



**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL  
16 MARCH 2017**

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD (CHAIRMAN)**

**Lincolnshire County Council:** Councillors J D Hough (Vice-Chairman), A G Hagues and Mrs N J Smith.

**Added Members:** Jean Burbidge (Lincolnshire Community Health Services) and Polly Coombes (Foster Carer).

Officers in attendance:-

Kieran Barnes (Head of Virtual School, Looked After Children), Michaela Berry (Practice Supervisor), Annie Fletcher (Children's Services Manager, Barnardo's), Cheryl Hall (Democratic Services Officer), Jenny Harper (Interim Designate Nurse Safeguarding, South West Lincolnshire CCG), John Herbert (Youth Development Hub Manager), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Service Manager Regulated South and Adoption), Sarah Lane (Lead Advisor), Andrew Morris (LSCB Business Manager), Julian Saggiorato (Interim Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children, LAC and Adults) and Janice Spencer (Assistant Director Safeguarding).

39      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R A H McAuley, P J O'Connor and L Wootten.

Apologies for absence were also received from Michelle Andrews (Head of Birth to Five Service), John Harris (Service Manager Regulated North and Fostering), Kerry Mitchell (Assistant Director – Barnardo's) and Yvonne Shearwood (Quality and Assurance Manager). It was noted that Sarah Lane was attending the meeting on behalf of Michelle Andrews.

The Corporate Parenting Panel congratulated Tara Jones on her recent appointment as the Partners in Practice Manager. The Panel also wished its thanks be recorded for the work that Karen Bailey (Looked After Children Education Services Manager) had undertaken over the years with this Panel, who had recently left the County Council.

40      DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

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41 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

42 BARNARDO'S LINCOLNSHIRE LEAVING CARE SERVICE SIX MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2016 - SEPTEMBER 2016

The Corporate Parenting Panel received the six monthly update from Barnardo's Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service for the period from April 2016 to September 2016.

Members were guided through the report by Annie Fletcher (Children's Services Manager, Barnardo's), and some of the specific points highlighted included the following: -

- Suitable Accommodation – the provision was now very person centred, and having a good relationship between the young person and the accommodation worker was very helpful;
- Education, Employment and Training – the young people could be based anywhere, not necessarily in Lincolnshire, and this was leading to some young people becoming isolated;
- Lead Care Leavers Participation Group Activities – the Alice in Wonderland tea party and other success stories were highlighted to the Panel. It was queried whether any of these care leavers could act as mentors.

Members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following: -

- It was clarified that the social care return was a 4 month snapshot which was also reported to government, but the 'All open cases' referred to all children in suitable accommodation;
- It was acknowledged that it was getting harder to house care leavers as there were increasing demands on councils;
- There was a need for care leavers under the age of 25 to have rent guarantors for private sector tenancies. It was noted that it was usual for parents to undertake this role. It was queried whether there was anything other than this which could be done, but members were advised that it would be a massive risk and commitment. It was reported that the authority used to do this many years ago but had to be stopped due to the risk, however, officers offered to look at it again;
- In relation to membership of the Lincolnshire Youth Homelessness Strategy Delivery Group, it was noted that this was about what Lincolnshire could do and provide to nurture young people through supported accommodation;

- An example of 'unsuitable housing' could be when a young person had returned to the family home and this had been deemed unsuitable. It was also noted that this would include those that were in B&B accommodation.

The Chairman commented that it was felt that progress was being made in this area.

#### RESOLVED

That the six monthly report for Barnardo's Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (April – September 2016) be noted.

#### 43 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Consideration was given to a report which presented the Looked After Children (LAC) annual report to the Panel and identified key points contained within the report. Members of the Panel were guided through the report by Jenny Harper (Interim Designate Nurse Safeguarding, South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group).

The Corporate Parenting Panel was provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following: -

- In relation to the initial assessments not being achieved within the statutory timeframe, it was noted that this was countrywide and was not specific to a certain area;
- Despite not having an initial health assessment in 28 days, Looked After Children would still have their health needs addressed by their GP;
- There was a desire to fully develop the voice of the child within the annual report, and for the report to be more child friendly and user friendly for older people;
- It was acknowledged that progress was being made, but there were still some complex issues;
- In terms of mental health assistance for LAC, it was noted that there was provision in the crisis team within A&E departments. However, improvements were being made to this area;
- It was queried whether the age at which a child became Looked After could have an effect on their outcomes. In response, it was noted that this could be difficult to monitor as younger children were usually adopted and therefore this information would not be obtainable;
- A GP who has had the specific training would be able to do the initial assessments. However, it was noted that the training was not the issue, but rather the impact on the GP's time (approximately 2 hours);
- There were approximately 26 doctors who were trained to carry out these assessments, but it was often a challenge to get the GP's to undertake the training. A lot of promotional activity was currently underway to encourage take up. It was queried whether this could be discussed at the Lincolnshire

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Health and Wellbeing Board, which incorporated representatives from the Lincolnshire CCG's;

- It was queried whether there was a pool of young and retired GP's who could take this on, and would they still be eligible if they had retired. It was noted that if they were registered they would be able to carry out this task;
- It was commented that there seemed to be a high number of children who lived in smoking households (p.117 & 135 of the report refers). The Panel was assured that foster carers were not permitted to smoke, where children were under the age of five and smoking was discouraged away from children generally of all ages;
- It was also commented that it appeared that placement stability had deteriorated and looked worse than it was. It was noted that this had been looked at in detail at a previous meeting;
- The increase in kinship or 'connected person' carers had, in itself, created the need to provide specific training and support, as many of the issues encountered were peculiar to this situation. Further to this, the Panel was advised that recent changes in legislation had brought in changes so that the relationship of the 'connected person' had to be much more explicit;
- In relation to carers receiving a retainer to continue support for LAC attending university and living away, it was hoped that by the age of 25 those young people would be settled; and
- It was noted that the authority was still short of foster carers and this was still presenting a big challenge.

