

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

6 JULY 2023

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S P ROE (CHAIRMAN)

Lincolnshire County Council: Councillors A G Hagues (Vice-Chairman), K H Cooke, C Matthews and N Sear

Added Members: Ann Wright (Foster Carer) and Elizabeth Bunney (Lincolnshire Community Health Services)

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Head of Service, Children in Care Transformation and Partners in Practice Programme), Andrew Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager), Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer), Lisa Adams (Service Manager, Barnardos), Sarah Lane (Virtual School Team Manager), Kerry Mitchell (Assistant Director Barnardo's (Lincolnshire)), Nicola Wilkinson (NHS Lincolnshire ICB) and Deborah Crawford (Head of Service - Fostering and Adoption)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2023/24

On the nomination of Councillor A G Hagues, seconded by Councillor K H Cooke and there being no further nominations, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor S Roe be elected as the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2023/24.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2023/24

On the nomination of Councillor S Roe, seconded by Councillor K H Cooke and there being no further nominations, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor A G Hagues be elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2023/24.

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3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M A Whittington and Polly Coombes (Foster Carer Representative).

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11 MAY 2023

Within the attendance details, it was agreed that Nicola Wilkinson's title be amended to show that she is a representative of NHS Lincolnshire ICB.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 May 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the above amendment.

6 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman had attended the FAB awards which he commended as a fantastic and fun event.

He had also delivered a training event on Corporate Parenting to South Kesteven District Council which had been well received and there had been interest from the South Kesteven District Councillors to attend a future meeting of the Panel.

The Chairman was pleased to congratulate Lincolnshire County Council's Children's Services Directorate for being rated outstanding by Ofsted. The Chairman thanked the Panel and Officers for their ongoing work.

The Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding reiterated how fantastic the FAB awards for children in care was and expressed how humbled she was by the achievements in perseverance and education and how great to see so many foster carers and residential staff supporting the young people. The Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding thanked everyone involved in setting up a brilliant event.

7 CHILDREN IN CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4

Consideration was given to a report by the Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding, which invited the Panel to consider the key performance information for Quarter 4 2022/23 that was relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, as detailed within the report.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were noted:

- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were supported financially through the grant funding allocated through the National Transfer Scheme. However, the increase in the number of asylum-seeking children had impacted on placement sufficiency for children in care across the county, which had impacted on almost every performance indicator. Unaccompanied asylum seekers received pupil premium to support with learning, however following an increase in unaccompanied asylum seekers identified as being 16 years of age, there had been challenges in placing children into school or college places. The Panel were assured that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children would have access to some form of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision whilst awaiting a school or college place.
- Some children were engaging with home education and home tuition and receiving the relevant learning, however as they were not attending school or examinations, they were not being recorded within the data. Officers were seeking specialist support from educational psychologists around how to support those young people in returning to school, particularly because analysis showed that those who were not attending school were more likely to have reduced outcomes.
- Assurance was provided that once a young person enters care, a meeting would be held within 10 days to look at the potential barriers to education and access pupil premiums to work with the school to put interventions and the correct measures for the individual to support with learning. Additional funding and recovery premium would be used to put additional interventions in place as well as home tuition if appropriate.
- Late entrants into the care system often had a history of disengagement with education and had missed a significant amount of key learning. Many would not be expected to meet the thresholds set which impacted on data and GCSE results within the target timescales. Many did obtain GCSE's and qualifications, but it often took a longer period of time so was not recorded within the performance measures.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and endorsed;
2. That satisfaction be recorded for assurances received;
3. That the comments made be recorded and passed on to the relevant Executive Councillor for and leading officers for consideration.

8 FOSTERING QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption, which invited the Committee to consider the quarter 4 performance report for the Fostering Service, as set out in the report. The Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption.

The Foster Carer Representative was pleased to hear about the success of the family finding event, which she commended as a fantastic process and expressed her thanks for the appreciation of the work of Foster Carers. Despite the challenging role of a foster carer representative, the Foster Carer Representative felt were supported by the Council.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

- The Panel echoed the comments made and expressed its thanks to Foster Carers.
- There were no specific geographical locations that were struggling with the recruitment of foster carers more than others. A blend of different marketing tools in public and on social media were used in different locations to ensure they were as seen and visible to as many communities as possible. Social media was the largest contact method and foster carers were encouraged to engage with others to encourage others to take up foster caring.
- Research from the Fostering Network and National charities and feedback provided from foster carers would be used to support new marketing and recruitment tools. The marketing team regularly launched ambitious new recruitment campaigns.
- Overall, the number of children in care had decreased which was positive, however it was accepted that this number would fluctuate and due to there still being a high number of children overall, there had to be some reliance on external provision. Despite this, the Panel were reassured that the needs of the child would always be considered as a priority, including considering whether it was possible to place with relatives as an alternative to foster care or residential care.
- There were various reasons for the 83 children exiting care during the period, which included some which had exited through special guardianship orders or adoption. Data was monitored for use within the sufficiency strategy and a breakdown would be provided within the Children in Care Annual report.
- Assurance was provided that all providers of foster care had to work to the same guidance, legislation and timeframes as the Council.
- The recruitment process for foster cares was carried out in two stages: the first stage included checks, references and checking for police probation and the second stage was the undertaking of a formal assessment. The whole was aimed to be completed within 8 months from the point of registration.
- The main reason for people dropping out during the fostering process was due to significant life events. Generally people had thought extensively about their decision to proceed prior to registering and had engaged with the Council on the expectations of the role.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and endorsed;
2. That thanks be recorded for the overall efforts of the Fostering Service; whilst acknowledging continuous pressures on placement availability you have clearly achieved to place most children within the Lincolnshire County Council approved foster carers community who, undeniably put every effort in achieving positive, child focused outcomes;
3. That the views and feedback from the Panel be shared with Officers and relevant Executive Councillors

9 LINCOLNSHIRE LEAVING CARE - ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Consideration was given to a report by the Programme Manager – Barnardo’s, which invited the Panel to consider the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Annual Report for 2022/23.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

- Young people placed in health provision were not necessarily children in care or care leavers. It may be the case that there were no children’s services involvement or any statutory involvement from social care but was case dependent.
- The Panel commended the support offered by Tesco and their support to the care leavers.
- The Chairman congratulated Andrew Morris for his promotion to Head of Service – Leaving Care.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received;
2. That satisfaction be recorded on the progress and achievements of the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Services
3. That the comments from the discussion be recorded by Partners, Officers and relevant Executive Councillors.

10 SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2023

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Service – Leaving Care, which invited the Panel to consider the Council’s implementation of the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations detailed in Appendix A to the report.

Consideration was given to the report and during the discussion the following points were recorded:

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- In relation to future inspections and reporting, supported accommodation would be inspected by the Council on a three-year cycle, as well as by Ofsted. A report would be scheduled when appropriate to provide an update on the registration process for the provisions and to provide an update on the changes made within the homes and to provide assurance that those homes had been inspected to the same standard as other residential homes.
- There would be no additional performance indicator within the performance measures, but performance would be measured as part of the Regulation 44 report.
- Once registration of the homes had been received, visiting Members could be allocated.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

11 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Scrutiny Officer which invited the Panel to consider the Panel's work programme.

The Chairman suggested that an item be added to a future meeting to give time to allow representatives from external organisations to introduce themselves to the Panel and explain their role in relation to the Panel.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the existing work programme, as detailed on pages 73-76 of the agenda pack, be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am