

**CORPORATE PARENTING SUB  
 GROUP  
 6 JULY 2017**

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

**Lincolnshire County Council:** Councillors Mrs C L Perraton-Williams (Vice-Chairman), Mrs K Cook, S R Dodds and R L Foulkes.

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

Officers in attendance:-

Rosemary Akrill (Senior Commissioning Officer), Michelle Andrews (Service Manager Early Years and Childcare Support), Kieran Barnes (Virtual Head Teacher), Cheryl Hall (Democratic Services Officer), John Harris (Children's Service Manager - Regulated - North and Fostering), Samantha Harrison (Senior Performance Officer), John Herbert (Youth Development Practice Supervisor), Caroline Jackson (Commissioning Manager – Performance Services), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Kerry Mitchell (Assistant Director Barnardo's (Lincolnshire)) and Mark Rainey (Commissioning Manager – Commercial).

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Brailsford be elected as Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group for 2017/18.

**COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD IN THE CHAIR**

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mrs C L Perraton-Williams be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group for 2017/18.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs W Bowkett, Annie Fletcher (Children's Service Manager – Lincolnshire Services), Ildiko Kiss (Regulation 43 Visitor), Amanda Newman (Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust), Yvonne

**2**  
**CORPORATE PARENTING SUB GROUP**  
**6 JULY 2017**

Shearwood (Children's Service Manager – Regulated – South and Adoption) and Janice Spencer (Assistant Director Children's Safeguarding).

**4**      **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST**

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

**5**      **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL HELD ON 16 MARCH 2017**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**6**      **PUTTING CORPORATE PARENTING INTO PRACTICE**

The Sub-Group received a presentation from John Harris (Children's Service Manager – Regulated – North and Fostering) which provided an overview of why children come into care and the role of the Corporate Parent.

NOTE: At this point in the proceedings, Councillor S R Dodds entered the meeting.

The presentation slides covered the following areas: -

- Regulated services;
- Children's Homes;
- Ofsted;
- Looked After Children;
- Placements;
- Fostering and adoption teams;
- Panel Advisor;
- Role and requirements of Visiting Members;
- Secure Unit;
- Challenges facing Looked After Children;
- The Role of Corporate Parents;
- Corporate Parents: Children and Young People's Perspective; and
- Lincolnshire Corporate Parenting Outcomes.

The Sub-Group was provided with an opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation, where the following points were noted: -

- It was advised that all looked after children would have a care plan in place;
- The last Ofsted inspection of Lincolnshire was held in October 2014 and reported in January 2015. Lincolnshire was found to be Good overall, with Outstanding for Adoption. All care homes were good or outstanding in Lincolnshire;

- Children could become looked after through two primary routes provided for in the Children Act 1989: Section 20, parents had requested looked after status; and Section 31, Court Order for child to have Looked After Child status. However, it was emphasised that although the authority would not have the same legal responsibility for Section 20 children, they would still come under the corporate parenting support at the County Council;
- As of 12 June 2017 there were 684 children looked after. It was noted that the placement types varied and included: in-house foster placements; friend and family carers; in-house residential placement; secure accommodation; out of county placement; and independent foster placement;
- There had been a steady increase in the number of Looked After Children over the last two years in Lincolnshire. The reasons for the increase were not clear; however possible reasons for this increase were discussed. It was noted that nationally the number of 14, 15 and 16 year olds entering care was on the increase;
- Members were invited to observe meetings of the Fostering and Adoption Panels;
- It was recognised that it was not always suitable for a child to be placed within their extended family unit. Further to this, the Sub-Group was advised that recent changes in legislation had brought in changes so that the relationship of kinship or 'connected person' had to be much more explicit;
- The impact of placements into Lincolnshire from other authorities should be considered by the Sub-Group; and
- It was suggested that a governor at each school was designated with oversight for safeguarding. Concerns were raised regarding the misuse of social media for bullying and child sexual exploitation and the potential increased risk for looked after children.

## RESOLVED

That the presented slides be emailed to Members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group.

## 7 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLACEMENTS

The Sub-Group received a presentation from Rosemary Akrill (Senior Commissioning Officer) and Mark Rainey (Commissioning Manager – Commercial), which provided an overview of the types of Looked After Children Placements. The presentation slides covered the following areas: -

- Placement types;
- Fostering;
- Residential Children's Homes;
- Supported Lodgings/ Supported Accommodation;
- Summary; and
- Sufficiency Strategy.

**CORPORATE PARENTING SUB GROUP****6 JULY 2017**

The Sub-Group was provided with an opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation, where the following points were noted: -

- Under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, the Council was required to produce a Sufficiency Strategy. The current strategy was due a refresh and would be presented to a future meeting of the Sub-Group. A Big Conversation meeting was scheduled to be held on 25 October 2017 at 2.00 pm to discuss the refresh with children and young people. Volunteers from the Sub-Group were sought to assist with the development of the refresh via a working group. Councillors S R Dodds and R L Foulkes volunteered to take part in the working group. It was requested that Members advised the Senior Scrutiny Officer via email, should they wish to sit on the working group. It was suggested that children and young people should also be engaged in this refresh via Voices for Choices (V4C);
- A discussion took place regarding mother and baby placements.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the presented slides be emailed to Members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group.
- (2) That a working group be established to consider the refresh of the Sufficiency Strategy consisting of Councillors S R Dodds and R L Foulkes.