### RESOLVED

That the findings of the report be supported by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

#### 44 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2013-2017

The Corporate Parenting Panel received a report which provided an update to the original Action plan of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy, last presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 9 June 2016.

The report also asked the Panel to consider nominating representatives to participate in a working group to contribute to the refresh of the Strategy, a draft version of which would be presented to the Panel in June/July 2017.

The Panel was guided through the report and provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following: -

- It was reported that the Corporate Parenting Champion post had been advertised and would be for two years;
- Every child's experience would be different to others;
- There was a need to ensure that the wraparound services were as flexible as they should be. Resources would be allocated to deal with this;

- It was commented that the population of LAC was increasing;
- Lincolnshire was a net importer of LAC but the placing local authority would retain responsibility for those children;
- It was noted that another area of growth was young girls requiring secure accommodation;
- It was requested that a report be brought back to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub Group on 6 July 2017 inviting members to form a working group.

## RESOLVED

- (1) That the updates to the LAC Placement Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan be noted.
- (2) That the timescales for presentation of a draft LAC Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2017-2020 be delayed until the September 2017 meeting.

45 VISITING MEMBERS - LOG OF QUARTERLY VISITS

The visiting members' log of quarterly visits to Children's Homes April 2016 – March 2017 was received and comments made during consideration of this log included the following: -

- The Beacon at Grantham was closed during July/August and so the visits could not take place;
- Councillor Mrs A M Newton had undertaken a visit on 11 March 2017;
- The information in relation to visits to Strut House had been chased, and it was important that councillors were able to carry out these visits.

## RESOLVED

That the visiting members log of quarterly visits and comments made be noted.

46 V4C UPDATE THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL - FEBRUARY 2017

The Corporate Parenting Panel received an update on the work of the V4C.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following: -

- It was reported that 27 new members had been recruited who were all enthusiastic, and it was hoped that this number would increase further;
- The FAB! Awards would be taking place on 1 July 2017. It had been suggested that the awards ceremony takes place in the morning, with an after show party in the afternoon;

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- One member commented that they were disappointed that there were not any care leavers present at this meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel and it was suggested its membership was reviewed.

**RESOLVED**

That the update presented be noted.

**47 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 EXCEPTIONS REPORT**

Consideration was given to the performance indicators relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, and some of the points raised during discussion of the information contained within the report included the following: -

- The percentage of LAC with an up to date health check – this was now on target;
- The percentage of LAC with an up to date dental check – the actual figure was 99%, in February it was 98.5%;
- 16 -18 year old LAC participating in learning – this was still a challenge, and Barnardo's were doing a lot of work on this;
- Overall, officers were pleased with progress.

**RESOLVED**

That the performance information presented be noted.

**48 FOSTERING REPORT QUARTER THREE**

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the activities in the Fostering Services during Quarter Three and was presented in line with regulatory requirements.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following: -

- There were 677 LAC by the end of September. There was a need to continue to embrace the recruitment campaign for foster carers;
- Two dedicated recruitment officer posts had been put in place;
- It was aimed to visit prospective foster carers within five days, and some would be fast tracked if they wanted to work with adolescents. Generally, the whole process would take six months;
- Some of the issues which were highlighted as concerns were the lack of information about the child placed; carers' views not being sought/heard; and lack of communication. It was acknowledged that the authority was not good at sharing information when it was received, however officers were working hard to improve communication;

- The Panel was advised that some of the areas of concern would be tackled by the Corporate Parenting Champion, and one of the workstreams would be the care offer for carers;
- It was requested that an update be brought back to the Panel in six months to outline what progress had been made.
- A query was raised regarding the unaccompanied asylum seeking children, as it was understood that some had run away. Members were advised that none of these children had recently absconded, as the foster care placements they had been placed in, in Lincolnshire, were working well. It was commented that these children were resilient, dedicated and driven.

## RESOLVED

That the report be approved.

49 INTERIM REPORT - THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LINCOLNSHIRE  
LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Corporate Parenting Panel received the interim report for the Virtual School for Lincolnshire Looked After Children. It was reported that there had been a successful bid for the Caring Schools, Learning Placements project.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report, and some of the points raised during discussion included the following: -

- It was commented that the aim of the project was very ambitious and it was queried where the resources would come from and what the timescales were. It was reported that it was hoped that it would be up and running in pilot form by September 2017, and the role of project manager would be going out for recruitment shortly;
- It was noted that Partners in Practice was a four year plan, and this was one of the eight workstreams. Other workstreams included practice and systems; governance and accountability; and people and learning;
- It was requested whether the Panel could have an update on the Partners in Practice, and members were advised that this would be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in the near future;
- In relation to the post 16 cohort, it was commented that only having three apprentices out of a cohort of 115 seemed very low. It was noted there was a need to increase progress at key stage 4 and tackle attainment.

## RESOLVED

That the interim report be noted.

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50     CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2017

Consideration was given to a report which invited the Corporate Parenting Panel to discuss and agree its work programme for 2017.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the first meeting date of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group be moved from 15 June to 6 July 2017.
- (2) That the work programme for 2017 as presented, be approved.

The meeting closed at 12.40 pm.