



Corporate Parenting Board

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ on Tuesday, 11 December
2018.

Present:

Deborah Croney (Chairman)
Pauline Batstone, Richard Biggs, Susan Jefferies and David Shortell

Officers:

Thomas Fowler (Project Manager - Design & Development), Madeleine Hall (Safeguarding Officer, Corporate Parenting), Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher (Service Manager Care & Support), Nick Jarman (Corporate Director for Children's Services), Elaine Okopski (Dorset Parent Carer Council), Kevin Peers (Assistant Director, Children's Care and Protection), Kevin Stenlake (IRO Manager for Looked After Children), David Webb (Service Manager - Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service), Tim Wells (Senior Manager Placements & Resources) and Liz Eaton (Democratic Services Officer), .

Also in attendance:

Jayne Brooks (Permanence Co-ordinator/Agency Adviser Aspire), Antonia Dixey (CEO Participation People) and Ann Haigh (Participation Worker, Participation People).

(Notes: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board to be held on **Tuesday, 19 February 2019.**)

Apologies for Absence

77 No apologies for absence were received.

Code of Conduct

78 There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

79 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2018 were confirmed and signed.

Matters Arising

80 Minute 64 – Minute 60 Any Other Business

The Chairman informed the Board that she would be meeting with the Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships, the Safeguarding Officer, Corporate Parenting and the Project Manager, Commissioning and Partnerships regarding the Score Card.

The Project Manager, Commissioning and Partnerships informed the Board that as part of the Service Improvement Plan they were looking at how to ensure services were in a good state of health by measuring performance. A whole range of performance measures would be included and it was hoped to have a centralised transparent list of measures placed on Sharepoint and that some of the measure would be available for the Board to see at its next meeting on 19 February 2019.

One member asked whether it was the intention to report back to each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board. The Project Manager explained how the measures would be reported and that the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Board would be informed of developments.

The Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) representative asked how officers would ensure information was adapted and how accessible it would be for young people.

The Project Manager would liaise with the Chairman of the Board. The Chairman informed the Board that the Children in Care Council would have full input into the Score Card.

Minute 69 – Children’s Social Care Auditing Programme

The Chairman asked whether the monthly newsletter had been published. Officers informed the Board that quarterly reports were very close to being cascaded.

Minute 71 – Children in Care Council

The Chairman asked whether the Activity Day on 5 January 2019 was still going ahead. The Chief Executive of Participation People confirmed that it was and that everyone was welcome.

Preparation for Ofsted

81 The Corporate Director for Children’s Services informed the Board that all Councils were periodically inspected by Ofsted and those inspections were graded from Outstanding to Inadequate. A great deal of work had been carried out to improve performance for all children by the introduction of a Service Improvement Plan and meetings of the Service Improvement Board (SIB). The SIB oversaw the progress of the Service Improvement Plan and Children’s Services had recently started working with Essex County Council sharing expertise and knowledge. To date performance had improved considerably, for example in the timeliness of assessments. Over 90% of young people had a care plan and nearly all were of a good quality. The next challenge would be to ensure the quality of what was produced and the services commissioned made a positive difference to children and young people. The immediate priority was dealing with drift or delay, Children’s Services had made progress but there was still a lot to be achieved with help from Essex County Council and members, this was a very focussed programme.

The Director would give the Board a further update at the next meeting on 19 February 2019. He suggested the title of this item should be Service Improvement and not Preparation for Ofsted.

The Chairman mentioned there were a number of items on the agenda that fed into service improvement, ie health care assessments, fostering and regulation health care.

Resolved

1. That in future this agenda item should be called Service Improvement and not Preparation for Ofsted.
2. That the Director provide the Board with an update at its next meeting on 19 February 2019.

Looked After Children Health Briefing Update

82 The Corporate Parenting Board received a Health Briefing report on the Escalation of Performance of Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) Quarter 4 by the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children (LAC).

Dr Rachel Lachlan, Designated Doctor for LAC informed the Board the target for completing IHAs was 95%. Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 had delays as a result of social workers and foster carers not being able to attend appointments. Quarter 3 was better and October 2018 dipped again after having slightly improved in September 2018.

One member was concerned at the distance carers had to travel with young people for their appointments. The Designated Doctor informed the Board this was not normally the reason given for the Dorchester appointments, which were fairly full. If a specialist paediatric service was required then they may have to travel some distance, she exemplified Hampshire County Council's young people who had to travel to Basingstoke for IHAs.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services thought the performance had fluctuated due to the Service Improvement Plan, he confirmed that officers must take responsibility for the notification and obtaining of consents. It needed to be made very clear that these appointments were important but felt the 95% target was steep and notifications of consent were for people to agree to attend.

