

Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date	21 November 2016
Present	Councillors Rawlings (Chair), Cuthbertson (Vice-Chair), S Barnes, Brooks and Gunnell
Apologies	Councillor Runciman

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## 19. 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.

Councillor S Barnes declared a personal interest as a result of the involvement of a close family friend in the adoption process at Scarborough.

## 20. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 26 September 2016 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record with the following amendment in point 13 Care Leavers Bill:

- Members welcomed *aspects of* the Government's new strategy and agreed young people in care should be better prepared and supported to live independently.

The Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services took this opportunity to update the Board that from the 14 November 2016 Children's Services had become subject to the Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

The Board noted it was a four week inspection that would run from Tuesday 15 November until Thursday 8 December 2016 and the inspection team would be on site to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the contact, referral and assessment arrangements including the experiences of children who have recently become looked after.

- track and sample cases and
- meet with staff and service users.

The Board noted the inspection taking place and wished the Director and his staff every success.

## **21. Public Participation**

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

## **22. Good, Safe Placements: Context Setting Data**

The Board considered a report that gave them an overview of the placements of children and young people in care of the City of York.

The Group Manager for Quality Assurance confirmed that 192 children and young people were currently in care and he provided a data overview relevant to those placements, including:

- the gender, ethnicity and age of children and young people in care.
- the type and stability of placements including the length of time children and young people can spend in care.
- the legal status of children and young people in care.

The Board discussed and commented upon the dataset and the type of placements that were available. They noted that more males were currently in care, the majority of children and young people in care were aged between 10-15 years and the time spent in care was commonly over 4 years. This led to further discussions around rehabilitation plans for a child to be placed back with their parents and whether national changes to legal aid had affected legal support for parents. Members were advised that parents impacted by public law care proceedings were provided with legal aid.

In answer to Members questions officers agreed to provide national and regional comparators to placement stability of children and young people in care.<sup>1</sup>

The Chair thanked officers for their update and he highlighted the slow increase to the accommodation s20 legal status and welcomed an update at a future Board meeting.

- Resolved: (i) That the report be noted and discussed.  
(ii) That the national and regional comparators to placement stability of children and young people in care be circulated.

Reason: In order that Members are kept informed on data relevant to placements.

Action Required

<1> Provide national and regional comparators to placement stability of children and young people in care. <1> NF

### **23. Making York Home - Project Update**

The Board considered a report that gave them a comprehensive update on the Making York Home Project.

The Service Manager for Placement Finding, Support and Commissioning welcomed an experienced foster carer to the meeting. Together they gave an update and explained the vision and the approach used to develop the project which looked at the emotional, practical and professional support that foster carers needed in order to provide safe, caring and stable homes in York to all children and young people in care.

The Service Manager confirmed she had worked with various representatives and organisations to explore ways to build a more robust support network that would better serve the most vulnerable children and develop foster carers. She explained the collaboration had pooled resources to develop four key stages which included a rapid approach known as a sprint. It was noted that each sprint allowed up to 10 professionals to meet twice a week for one month to discuss and explore a particular issue or theme. The sessions broadly followed a defined framework and focused on 3 key themes:

- Placement Planning
- Placement Support
- Learning and Development

Members discussed and commented on the key themes and they appreciated this was a long term project that would require constant reviewing. Officers confirmed they would continue to

progress and develop the project to ensure, where appropriate, children and young people in care were placed in suitable placements locally and not outside the City.

The Board were very appreciative of the report and thanked all involved and following further discussions around placements, statutory responsibilities and aspirations it was confirmed that:

- placements outside of York had reduced.
- each foster carer would progress at their own pace and would receive their own individual development plan.
- a child placed out of the area, if appropriate and when possible, would be brought back to York.
- where appropriate the birth parents could be involved in their child's placement allowing a closer relationship with the foster carer.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: In order that Members are kept informed on the Making York Home Project.

#### **24. Response to the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

The Board considered a verbal update from officers on the Council's response to the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

The Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services explained how unaccompanied asylum seeking children arrived in the UK and how the National Transfer Protocol for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children had been created to ensure a fairer and safe allocation across all local authorities throughout the UK.

He confirmed York was collaborating with the other 15 Local Authorities within the Yorkshire and Humber Region to create a strategic partnership that allowed them to group resources and work collectively when managing any unaccompanied children.

This collaboration would pool expertise to ensure the best interest of the child was always a primary consideration and that the appropriate assessments could take place to ensure any

health or immediate support needs were appropriately managed.

Members discussed and commented on the arrangements and thanked officers for their update and congratulated them on the progress made. They agreed the Assessment Centre approach would contribute to and ensure a good understanding of each child's needs to allow a safe and secure way forward.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the Council's response to the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

## **25. Findings of the Ofsted Report following a Children's Home Inspection**

Members considered the report by Ofsted in relation to a recent children's home inspection.

The Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities was pleased to announce that the provision at The Glen had been rated good by Ofsted in all areas and the summary of findings that reflected the strengths of this provision were discussed.

He went on to commend the staff for their outstanding work and gave special recognition to the Registered Manager who had constantly delivered exceptional results and was always committed to improving lives of vulnerable children and young people.

The Board congratulated all staff and requested officers pass on their gratitude and best wishes to the Registered Manager who was due to retire. They agreed the commitment and support staff showed to the children and young people, including their parents and carers, was outstanding and in answer to some Members questions it was noted that an action plan was already in place to work on Ofsted's recommendations to improve the service.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the findings of the Ofsted inspection.

## **26. Children's Social Care Restructure Update**

The Board received a verbal update on the progress of the recent Children's Social Care restructure in relation to its impact upon the strategic theme.

Officers confirmed the restructure had established various positions that had been filled, including a new Group Manager post for Achieving Permanence, which would make a significant contribution to good, safe placements.

The Board noted that the restructure had led to some current vacancies. Officers explained that this was due to some staff being promoted to more senior positions created by the restructure and that the vacant Social Worker posts were actively being recruited to. In answer to Members questions it was confirmed that Children's Social Care had a low turnover of staff and a positive response to recruitment

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the restructure.

## **27. Members Visits to Children's Homes**

The Board received a verbal update regarding Members visits to the two children's homes, The Glen and Wenlock Terrace. It was noted that the homes should be visited at least two times per year by the relevant Members.

Resolved: (i) That officers circulate to Board Members a list of their individual responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>  
(ii) That officers arrange for the relevant Board Members to visit The Glen or Wenlock Terrace.<sup>1</sup>

Reason: In order to strengthen corporate parenting arrangements in the city.

### Action Required

<1> Inform the Board of their individual responsibilities and arrange visits to the Children's Homes <1> JS

## **28. Corporate Parenting Board Work Plan 2016-17**

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

The Board discussed the role of a corporate parent and how they could engage all Councillors. A previous suggestion of presenting at a Full Council meeting, where all Members would be required to sign a copy of York's Guarantee to children and young people in care, was raised.<sup>1</sup>

The strategic themes were considered and it was agreed to swap Education and Health on the workplan.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills investigate ways to engage all Members with an option to present at Full Council where all Members would be asked to sign a copy of York's Guarantee.
- (ii) That the strategic theme Health be considered at the 13 February Corporate Parenting Board meeting.
- (iii) That the strategic theme Education be considered at the 10 April 2017 Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

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

### Action Required

<1> Investigate ways to engage all Members at Full Council or training <1> JS

Cllr Rawlings, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00pm and finished at 7.00pm].

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