

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H R JOHNSON (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs C M H Farquharson, J D Hough, Mrs M J Overton and S F Williams.

External Members: Jean Burbidge (Lincolnshire Community Health Services), Samantha Edwards (Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust) and Marilyn Graham-Williams (Foster Carer).

Officers/invited guests in attendance: Karen Bailey (Looked After Children's Education Services Manager), Clive Chambers (Assistant Director, Barnardo's), Dave Clarke (Secure Unit Manager), John Harris (Joint Head of Service for Regulated Services), Colin Hopkirk (Participation Officer), Laura Hyatt (Regulation 33 Officer), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Joint Head of Service for Regulated Services), Kerry Mitchell (Leaving Care Manager, Barnardo's), Sarah Spillet (Community Nurse for Vulnerable Children and Young People) and Graham Watts (Democratic Services Officer).

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R A Shore and A P Williams.

Theresa Doughty (Looked After Children Council) and Ted Normandale (National Youth Advocacy Service) also submitted their apologies for absence.

47. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of Members' interests were made at this stage of proceedings.

48. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2012

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 February 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

49. MINUTES OF THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

The Corporate Parenting Panel received the minutes of the Looked After Children Council's Executive meetings held on 19 January 2012, 23 February 2012 and 22 March 2012, for information.

Reference was made to minute number 3 of the meeting held on 22 March 2012, which stated that the Looked After Children Council had experienced a lack of engagement from A National Voice. It was reported that the regional organiser of A National Voice had cancelled meetings with the Lincolnshire Looked After Children Council at late notice on a number of occasions and the County Council's Participation Officer reported that he would be contacting the national organiser shortly to report this issue. It was noted that Looked After Children Councils from

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
19 APRIL 2012**

other areas in the region, such as Nottingham and Derby, had decided to no longer be involved in A National Voice. An update on this issue would be reported to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, but the Chairman agreed to write to A National Voice seeking an explanation as to what was happening in Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the minutes of the Looked After Children Council's Executive meetings held on 19 January 2012, 23 February 2012 and 22 March 2012 be noted.
- (2) That a letter be written by the Chairman to A National Voice, seeking an explanation as to what is happening in Lincolnshire following reports by the Looked After Children Council of disengagement by the regional organiser.

50. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL SIX-MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report by the County Council's Participation Officer, which provided the Panel with an update on the work of the Looked After Children Council Executive and Sub-Groups for the last six months.

It was reported that the Sub-Groups continued to make good progress, both with membership and engagement in activities that led to real change and influence in service provision, representing Lincolnshire at national level and recently impressing the Local Government Association and Ofsted. Socially, these groups continued to prove very popular with children and young people as ways of sharing ideas and experiences and developing and maintaining friendships. Members were informed that the best way of working for these groups was through direct contact with lead officers and representatives from the County Council, the National Youth Advocacy Service and Barnardo's.

Updates on the following aspects were provided as part of the report: -

- the Children and Young People Voice Group;
- the Big Conversation Programme;
- the next Big Conversation Programme;
- the next Big Conversation Meeting;
- Diocesan Work;
- Local Government Association Awards;
- FAB! Awards 2012;
- website developments;
- A National Voice.

The Corporate Parenting Panel congratulated Theresa Doughty, Chairman of the Looked After Children Council, for the delivery of her presentation at the Local Government Association Awards regarding Fostering Services which earned Lincolnshire second place and highly commended in the national award. Members suggested that an article on this achievement should be included in the Council's County News publication.

It was reported that the County Council had been working on a 'coming into care' kit for those young people who also had disabilities. This kit was launched at an event on 18 April 2012 at the Collection in Lincoln where a DVD was showcased, which was very well received by those in attendance. The kit itself was something unique to Lincolnshire and Members agreed that this was something else that should be publicised. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel would be provided with a copy of the DVD in due course.