The Chairman asked whether there was anything that could be achieved collectively to improve the level of attendance bearing in mind the systems and service being offered at the present time, for example to ensure foster carers were fully aware of the importance of IHAs. The Designated Doctor confirmed that the foster caring team were notified of all appointments to enable them to contact foster carers in advance. There were sometimes problems with family and friends who had not realised there was a problem with the young person(s) and that they needed to attend an appointment. The Senior Manager Placements and Resources confirmed that there was still an issue with family and friends and connected persons, however, they all signed the same foster carer agreement and this was part of the role of the foster carer.

One young person from the Children in Care Council mentioned that some young people could not attend due to mock GCSEs. The Designated Doctor agreed that several appointments had been cancelled due to mock exams taking place on the same day and time.

The Chairman asked if there was any way of avoiding making appointments for young people who had Mocks and scheduling their appointments outside of the exam time. The Corporate Director was not sure how many LAC were in year 11 but was confident officers would be able to profile the young people who were in year 11 and ensure the appointments did not conflict with GCSEs.

The IRO Manager for LAC informed the Board that the information came to him on a weekly basis and although 95% was a steep target he would try not to let it slip again.

One member asked how Dorset compared when benchmarked against other authorities. The Corporate Director undertook to look into this further.

Resolved

1. That officers ensured all LAC in year 11 did not have health appointments the same date and time as mock GCSE's.
2. That the Corporate Director for Children's Services to look at benchmarking with other authorities and report back to the next meeting of the Board on 19 February 2019.

Initial Health Assessments Performance Update

83 This report was considered with the Looked After Children Health Briefing Update at

minute 82.

Noted

Children in Care Council

84 The Participation Worker, Participation People introduced the Children in Care Council (CICC) representatives who had made a short film covering the challenges and responses the Board had made to CICC.

The CICC informed the Board they would provide further challenges for 2019. The Christmas cards had recently been sold and they had made a list of the few things they enjoyed which included the new magazine.

One member circulated the Care Space Pack and all Board members confirmed they had seen it. The IRO Manager for LAC confirmed they were currently being distributed. The Chief Executive, Participation People mentioned 1000 packs had been printed and distributed and had asked questions in the user satisfaction card as to who had received the packs and 16 out of 37 people had received the packs, there was still a gap and Participation People would assist in distributing packs if necessary.

The Chairman asked the Assistant Director Children's Care and Protection if there was another way of auditing the distribution of the packs and who would be funding the next production run. The Assistant Director Children's Care and Protection confirmed there was a system on the computer but also mentioned the card approach was better as it could be replaced when information became out of date.

The Chairman discussed the youth magazine and confirmed to the CICC that the Board would keep in touch with Participation People to discuss future items for the magazine.

Resolved

That an item relating to the production and circulation of the Care Space Packs be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board on 19 February 2019.

Aspire Annual Adoption Report

85 The Corporate Parenting Board received the Adoption Annual Report dated 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 from Aspire Adoption.

Jayne Brooks, Permanence Co-ordinator/Agency Adviser Aspire informed the Board that Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole combined their adoption services in a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) Aspire Adoption went live on 1 July 2017. Aspire was still part of the Dorset Service to Children. The numbers in the report were up to and including June 2018. The special guardianship and adoption team for Dorset had around 50% of referrals.

The Chairman mentioned the Board was interested in knowing what officers thought of the relationship between Aspire and Dorset County Council.

The IRO Manager for LAC had found the relationship to be very positive and busy in terms of adoption numbers. He mentioned the biggest challenge had been when Aspire went live, MOSAIC came in at the same time but RAA feedback had proved positive.

One member referred to paragraph 6.6 of the report and congratulated Aspire as there were no placement breakdowns. The Permanence Co-ordinator/Agency

Adviser confirmed that this only related to young people that Aspire had placed.

The Chairman mentioned that two of the CICC representatives had experienced an adoption breakdown.

Following a question from the Chairman regarding young people's views of the adoption service the Chief Executive, Participation People confirmed the young people they worked with regularly would welcome a discussion.

The Permanence Co-ordinator/Agency Adviser mentioned Aspire were looking to obtain feedback from young people who were with adoptive parents, but there were no formally regulated meetings to look at the assessment process.

The Senior Manager Placements and Resources confirmed he made decisions around whether a young person should be placed for adoption and special guardianship and could not fulfil that role without the positive relationship he had with Aspire.

The Chairman made reference to Appendix C of the report and asked whether there were any other measures of impact given the illustration of how Aspire worked with Dorset County Council. The Permanence Co-ordinator/Agency Adviser confirmed they were in their second year and were comparing how they worked with the first year. Aspire had data on the number of doctors that expressed an interest and she explained the procedure for collecting data and that Aspire were looking at how to receive feedback from all services users at various stages of the process.

The Chairman referred to feedback from young people about their adoption experience and mentioned she would be interested in looking into that outside of the meeting.

