
Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date	7 May 2014
Present	Councillors Looker (Chair), Runciman (Vice-Chair), Cuthbertson, Funnell, Scott and Wiseman
Apologies	Councillors Brooks and Potter

25. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have had in relation to the business on the agenda or other general interests they might have had within the remit of the Board. No interests were declared.

26. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 5 March 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

27. **Public Participation**

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

28. **Show Me That I Matter Annual Report and U Matter Survey Findings**

Members considered a report relating to feedback from York's looked after children and young people, the Show Me That I Matter Annual Report and the U Matter survey.

Show Me That I Matter (SMTIM) Annual Report

Officers presented the report to the Board and commented that;

- A lot of children and young people did not know who to talk to at the Council.
- That the move to West Offices had been positive and the SMTIM panel had a Chair and Vice Chair on a more stable basis.
- It was hoped that an update to the SMTIM website would be complete by and relaunched in June.

Members asked the following questions in relation to the report;

- That the membership of the SMTIM panel comprised of ten members and two Councillors. How were the panel selected and how were people able to join?
- How was the agenda set for each meeting?
- Was there any communication between the Schools Councils and SMTIM, did their objectives overlap?

In response to the questions it was reported that;

- Officers were unsure if there was a cap of numbers on the SMTIM panel but any prospective members were encouraged to get in touch with the Council's Children's Rights Officer.
- Generally the agenda was set by young people, who would ask questions to Officers and if they had not received answers these would then go on as items for the agenda for the next meeting of the panel.

Some Members spoke about how they wished to see how Looked After Children were active in all organisations which involved Children and Young People's voices. They questioned why professional language continued to be used around these organisations and why language which was more likely to be understood more clearly by young people could not be used.

They hoped that the Annual Report was sent out to all Members so that they had the chance to see at least the front page.

U Matter Survey

Members commented on the figures presented in the survey. Comments included;

- In the opinion of Officers, how representative were the responses?

- That they wanted to see the actual figures rather than percentages to see how representative the survey group was.
- That they were worried about the high turnover of social workers and what this would mean for the continuity of support for children and young people in the city.

In response, it was stated that the results of the survey were compared with the overall population of children and young people in York. Members were also informed that social worker recruitment had been examined, as there had been a significant turnover during 2013 but the vacancy rate in the city was now low. However, it was pointed out that the city was always vulnerable to social workers moving to jobs elsewhere.

A representative from the SMTIM panel was in attendance at the meeting and he told Members that lots of young people did not like filling out surveys. The Chair added that this could be because young people questioned why they should be involved.

Officers hoped that the “Speak Up” engagement event in June would help to overcome this issue.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: The views, wishes and feelings of looked after children and young people are central to the strategic planning for current and future services for this group of young people.

29. Verbal Update Regarding Inspections Arrangements for Children's Services

Members received a verbal update regarding the preparations being undertaken for the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in York.

It was noted that the inspection regime had changed from previous arrangements such as the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection for which York was graded 'good'. The previous Inspection had previously been focus group and case file audit centred, with the Local Authority given notification to enable some preparation. The inspection was also shorter.

The new inspection framework, the Single Inspection Framework, would last for four weeks and there would be no notice period to enable preparation. The Inspection would look at Child in Need, Children in Need of Protection, Looked After Children, Leaving Care and Adoption Services. The framework did incorporate some inspection of the Early Help offer but this was not its main focus.

As has been widely reported in the media, the previous category of 'adequate' had now been replaced with 'requires improvement'.

Members were told about the various stages of the process these were;

1. That the Local Authority would receive a call from the Lead Ofsted Inspector at approximately 0930 on the Tuesday morning of Week One. The Inspectors would arrive later the same day.
2. That the inspectors would initially focus on the Referral and Assessment Team (the Front Door arrangements). For contacts, referrals and assessments. The inspectors were very interested in front-line practice and would accompany social workers on their visits.
3. Within Week One a dataset would need to be produced (known as Annex A) to reflect the range of children and young people at different stages of the child's journey through the safeguarding processes within York.
4. This data set would form key lines of enquiry for Ofsted inspectors in Week Three of the inspection.
5. In Week Two the Inspectors were 'off site' but would request that 18 cases selected by them be audited by Officers. The audits would evidence whether Officers knew the strengths and deficits of the Service.
6. Week Three is the fieldwork week when Inspectors are on site. Other Local Authorities note this to be an intense process with excess of 100 cases reviewed. Inspectors may well visit Looked After Children in foster care, sit in on Fostering Panel, attend Child Protection conferences in York and observe direct Social Work with service users.

7. Week Four allows for two days evidence gathering and then, on the Wednesday, initial feedback. The formal Report is moderated and published approximately six weeks later.

It was pointed out that there would be more scrutiny of the outcomes of the processes for children and young people rather than processes, and that the stated aim of the inspection would be to look at whether Children's Services were making a difference to children and young people and their families in York.

It was not clear as to when York would receive its Ofsted Inspection. A list of possible 'Tuesdays' had been circulated by Ofsted.

Further discussion took place regarding areas that the Ofsted inspectors might look at during their visit.

It was suggested that in their focus on Looked After Children the inspectors might look at education outcomes. Therefore it was suggested that a session for Members of the Corporate Parenting Board be arranged with the city's Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children, Tricia Head and Maxine Squire, the Interim Director for Education and Skills.

Officers gave Members a selection of comments and questions that might arise during an Ofsted inspection and were the subject of preparation work. These were;

- (1) What makes York's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Local Safeguarding Children Board anything other than inadequate?
- (2) What has happened in York since the last SLAC Inspection?
- (3) Are services in York self-aware – are there inconsistencies of understanding between professionals and/or between partner agencies about the Services being delivered and outcomes being achieved?

- (4) Are caseloads simply too high to provide a safe and effective service?
- (5) Is Quality Assurance systemic – is it part of the day-to-day business involving everyone at every level?
- (6) Do York know what ‘good’ looks like?
- (7) What is happening at the 'threshold points'? ie. such as a decision to escalate from CAF to Contact, Contact to Referral, Referral to Strategy Discussion, Decision to convene Conference, Decision to List, Decision to accommodate, Decision to enter into care proceedings.
- (8) What is the culture in York? Is there effective organisational support? Is there a clear and coherent narrative about the support being provided?
- (9) Does the Local Safeguarding Children Board hold partners to account? Are there clear and understood governance arrangements (do partners know who reports to who and who should know what?)
- (10) Are lessons learnt in York (from national and local Serious Case Reviews)?

The Chair felt that it was useful for the Board to have a ‘watching brief’ over inspection arrangements.

She asked how young people would be involved with the inspection. It was anticipated that inspectors would attend meetings with young people and also query how the child’s ‘voice’ was established and informed services.

Resolved: (i) That the update be noted.

- (ii) That a briefing session be arranged for Members with Tricia Head and Maxine Squire, ahead of an inspection.

Reason: So that Members are kept informed of the arrangements for the inspection.

30. Draft Work Plan for 2014-15

Consideration was given to the Board's draft work plan for the 2014-15 municipal year.

It was suggested that if Officers that an inspection for Looked After Children was imminent that the Board receive a briefing note from Tricia Head, the Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children and Maxine Squire, the Interim Director for Education and Skills. Other Members suggested that in advance of an inspection that the Board could review its effectiveness as a body.

Resolved: (i) That the work plan be approved.

(ii) That Members receive a briefing note if notified of an upcoming Ofsted inspection.

Reason: To ensure that the Board has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor Looker , Chair

[The meeting started at 5.40 pm and finished at 7.05 pm].