

Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date	22 November 2018
Present	Councillors K Myers (Chair), Cuthbertson (Vice-Chair), Brooks, Crawshaw, Funnell, Rawlings and Runciman

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## **16. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Crawshaw declared a personal non prejudicial interest as his partner worked as a clinical psychologist for TEWV NHS Foundation Trust and North Yorkshire County Council and her role had recently changed so that she now worked with care leavers.

## **17. Minutes**

Resolved:

- (i) That the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 September 2018 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.
- (ii) That it be noted that minute number 9 (Minutes of 5 June 2018 Meeting) which stated that Councillor Rawlings had been appointed as Vice Chair of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year was correct but that the minutes header listing Cllr Cuthbertson as Vice Chair was incorrect.

## **18. Public Participation**

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

## **19. Update on Regional Adoption Agency**

Members considered a report and verbal update from the Head of Agency One Adoption North and Humber, which had provided adoption services to the City of York since February 2018. The Agency comprises the adoption agencies of five local authorities including City of York (the host) and is responsible for the recruitment of adopters, family finding for children needing an adoptive family and the provision of post adoption support for adopted children across the region.

The Head of Agency One Adoption North and Humber explained that the agency operated the hub and spoke model with York as the hub and confirmed that York had not experienced any dip in performance since joining the regional agency, which was due to the benefits of the model itself and good management. She advised that while there was a good sufficiency of adopters in York, adopters were still needed for sibling groups and harder to place children.

She responded to particular queries from Members in relation to the following issues:

- Timelines around matching of approved adopters to children
- Access to greater pool of adopters for sibling groups and harder to place children
- Use of Early Permanence Arrangements (EPA)
- Contact with birth families and support for birth parents
- Current situation in York with regard to numbers waiting for adoption

The Head of Agency One Adoption North and Humber acknowledged that the report was brief and explained that this was due to her being new to the post, only having started on 8<sup>th</sup> November and this report having been submitted for agenda publication on 12 November. She agreed to provide a written record of her verbal update to the committee following the meeting and it was agreed that a performance report would be provided to a future meeting.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report and verbal update on the Regional Adoption Agency be noted.
- (ii) That a written record of the verbal update be provided to Members of the Board.
- (iii) That a further report and performance figures be presented to a future meeting.

Reason: In order that Members are informed on changes affecting adoption services in York.

## **20. Children in Care Strategic Partnership Strategic Plan: Health Section Update**

Members considered a report which provided an update regarding progress against the health section of the Children in Care Multiagency Strategic Plan. The Designated Nurse for Safeguarding and Children in Care explained what work had taken place in relation to some of the areas listed in the health section and responded to questions raised by members.

In relation to the section on '*Introduction of health passports to all children and young people in care*', she advised that Show Me That I Matter Panel members had expressed a preference for a paper document over an online record, but one which could work in conjunction with an app. The Foster Carers Group had also be consulted for their views as foster carers met regularly to discuss any concerns about meeting children's health needs. Members expressed their support for the passports (an example of which was passed around the room) and they raised a couple of points about the wording used in the passports which were noted by officers.

In relation to the section on '*Ensuring all children in care are offered a timely and high quality health assessment*' she acknowledged the significant challenges in undertaking initial health assessments and review health assessments. Delays

were due to a number of factors, including the introduction of the new Mosaic system. Although some business support was provided, unlike in some other authorities this was not available for administering the initial health assessments process which was complex and time consuming and a challenge for social workers due to their workload.

Although it was acknowledged that the delays were not as severe as a year previously, officers accepted that they were still not good enough and advised that this was being dealt with as key priority. The decision to start the process of obtaining enduring consent had helped speed up the process. Some quarter 3 data was now available which showed improvements and continued improvements were expected. Work was also being undertaken with foster carers to ensure they noted the importance and timeliness of health assessments.

Officers agreed to include data for the previous 3 quarters as well as the most recent quarter in a future report to allow Members to examine progress in this area.

Members acknowledged that while a centralised business support unit could operate efficiently across some work areas, there was concern in other areas, such as children and young people, as to whether it should be considered best use of resources and issues of confidentiality and the processing of sensitive personal data also needed to be considered. Officers advised that this was being reviewed and noted Members concerns.

In relation to the section '*Children in care should be permanently registered with a GP practice*', the Designated Nurse advised that training had been undertaken with colleagues in primary care and children in care had been discussed as a hot topic. Through liaising with the lead GP for safeguarding in each practice, children in care would be offered the option of seeing the same GP on each visit rather than several different GPs if this was what the child preferred.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.

- (ii) That quarter 3 and 4 data on timeliness of health assessments be provided to members at a future meeting in a format which would allow them to make comparisons with previous quarters' data.

Reason: In order that Members are updated on progress against the health section of the Children in Care Multiagency Strategic Plan.

## **21. Care Leaver Offer Update**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the Local Offer to City of York Council care leavers, a paper copy of which was appended to the report. The Council's Group Manager – Achieving Permanence and Commissioning was joined at the table by a representative of York's Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) Panel, who was a care leaver, and who had been involved in the preparation of the document.

They explained how, through a process of review and consultation, the council had enhanced its offer to care leavers aged 21 to 25 to ensure that care leavers were supported to be happy and healthy, safe and protected and enabled to transition to independent adult life. This enhanced offer included offering local bus passes to all care leavers up to the age of 21 which, it was noted, was a significant offer which would help promote access to education, work and assist with social interaction and safety. The SMTIM Panel member explained that care leavers had been able to gain work experience through the process and that they had met with the website designer who was working on a draft of how the offer would look online.

Discussion took place around some of the terminology used in the report and members expressed concern about it looking too much like a corporate/legal document. It was acknowledged that some statutory terminology had to be used, but Members asked that consideration be given to possibly softening some of the wording, and adding an explanation of some wording. They made the following suggestions:

- Insert the word “Statutory” in title - Explanation of STATUTORY Care Leaver Status Terms.
- Add “or” between bullet points where this was needed to aid understanding, and check punctuation.
- Improve layout on pages 30 and 31 to make it easier to read
- Add in information about the community Dental Service provided by Harrogate District Foundation Trust.
- Suggest test readability of offer on someone who has not yet left care to ensure it is clear to them.
- Ensure full addresses are used in the Key Contact Section in order that users don’t have to request this.

Officers advised that they were now focusing on 21-25 year care leavers who they hadn’t been working with previously and they had proactively contacted them to explain to them about the offer.

Officers advised that the new Director of Children, Education and Communities due to start in the new year had seen a copy of the local offer and was very happy with it, and although guidance stated that the offer should be reviewed within 2-3 years, she had expressed a desire to review it in 12 months time.

Resolved: (i) That the report and information contained in the Local Offer be noted and that Members suggestions be taken into account in finalising the offer.

(ii) That an update on the Care Leaver Offer be provided to the Board in around 12 months time.

Reason: In order that Members are kept updated on the council’s offer to Care Leavers.

## **22. Work Plan**

Members considered the workplan for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year.

It was agreed that the workplan be updated to include:

- At the February 2019 meeting, a further report and performance figures in relation to the work of the Regional Adoption Agency.
- A report on the timeliness of health assessments be provided to members at a future meeting, to include quarter 3 and 4 data in a format which will allow them to make comparisons with previous quarters' data.
- In approximately 12 months time, to receive a further report in relation to York's Local Offer for Care Leavers.

Resolved: That subject to the above additions, the workplan be approved.

Reason: To keep the Board's workplan updated.

Councillor K Myers, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].

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