



**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
11 OCTOBER 2012**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR H R JOHNSON (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs C M H Farquharson, R A Renshaw and S F Williams.

External Members: Jean Burbidge (Lincolnshire Community Health Services), Mr T Normandale (National Youth Advocacy Service), and Samantha Edwards (Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust).

Councillor D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning) was also in attendance.

Officers/invited guests in attendance: Karen Bailey (Looked After Children Educational Services Manager), Theresa Buhryn (Performance Development and Reviewing Officer), Theresa Clarke (Homes Manager), Katrina Cope (Democratic and Civic Services Team Leader), Sheridan Dodsworth (Head of Service for Children with Disabilities), Jan Gunter (Consultant Nurse, Safeguarding NHS Lincolnshire), John Harris (Joint Head of Service for Regulated Services) Colin Hopkirk (Principal Participation Officer), Laura Hyatt (Regulation 33 Officer), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Joint Head of Service for Regulated Services) and Kerry Mitchell (Leaving Care Manager, Barnardo's).

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J R Hicks, J D Hough, R A Shore and A P Williams.

The Chief Executive reported that, having received notice under Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups Regulations 1990), he had appointed Councillor R A Renshaw as replacement member on the Committee in place of Councillor J D Hough, for this meeting only.

Dr Folasade Johnson (Designated Doctor), Theresa Doughty (Looked After Children Council), Clive Chambers (Assistant Director Children's Services Barnardos Midlands Region) and Janice Spencer (Assistant Director Children's Services) also submitted their apologies for absence.

19. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

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

20. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2012

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 July 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21. MEET YOUR SOCIAL WORKER SHOW PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel received a short introduction to the DVD “Meet your Care Workers Show” from the Principal Participation Officer, which provided the Panel with an insight in to the contents of the DVD and how this provided help for children at school.

It was highlighted that the London Borough of Brent were interested in buying the rights to the DVD and the care kit.

During discussion, it was noted that the DVD did not currently contain any information relating to the health assessments, but as the content of the DVD was to be reviewed in two years, a reminder would be set to ensure its inclusion in a future version. It was also reported that feedback had been received from children with disabilities who felt it was appropriate, however, it was noted that some children depending the nature of their disability would still struggle to understand the content of the DVD.

It was agreed that Members of the Panel would be issued with a copy of the DVD after the meeting.

22. V4C ANNUAL REPORT

The Principal Participation Officer presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel the V4C Annual report.

The report highlighted that it had been a busy, but successful year for the children and young people who gave their time to the V4C executive and to subgroups across the county.

In guiding the Panel, through the report, the Principal Participation Officer made reference to:-

- Who Cares? Trust, it was noted that members of the V4C had been selected nationally to take part in the event in Westminster during the summer. Fifty copies of The Coming into Care Kit and the new DVD had been taken to this event; all fifty had gone in the first hour. The kits and the DVD had generated a lot of interest from other children and young people, professionals and ministers;
- The V4C Chairman was also involved as a key presenter on behalf of the Councils Fostering Services at the national Local Government Awards, which helped the council achieve second place in this category;
- V4C Groups membership, progress and achievements. The achievements so far included:-
 - DFE work on education issues for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
 - Improving EPEPs for Looked After Children (LAC) in Lincolnshire
 - Improving the relationships between social workers and LAC