During discussion on the Big Conversation programme, it was agreed that a report on the plans to develop improved relationships between social workers and children should be submitted to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Discussion ensued on the next Big Conversation Meeting, scheduled to be held on 27 July 2012 at the Showroom in Lincoln. The meeting would involve children and young people from the Children in Care Council, care-leavers, young people on the 'Staying Put' scheme and young people from children's homes. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel were also encouraged to attend.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That a report on improving relationships between social workers and children be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

51. VISITING MEMBERS REPORT

A report by the County Council's Joint Head of Regulated Services and Secure Unit Manager was considered, which provided the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update on visits undertaken by the County Council's Visiting Members.

Officers stated that they were very pleased with reports from Visiting Members following their visits to care homes for this quarter.

The Secure Unit had recently introduced a new touch screen electronic system for use by its staff which the Visiting Member, upon taking their routine visit and being given a demonstration of its capabilities, was very impressed with.

An issue was reported whereby an individual had been inappropriately placed at 91 Eastgate in Sleaford, which led to some difficulties at the home. Officers confirmed that this particular individual had now been referred to a more appropriate unit where she would receive the correct level and type of support and care.

Members also learned of an incident at 33 Northolme in Gainsborough whereby a Foster Carer had referred a young person to the home with their belongings packed in a hessian bag, rather than a suitcase. Officers reassured Members that this was a one-off and all supervisors had been contacted to ensure that something like this did not happen again.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
19 APRIL 2012**

During discussion, it was noted that visits had not taken place by Visiting Members at Beacon in Grantham or Haven Cottage in Boston for this quarter. Reference was made to the use of substitute Visiting Members, which the Panel felt should be more widely used to ensure that care homes were visited on a regular basis. Officers agreed to speak to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning regarding this issue.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That officers be requested to contact the Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning regarding the lack of visits to Beacon in Grantham or Haven Cottage in Boston and to discuss the use of substitute Visiting Members.

52. BARNARDO'S TACKLING NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING STRATEGY 2011 – 2013

NOTE – Councillor J D Hough declared a personal interest in this item as his partner was a Non-Executive Director for Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and he was a Member of the Trust.

The Leaving Care Manager from Barnardo's introduced this item and invited Members to consider the Tackling Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy for 2011 to 2013, in relation to care-leavers in Lincolnshire. The Panel also received a performance monitoring return for March 2012, for information.

The Strategy included an implementation plan, which set out the current provision, next steps, actions and deadlines for a range of priorities and showed how outcomes for care-leavers in relation to employment, education and training could be improved.

Appended to the Strategy was information from a national perspective in relation to care-leavers, together with a further appendix detailing some of the barriers that care-leavers had to deal with when attempting to engage in education, employment or training.

It was reported that most care-leavers did not have a level one or equivalent qualification, which was needed to enter into normal apprenticeship schemes. Barnardo's was helping care-leavers in Lincolnshire attain level one qualifications so that they could participate, but also provided other opportunities for young people through a care-leaver's apprenticeship scheme. Fifteen young people were now involved in the care-leaver's apprenticeship scheme, which was an increase from seven in the previous year. An example was also given whereby a thirteen week work experience placement had led to an apprenticeship scheme being undertaken at a gym in Lincoln.

The strategy set out the national indicator figures for care-leavers in 2011, which was a snapshot of the whole cohort, indicating that of 47 young people 22 were not in education, employment or training. However, of those 22 young people, six were unable to participate due to disability or illness, four were classed as 'all rights

exhausted', three had become parents in the last six months and two were in custody. The national indicator snapshot was therefore quite challenging for this particular year as there was very little Barnardo's could do to influence participation given the circumstances of these 22 young people. In terms of the whole cohort, it was noted that there was a total of 308 care-leavers, 110 of whom were not in education, employment or training. Of the whole cohort, 22 young people were unable to participate due to disability or illness, 15 were classed as 'all rights exhausted', ten had become parents in the last six months and nine were in custody. It was also noted that 148 young people from Lincolnshire lived outside of the county boundary but still counted towards Lincolnshire's national indicator statistics. Barnardo's was working with other organisations and authorities countrywide to ensure their engagement and an out of county education, employment and training worker had recently been employed to lead this work.

