bus pass to care leavers who were actively seeking employment be investigated.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the work of SMTIM.

12. Annual Advocacy Report 2015-16

The Board considered a report that provided the Annual Advocacy Report for 2015/16.

Officers gave an update and confirmed that the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service, known as Speak Up, promoted children's rights entitlements and provided advocacy for children and young people who were in care, on a child protection plan or wanting to make a complaint against the council, in line with the Local Authority's statutory duties.

The advocacy statistics were highlighted and discussions took place around the type of referrals made, the length of time cases remained open and the emerging themes.

The Board also discussed the age and legal status of those children and young people who had accessed advocacy and they welcomed the recent effort to ensure that this service was not only available to children and young people placed locally but also those placed outside the city.

Resolved: That the Annual Advocacy Report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the work of Speak Up.

13. Care Leavers Bill - Keep on Caring

Board Members received a verbal update from the Practice Manager of the City of York Pathway Team. He highlighted the services available for care leavers and introduced the Government's new care leavers strategy 'Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence'.

He then explained how the new strategy would support the life chances of care leavers and how it would prepare and support young people making the transition to adulthood by:

- Promoting ambition for care leavers.
- Preparing care leavers for the challenges of living independently.
- Providing stable and safe placements.
- Providing good access to health, emotional health and wellbeing services.
- Providing support to achieve financial stability.

Members welcomed *aspects of* the Government's new strategy and agreed young people in care should be better prepared and supported to live independently [*as amended at the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board on 21 November 2016*]. They discussed the feedback received from care leavers including their finances. They welcomed the extension of support to 25 years and agreed that officers should continue to measure the outcomes for each care leaver.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the implementation of the Government's care leavers strategy.

14. Making York Home - Update

The Assistant Director for Children's Specialist Services gave a brief verbal update on the City of York's Making York Home Project.

He confirmed that as a result of consultation with Foster Carers as part of the Project, officers had built a more robust support network. The positive outcome of which was that the number of children in care being placed outside the city had reduced.

He went on to explain the reasons why some children would always be placed out of York if in their best interests but assured Members that, where appropriate, officers continued to seek to find suitable placements locally.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the work of Making York Home.

15. Virtual School Update - GCSE and A Level results for children in care

The Board received a verbal update from the Virtual School in relation to GCSE and A-Level results for children in care. The Assistant Director for Education and Skills highlighted the successful KS4 results and confirmed that the majority of those children were continuing their education through apprenticeships, college or Sixth Form.

The Board welcomed the KS4 results and were encouraged to note that although Post 16 results were not currently available they had also achieved positive outcomes.

Officers confirmed a new National Benchmarking Data system would allow them to measure results against other Virtual Schools and generate a more robust comparison through Value Added Data. Members were keen to receive these reports at a future Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

Discussions also took place regarding pupil premiums and Members agreed schools should be encouraged to use this funding to support the particular child.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the Virtual School.

16. Annual Report from Independent Reviewing Officers

The Board considered a report that summarised the work of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) over the preceding twelve month period.

Officers gave an update and highlighted the key elements in sections 8, 9 and 10 of Annex A, in particular, dispute resolutions and escalations, the seven service priorities and the service work plan for 2016/17.

Members noted that the appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer for a child or young person in care was a legal requirement and discussions took place regarding their specific responsibilities, which included:

- Promoting the voice of a child.
- Ensuring that plans for looked after children were based on a detailed and informed assessment.
- Making sure a child understood how an advocate could help.
- Offering a safeguard to prevent any 'drift' in care planning for looked after children and the delivery of services to them.
- Monitoring the activity of the local authority as a corporate parent in ensuring that care plans were given proper consideration and weight to the child's wishes and feelings and that where appropriate the child fully understood.

Members discussed and commented upon the annual report, including the IRO caseloads and welcomed officers dedication to ensure every child received the care they deserved.

The Board agreed that the IRO should continue to encourage younger children and young adults to engage with Show Me

That I Matter or one of the sub groups to ensure the voice of a child continues to be heard.

Resolved:

- (i) That the positive performance referred to within the Annual Report, particularly evidence that the Unit had directly contributed to improving outcomes for children and young people in care, be noted.
- (ii) That the Unit's commitment to better deliver its statutory responsibilities to children and young people in care and their parents or carers, in particular increased consultation, participation and challenge be noted.
- (iii) That the IRO Annual Report be used as an assurance document to raise outcomes for the children and young people in care.

Reason: To meet the statutory requirement to keep the Board updated.

17. Inspection Briefing

Members considered a report that detailed the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework and its implications for the Corporate Parenting Board.

Officers gave an update and confirmed which children and young people were within the scope of inspection and the inspection methodology which included:

- at least two children placed out of authority.
- at least one child who had a plan for adoption.
- at least one child who lived with a foster family provided by the local authority.
- one child who had recently returned home in the last three to six weeks.
- one child for whom the plan was to return home.
- two children living in children's homes who were known to have run away.

The Board noted the inspection process and that the overall effectiveness of services including the arrangements for children looked after, care leavers and children who need help and protection would be judged in addition to leadership, management and governance.

The Board discussed and commented upon the framework and in answer to Member's questions officers confirmed that the inspection would take place sometime before December 2017.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that Members were kept updated on the framework for inspection.

18. Corporate Parenting Board Workplan 2016-17

Members considered the Boards work plan for the 2016/17 municipal year.

The Board agreed to continue with the strategic themed work areas.

Resolved: That the work plan be agreed.

Reason: To keep the Board's work plan updated.

Cllr Rawlings, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.13 pm and finished at 7.13 pm].