- Co-Presenting on behalf of and helping Lincolnshire achieve second place in the national Local Government Awards Fostering Services section
 - OFSTED inspection
 - Fully leading the third BIG Conversation event, inviting elected members to the table
 - Co-hosting the 2012 FAB! Awards
 - Nationally showcasing the Coming into Care Kits, including the DVD for children with disabilities, at Westminster 'Who Cares?' event
 - Helping the Diocese redesign its new YODL website for young people
 - Creating content for and improving the V4C area of www.teeninfoincs.com
 - Working with Participation and Commissioning team colleagues to create a small new limited 'positive activities' fund for Looked After Children in Lincolnshire, which starts September 2012 and runs to march 2013. This fund will only continue subject to future support budget levels.
 - The V4C executive has been invited by Manchester Metropolitan University and Nottingham University to help train prospective social workers on their social work degree course in the New Year.
- FAB Awards 2012, this event had taken place at the EPIC Centre on 31 March 2012. This event had been co-designed by the V4C executive;
 - BIG Conversation 3 – This event had taken place at the Showroom, Lincoln on 27 July 2012. Looked after Children and care leavers met with staff from Children's Services and Barnardos. This was the first Big Conversation event Run by children and young people. It was noted that BIG Conversation 4 would be a Takeover Day 2012, and that BIG Conversation 5 would be arranged to take place at Half term in February 2013; and
 - National Take-over day 23 November 2012 – An invitation was extended for two or three members of the Panel to attend the event.

The Panel were advised that the current V4C Chair, Theresa Doughty was leaving in December 2012, to continue with her development. The Panel were advised that Beth Tibbles, a young care leaver would be taking over this role.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

23. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT 2011 - 2012

The Corporate Parenting Panel gave consideration to a report from Jean Burbidge (Named Nurse Vulnerable Children and Young People), Jan Gunter (Designated Nurse for Looked After Children) and Folasade Johnson (Designated Doctor for Looked After Children), which provided the Panel with the Annual report for Health for 2011/12.

It was reported that the total number children looked after by Lincolnshire County Council fluctuated daily, but a total of 717 children were in care at any point during the year, with 340 children being in care for at least 12 months as at 31 March 2012. It was noted that the number of children placed out of county whilst remaining the responsibility of the authority was relatively small a total of 23 (4.6%) were placed out of county.

A total of 225 children and young people were admitted into care by the council, this had increased by 15% from the previous year.

The Panel were advised that there had been a significant improvement increase in the number of children who had been assessed this figure was now at 94%, this demonstrated the quality of the health assessment process. Figures had also improved for immunisation, and dental assessments. It was also highlighted that the number of children who had access to healthcare who did not attend had also been dramatically reduced.

A discussion ensued, from which the Panel raised some of the following issues:-

- That a glossary to the report would be useful;
- Reasons for children and young people coming into care, the panel were advised that there was no single reason, there were various factors that can have an effect, and examples given were the economic down turn and recent cases like the Rochdale case. It was highlighted that more data would be available next year, from which trends would be able to be identified;
- Legislative changes relating to 16/17 year olds. A question was asked whether there was sufficient funding. The Panel were advised that there wasn't sufficient funding; however, work was currently on going concerning external placements. The Panel agreed that they would like to receive a progress report relating to external placements; and
- Representative sample of children assessed, how the sample was completed. The Panel were advised that the sample was picked at random. It was noted that the sample size would increase in future years, due to reporting changes targets and indicators.

RESOLVED

That the report presented be noted.

24. LOG OF QUARTERLY VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES

The Head of Service for Regulated Services presented the Corporate Parenting Panel with the quarterly report for visits to care homes by the Council's Visiting Members.

Overall, all visiting members had had positive visits; personal experiences of the visiting members were shared at the meeting.

One area that officers highlighted was difficulties with neighbours near Strut House, reassurance was given that noise levels were being monitored and the issue was being dealt with by the authority.

Visiting members were asked whether there was anything further that could be done to help them engage with the children and young people.

The Chairman advised that he had been asked by the young people about the procedure for getting a member of staff nominated for an award. Councillor Johnson agreed to forward details of the request to the Head of Service for Regulated Services.

The Chairman reminded members of a meeting on 9 November 2012 at 1.00 p.m. in room 101, for visiting members.