8 VOICES FOR CHOICES (V4C) THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL

The Sub-Group received a presentation from John Herbert (Youth Development Practice Supervisor), which provided an overview of Voices for Choices (V4C). The presentation slides covered the following areas: -

- Voices for Choices (V4C);
- V4C aims;
- V4C and Big Conversations;
- Big Conversation projects;
- Lincolnshire Care Pledge; and
- FAB! Awards – July 2017.

The Sub-Group was provided with an opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation, where the following points were noted: -

- It was agreed that a link to the *Coming into Care* mobile application would be sent to Members of the Sub-Group. Members were assured that this was not available through 'App Stores' for safeguarding reasons;
- FAB! Awards were held on an annual basis, with a different theme each year. Members were advised that young people decided on the theme for the awards. Positive feedback was received from those who had attended this year's awards;

- Members were encouraged to attend local V4C meetings; Big Conversations; and support and visit the FAB! Awards;
- Foster Carers were welcome to attend local V4C meetings and any general feedback on V4C would also be welcome. Further to this, the Senior Scrutiny Officer advised that she would email dates to Members and seek volunteers from the Sub-Group to attend each meeting; and
- It was highlighted that there was a need for a voice for foster carers and it was suggested that something similar to V4C was established for foster carers. It was noted that this could further encourage children and young people to engage with the V4C if they could see their foster carer also engaging in something similar. It was agreed that the Youth Development Practice Supervisor and the Virtual Head Teacher would take this suggestion forward.

#### RESOLVED

That the presented slides be emailed to Members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group.

NOTE: At this point in the meeting, Councillor Mrs C L Perraton-Williams left for the remainder of the proceedings.

#### 9 ROLE OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Sub-Group received a presentation from Kieran Barnes (Virtual Head Teacher), which provided an overview of the Virtual School. The presentation slides covered the following areas: -

- Promoting the educational achievement and progress of Looked After Children - Key Points;
- Looked After Children Lincolnshire Figures;
- Looked After Children Diversity of Care Experiences;
- High Level Responsibilities;
- Working with others;
- Supporting Schools;
- Pupil premium.

The Sub-Group was provided with an opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation, where the following points were noted: -

- It was noted that all Looked After Children had a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which was part of the child's care plan or detention placement plan. Further to this, it was noted that PEPs were now electronic, rather than paper based. This had had a positive impact on all parties;
- The Virtual School had responsibility for placing looked after children into good or outstanding schools. Members were advised that all schools were supportive of the Virtual School and actively engaged with the team;
- The Virtual School team also provided information and guidance for looked after children placed from other authorities. However, the Lincolnshire Virtual

School team would not have responsibility for those children, as this remained with the placing authority;

- Looked after children was one of the groups of pupils that attracted pupil premium funding. The County Council received a pupil premium grant allocation based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 15 at 31 August;
- The Virtual School would be able to support post-16 looked after children in accessing sixth form, should any support in accessing a sixth form be required; and
- The Caring to Learn Project was aiming to rationalise the number of assessments, to lessen the burden on young people. An example was cited where all of the assessments could be completed on the same morning/afternoon.

#### RESOLVED

That the presented slides be emailed to Members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group.

#### 10 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Sub-Group received a presentation from Caroline Jackson (Commissioning Manager – Performance Services) and Samantha Harrison (Senior Performance Officer), which provided an overview of performance indicators relating to Looked After Children. The presentation slides covered the following areas: -

- Outline of the performance measures reported to Corporate Parenting Sub Group;
- Format of the report;
- key issues.

Tabled at the meeting was the latest performance report for Quarter Four, along with a list of the key measures covering Looked After Children.

The Sub-Group was provided with an opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation, where the following points were noted: -

- Concerns were raised regarding the measure for the percentage of Looked After Children achieving A\*- C GCSEs in English and Maths and how it was compared against those children not in care. In response, the Sub-Group was advised that all local authorities were measured on attainment for all children, and this measure was a sub-set of that information. It was also noted that the access requirements for certain post-GCSE courses was to achieve a set number of A\* - C, it was important to understand the attainment of looked after children for this purpose; and
- It was queried why the measure on the number of Looked After Children per 10,000 under 18s was a relevant measure. In response, the Sub-Group was advised that this was a national measure and it was important to be able to

compare this measure to other local authorities and understand how the County Council measured against it.

RESOLVED

That the presented slides be emailed to Members of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group.

11 CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-GROUP WORK PROGRAMME 2017

Consideration was given to a report by Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), which invited the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group to discuss and agree its work programme for 2017.

It was noted that quarterly performance reports would be added to the work programme for future meetings.

The Sub-Group was advised that proposed meeting dates for 2018 would be presented to the meeting on 21 September 2017, for consideration and approval.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Parenting Sub-Group's work programme for 2017 be approved.

The meeting closed at 1.04 pm.

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