Reference was made to the 'From Care2Work Quality Mark' that had recently been awarded to Barnardo's. Care2Work was a national project managed by Catch22's National Care Advisory Service which aimed to improve employability outcomes for young people leaving care. The Panel congratulated Barnardo's for this achievement.

Discussion ensued on the 'Staying Put' scheme, which allowed young people beyond 18 years old to stay with their Foster Carers if they were engaged in education, employment or training. It was reported that there were 29 young people in that position in Lincolnshire. The Panel requested a report on the 'Staying Put' scheme at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Barnardo's Tackling Not in Education, Employment or Training Strategy for 2011 to 2013 be noted.
- (2) That a report on the 'Staying Put' scheme be submitted to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

53. '10 QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU ARE SCRUTINISING SERVICES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN' – QUESTIONS FOUR AND SEVEN

A report by the Joint Heads of Service for Regulated Services was considered, which provided Members with an opportunity to discuss questions four and seven of the guide produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny on the ten questions to ask if services for Looked After Children were being scrutinised.

Responses to questions four and seven were set out within the report, which the Corporate Parenting Panel supported.

It was agreed that questions five and nine should be considered at the next meeting of the Panel and that questions one, three and six should be considered at the meeting in October 2012.

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
19 APRIL 2012**

RESOLVED

- (1) That questions five and nine of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's guide on the ten questions to ask if services for Looked After Children are being scrutinised be considered at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- (2) That questions one, three and six of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's guide on the ten questions to ask if services for Looked After Children are being scrutinised be considered at the October meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

54. HALF YEARLY REPORT OF THE REGULATION 33 SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report by the Regulation 33 Officer, which set out the half yearly report of the Regulation 33 Service covering October 2011 to March 2012.

Members were pleased to learn that 67 Albion Street in Spalding, The Beacon in Grantham, Haven Cottage in Boston, 33 Northolme in Gainsborough and Strut House in Lincoln had received 'outstanding' following their Ofsted inspections. The Secure Unit in Sleaford had achieved 'good' and 91 Eastgate in Sleaford was judged as 'satisfactory'. The Panel congratulated officers on achieving judgements of 'outstanding' for five of the homes, but questioned what could be done to gain better inspection results in the future at the Secure Unit and 91 Eastgate. It was reported that action plans had been produced for each home and good practice from all care homes in the county was being shared. It was also noted that an emergency placement had occurred at 91 Eastgate and in such circumstances the maximum judgement that Ofsted could make was 'satisfactory'.

It was suggested that an article should appear in the Council's County News publication, celebrating the fact that five of its seven children's homes achieved judgements of 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

55. REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS – SIX-MONTHLY REPORT

An exempt report from the Complaints Officer was considered, which provided Members with information on complaints received regarding Looked After Children for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 March 2012.

The Panel requested a further report on the complaint detailed in the report at a future meeting.

In closing, the Chairman thanked the Complaints Officer, John Stephenson, for his contribution to the work of this Panel in view of the fact that it was his last meeting before leaving the authority.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and a further report be submitted to the Corporate Parenting Panel regarding the complaint referred to in the exempt report.

56. FOSTERING SERVICE QUARTER THREE REPORT

The Joint Head of Regulated Services presented a report which outlined the operational performance of the Fostering Service from October 2011 to December 2011.

Members were provided with updates on the following aspects of the Fostering Service: -

- recruitment of Foster Carers in terms of mainstream applications;
- connected persons;
- placements for children;
- training for Foster Carers;
- parent and child placements.

The Panel requested an update at the next meeting on the outcome of the bid for the specialist Foster Carer training model referred to as 'KEEP'.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

57. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2012

The Scrutiny Officer introduced this item and provided the Corporate Parenting Panel with a copy of its work programme for 2012.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Parenting Panel's work programme for 2012 be approved, subject to the inclusion of the additional items agreed in minute numbers 50, 52, 53 and 55 above.

Meeting closed at 12.55 p.m.