One member asked whether Aspire had any contingency plans in place relating to Local Government Reorganisation on 1 April 2019. The Permanence Co-ordinator/Agency Adviser confirmed that changes had already been made and nothing further was required, her colleague dealt with the Bournemouth and Poole area but the Adoption Panel was for all authorities. In the future it would become much easier collecting data for just two authorities.

Resolved

That the Chairman would liaise with RAA to look further into feedback from young people about their adoption experience.

Children's Placements - legislation, regulation and guidance

86 The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Corporate Director for Children's Services on Children's Placements – legislation, regulation and guidance.

The Senior Manager Placements and Resources explained that from time to time young people were placed in unregulated placements. This was not unlawful but did not fall within the regulatory framework and such placements were not registered. The main cohort of young people this related to were those in the age range of 14-17 for whom it was often a challenge to find regulated placements. There were 6 young people in unregulated settings, 3 were now settled the remaining 3 were all aged 16 plus, and the law then changed for this age group.

In response to a question from one member relating to paragraph 7.6, the Senior Manager Placements and Resources confirmed the matter was before the Court and would be subsequently clarified.

One member expressed the view that it was important the Board knew exactly what the situation was in relation to these young people as it was 2 months since the Board were made aware of the situation. More importantly was whether the young people were happy as she had heard that they were not. It was imperative that young people were kept safe and secure and urged officers to keep the Board up to date. She was unsure if the situation had arisen due to the closure of the residential homes.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services explained that the County Council in common with all councils had a significantly high tariff, the 14-17 year age range had very little appreciation of the risk they exposed themselves to, this was not unique to Dorset. One young person set fire to the accommodation they were placed in. He explained that recently, Shropshire, East Sussex and Suffolk had put their finances in lock-down due to the costs involved. A considerable amount of work had been done in the last 12 months to identify these young people at a much earlier stage. Nationally there was a chronic lack of suitable accommodation for them and Dorset was frequently placed in a situation where it was one of 14 applicants for accommodation across the country. With regard to the closure of the residential homes unfortunately Ofsted had judged both Dorset's homes as "Inadequate".

The Chairman mentioned that in future she would like to see a standing item on the Board's agenda relating to this subject. She asked for a report to include information relating to each young person placed in unregulated accommodation, with a clear narrative as to why they were there and an action plan to state how they were going to be moved to a more suitable residence.

The DPCC representative asked what level of contact the young people had with their named advocate.

One member highlighted an issue he had with the recent closure of the homes. He remembered hearing that there would be no problems identifying accommodation for these young people and he was sure this problem would get worse, and wondered if it would have been better for the County Council to have gone into a partnership to enable the homes to have been retained.

The Assistant Director Children's Care and Protection explained they had put something in place to address the situation called the "Meaningful Day" and explained the procedure.

The Chairman asked that the Board be notified each month with an updated list of young people that had been placed in unregulated accommodation as they were concerned and wanted to ensure that action was being taken in an appropriate timeframe and manner.

The DPCC representative asked what work was being undertaken in Adult Services considering the age range of the young people. The Assistant Director Children's Care and Protection confirmed the responsibility for the young people remained with Children's Services until they were 25 years old.

Resolved

That Officers notify the Corporate Parenting Board each month, with an updated list of young people that had been placed in unregulated accommodation. In order to ensure that action was being taken in an appropriate timeframe and manner.

Children in Care and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy

87 The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Corporate Director for Children's Services on Children in Care and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency

Strategy.

The Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships confirmed this was work in progress and an action plan was due to be ratified in January 2019 giving an overview of work during the previous year. Focus was around inhouse fostering with progress regarding young people in police custody and safeguarding. The priorities for this year were to consider what the alternatives to care were and to explore different types of accommodation, and different providers. There was an opportunity to tender for a block contract for 8-12 year olds with complex needs and separately for 13-16 year olds for therapeutic placements. A framework was in place for providing supported housing and a finalised report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

The Chairman expressed an interest in the timetable and impact assessment for the actions to be taken between October 2018 to September 2019, and felt this could be catastrophic for the 9 young people in long-term fostering and asked that this be monitored very closely.

The Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships highlighted paragraph 4.1 of the report and mentioned that a Foster Plan was already in place. A block contract business case had been developed and was going to Children's Services Leadership Team in the new year. The tender for supported housing had closed that day and the action plan would be completed in January 2019.

One member ask how the Board would be assured that the block contracts would be affordable and meet the high standards expected. The Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships confirmed the contract would be monitored by officers with quarterly monitoring reports on the services and would include involvement from the Corporate Parenting Board.

The DPCC representative referred to paragraphs 4.4/4.5/4.6 of the report and asked if the complex needs referred to included disability. The Assistant Director for Commissioning and Partnerships considered that it could include a learning disability.

