

Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date	3 September 2019
Present	Councillors Fitzpatrick, Cuthbertson, Heaton, Hunter, Musson, Runciman and D Taylor
Apologies	Councillor Rowley

9. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting Members were invited 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.

10. Minutes

The Chair advised that the glossary of terms would be issues to all Members of the Board.

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 4 June 2019 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11. Public Participation

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

12. Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum Annual Report

Members considered a report that detailed the issues identified by the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum, how these issues were being addressed and what issues were still to be taken forward. The report also detailed professionals and partner agencies that met with the Children in Care Council and

Care Leavers Forum, the outcomes of these discussions and different projects that the groups were involved in.

Officers provided an overview of the report and in answer to questions noted that:

- The joint meetings of Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) and I Still Matter (ISM) monthly meetings were very focussed and useful.
- Examples of how the Review Toolkit was used were given and it was hoped that this would be extended for use by social work teams.
- Priorities for the coming year included the expansion of foster carer recruitment and their training. A digital approach would be used for recruitment.
- It was agreed that young people would be invited to future meetings.

The Chair thanked officers for their update.

Resolved: That the work of the Children in Care Council be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated.

13. Annual Advocacy Report 2018-19

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report that highlighted the 2018-19 Annual Advocacy report and provided a review of the statistics on the demographic of young people who had requested advocacy, detailed advocacy requests / common themes and reviewed the outcomes of the service. The Local Area Team Project Officer outlined the report and gave an update on the appointment of Childrens Champions.

In response to questions from Members officers explained:

- How the reasons for referrals were categorised, including primary and secondary issues.
- How the Report of the Office of the Childrens Commissioner was utilised. This included a piece of work on where professionals were signposted to.
- That it was not uncommon for young people to raise further issues after raising an initial issue.
- The timescales for contact before going to a placement would vary on the circumstances i.e. for planned moves or emergency placements.

- The council complaints team decided what constituted a complaint in accordance with statutory guidance. An explanation of how complaints were dealt with was given.
- When complaints were not resolved, the reason for this was communicated to young people and a large part of the advocacy work was helping children to understand why a decision had been made.
- With reference to a complaint concerning one person having 13 different social workers over 12 months, this was related to staff turnover. Members were assured that there would not be any full time agency social workers in post by Christmas and it was noted that the improvement data dashboard had been changed to show the number of changes of social workers.
- There were three advocacy and participation workers visiting secondary schools.
- An update on the recruitment of social workers was given.
- Details of the measures put in place following the focussed inspection visit were outlined.

Officers were thanked for their update and it was agreed that Annexes A and B of the report would be circulated to the Board.

Resolved: That the advocacy casework that was carried out with children and young people be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated.

14. U Matter Survey 2019

Members considered a report that highlighted the U Matter Survey 2019 and detailed the consultation findings from children and young people looked after by the City of York Council. Officers explained the results of the survey and noted that not all questions were answered by young people. An explanation of pathway plans and personal education plans was given and it was highlighted that a number of care leavers that took part in the pathway plans did not see the value of it.

Following an overview of the report, Officers confirmed that:

- The team had been proactive in engaging with harder to engage young people.
- There had not been many referrals focussed around advocacy being used around personal education plans (PEPs).

- At each meeting of the Virtual School Senior Leadership Team, discussion took place regarding out of area young people.
- PEPs included Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which were reviewed every two weeks.

The Chair thanked officers for their update

Resolved: That the 2019 U Matter findings be noted.

Reason: To keep the Board updated.

15. Summary of the Key issues identified in 2018-19 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report

Members noted that Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) had a statutory responsibility to report to senior managers and the Corporate Parenting Board regarding the performance of the local authority with regards their statutory requirements as corporate parent to the Children and Young People in the Care (CYPIC) of the local authority. This report covered the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

The Service Manager was in attendance to present the report and in outlining the report she noted that the number of IRO case studies was high. She explained the cohort of looked after children noting the impacts of placement sufficiency and social worker retention on children. She added that because of the high turnover of staff, qualitative contact with hard to reach children had been difficult for staff. She noted that since the report had been published in April 2019, the resolution process had been relaunched. Clarification was given on the remit and statutory requirements of the IROs.

In response to questions from the Board, Officers confirmed that:

- A peer review had been commissioned.
- The Improvement Board looked at the entirety of the offer for children in care and the Board could request an update from the Improvement Board.
- The benchmarks for national and regional data had not yet been published. It was noted that the benchmarks for comparative data were useful.
- The impact of staff retention on children and young people was being looked at.

- There was more stability around the social work teams and the situations that led to social workers leaving was being addressed.
- An update on kinship carers was given.

The Chair thanked officers for their update.

Resolved:

- i. 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
- ii. That the annual reporting requirement of the Unit to inform the ongoing work of the Corporate Parenting Board in raising outcomes for the children and young people in the care of the City of York Council, be used.

Reason: To keep the Board updated on the IRO service.

16. Work Plan

Members considered the Boards work plan for the 2019-20 municipal year and the continuation of strategic themes.

Members agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair and Corporate Director Children, Education and Communities would meet to discuss the work plan.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved.

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

Cllr I Cuthbertson, Chair

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

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