The Chairman thanked members and officers for their updates.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

25. QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE REGULATION 33 SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report from the Regulation 33 Officer. In guiding the Panel through the report, particular reference was made to:-

- The Beacon was now fully staffed;
- Staff were very positive and were always willing to go the extra mile to provide an excellent service;
- Young people were fully involved in a range of activities and e learning. It was noted that in-house and community activities were planned to complement and promote the young people's likes/choices and aspirations;
- For children who do go missing, the County Councils policy was being followed and risk assessments were being adhered to in to protect the young people;
- 33 Northholme had been inspected on 22 August 2012 with an outcome of good with some outstanding qualities;
- Councillors visits – It was reported that all visits were now up to date; and
- Activities undertaken by Children with Disabilities, the Secure Unit and the residential Homes. Full details of the activities were contained within the report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

26. FOSTERING SERVICE QUARTER ONE REPORT APRIL TO JUNE 2012

The Corporate Parenting Panel gave consideration to a report from Head of Service, for Regulated Services, which provided information relating to operational performance of the fostering service for the Quarter 1 from April to June 2012.

It was reported that the report had been produced in line with the requirements of the Fostering Services Regulations and the National Minimum Standards. It was highlighted that an annual report was to be presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in August 2013.

The report identified that there had been a steady increase in the numbers of looked after children, some of which had been very complex younger children who had required intensive additional support in order to sustain foster placements. This had had an impact on the budgets in both fostering north and south budgets and as a result, an overspend was projected.

The Panel were advised that recruitment remained a challenge, but there was evidence that a concentrated response was drawing in new applications. The number of carers had remained at 300. It was highlighted that a dedicated website had been created, which would permit the service to manage outward facing content with greater flexibility, but overall officers were pleased with recruitment activity.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

27. PERFORMANCE REPORT ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN BELONGING TO LINCOLNSHIRE SEPTEMBER 2011 TO AUGUST 2012

Consideration was given to a report from the Looked After Children Educational Services Manager, which provided the Corporate Parenting Panel with information relating to the academic achievements of Looked After Children belonging to Lincolnshire for the period from September 2011 to August 2012.

It was reported that there were approximately 310 children aged 5 -16 who were looked after by Lincolnshire County Council. Approximately 35% of all looked after children have a statement of additional needs and more that 70% had been identified as having some level of additional needs.

Panel members were advised that 25% of the target group for the 2012 cohort had achieved 5+ A* -C GCSEs, or equivalents including English and Maths. This was the highest percentage achieved so far by Lincolnshire looked after children. The reasons for the increase were due to a number of interventions over several years, but the main reason for the increase was the use of additional home tuition. It was highlighted that the home tuition programme was continuing to be offered to any looked after children who would benefit, and who were willing to work with a tutor. It was highlighted that tuition was also offered to Lincolnshire children placed in out of county placements, or in residential homes.

Full details of the profile of the cohort were detailed in the report presented. Performance results from 2006 to 2012 were also displayed at Table 2 of Paragraph 3.4 of the report.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- The success of home tuition – The Panel were advised that home tuition had been a great success and that home tuition could be improved further with Solutions Four now offering English and Maths;
- Funding issues; and
- The recent Ofsted survey of looked after children. The Panel were advised that the results were due to be published shortly and that the officer would send a link to the Scrutiny Officer for circulated to Panel.

The Panel extended their thanks to officers for an excellent report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

28. TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU'RE SCRUTINISING FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – QUESTIONS 1, 3 AND 6

The Corporate Parenting Panel gave consideration to a report from the Head of Service for Regulated Services, which provided members with an opportunity to discuss questions one, three and six out 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 question one, three and six were set out within the report, which the Panel supported.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

29. MEETING DATES

RESOLVED

That the following future meeting dates be agreed:-

17 January 2013 at 10.00 a.m.
 4 April 2013 at 10.00 a.m.
 18 July 2013 at 10.00 a.m.
 3 October 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

30. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

A report by the Scrutiny Officer was considered, which invited the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider its work programme for the coming year.

RESOLVED

That the work programme as presented be approved.

The meeting closed at 12.38 p.m.