Resolved

That the Corporate Parenting Board accepted the recommendation and agreed that a further progress report be submitted to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Care Leavers Accommodation and Local Offer

88 The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Director for Children's Services on Care Leavers Accommodation and Local Offer.

The Operational Manager (C&S 13-25) informed the Board the report gave an update on the current accommodation position and Local Offer for Care Leavers. She informed the Board that most Care Leavers lived in accommodation defined as suitable. The majority lived in independent rented properties as there was a lack of housing association and local authority accommodation. There were currently 26 Care Leavers who, under Staying Put, were staying with their foster carers. It was difficult to find suitable accommodation and Dorset had very few Care Leavers who lived in accommodation considered to be unsuitable. Some young people were hard to place due to their lifestyle. The Care Leaver Local Offer would include information of the services and support available to Care Leavers and was available on Dorsetforyou.

The Chairman had spoken with the Dorset Youth Council who were interested in

developing the Local Offer and asked officers to ensure the Dorset Youth Council's ideas were incorporated.

The Chairman enquired how individuals in custody and bed and breakfast were kept track of. The Operational Manager (C&S 13-25) confirmed the Personal Advisers kept in contact and visited them. They also kept in touch with welfare services and social workers in prison to try and prepare the young people for coming out of prison.

The Chairman enquired about the 2 young people who were of no fixed abode. The Operational Manager (C&S 13-25) mentioned the data was slightly historical as MOSAIC was not real time, but in either way the County Council would support them to secure appropriate accommodation.

The Chairman sought assurance that the young people were supported with their applications for Universal Credit and asked how the County Council would support them to manage their finances. The Operational Manager (C&S 13-25) mentioned the biggest difficulty was not getting Universal Credit until 4 weeks after a claim. Although Care Leavers were identified as a priority need group, their claims were not paid any earlier or quicker. Officers would negotiate with the landlord if it looked as though the Care Leaver might lose their tenancy and provide the money.

The Chairman enquired as to whether officers used the Dorset Credit Union. They confirmed that they did use them when appropriate.

The Chief Executive of Participation People mentioned 3 Care Leavers who had a difficult experience trying to obtain Universal Credit and wanted to formally complain about how they had been treated. She thought they would be writing a formal letter to the Corporate Parenting Board. She also mentioned that pay day loans and getting money quickly was a big risk for Care Leavers.

The Chairman felt she would like to develop the area of money management and Universal Credit to see what positive help the Corporate Parenting Board could provide.

The DPCC representative mentioned the difficulty experienced by young people who were disabled and were returning to live with parents, with no benefit money coming in.

The Operational Manager (C&S 13-25) informed the Board that the Personal Assistants were well versed with Universal Credit and suggested that one of them attend a future meeting of the Board to explain the difficulties being experienced by Care Leavers.

Resolved

1. That the Corporate Parenting Board develop the area of money management and Universal Credit to see what positive help the Board could provide.
2. That one of the Personal Assistants attend a future meeting of the Board to explain the difficulties being experienced by Care Leavers.

Offending by Children in Care

89 The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report by the Corporate Director for Children's Services on Offending by Children in Care.

The Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service Manager informed the Board the report covered the combined service including Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Council. He mentioned a protocol had been in place since January 2017 and they rarely got called-out to children's homes with the

Police. However, whenever possible low level offending was dealt with informally through a Youth Restorative Disposal (YRD) and up to September 2018 there had been 6 girls and 4 boys in Dorset receiving a YRD. There were 5 girls and 8 boys who had received a Youth Caution or a Youth Conditional Caution. There were approximately 26% of girls who had offended and there were more girls than boys who had offended. Some offending applied to placements outside of the county. The Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service Manager read out the paragraph on patterns of need and risk among this group of young people and explained that all these young people were at risk of sexual exploitation and all had school moves at secondary school age which was always a negative move. There was always continuity with the care workers working with the young people who ensured they had access to the services they required.

The Chairman responded that the report was really helpful, giving precise detail of the work undertaken by the team and asked how the services worked together from the Council's point of view.

Officers responded that working relationships were very good, although the Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service Manager mentioned there had been some IT issues, but otherwise the relationship with officers worked very well.

One member referred to paragraph 3.2 of the report and asked what happened in the second quarter of last year. The Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service Manager responded that this related to multiple interventions for the same young people.

The Chairmen mentioned that at a previous meeting of the Board the virtual school had looked at sexual exploitation and those who were at risk and asked for this to be discussed at a future meeting of the Board.

One member mentioned concern regarding county lines and officers agreed it was an issue.

Resolved

That officers provide a report to a future meeting of the Board relating to sexual exploitation and those who were at risk.

Meeting Duration: 3.00 pm - 5.15 pm

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