

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

Councillors A G Hagues, J R Hicks, J D Hough, R J Hunter-Clarke, P O'Connor and L Wootten

External Members:

Jean Burbidge (Lincolnshire Community Health Services), Polly Coombes (Foster Carer), Beth Tibbles-Hammond (Children in Care Council)

Councillors B Adams, W J Aron, S R Dodds, B W Keimach, N H Smith, R Wootten and S M Wray attended the meeting as observers

Officers/invited guests in attendance: Karen Bailey (Looked After Children's Education Services Manager), Andrea Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Clive Chambers (Assistant Director Children's Services, Barnardo's Midlands Region), Dave Clarke (Unit Principal, Lincolnshire Secure Unit), John Harris (Joint Head of Service for Regulated Services), Colin Hopkirk (Participation Officer), Tracy Johnson (Scrutiny Officer), Tara Jones (Head of Service for Regulated Services), Kerry Mitchell (Leaving Care Manager, Barnardo's), Janice Spencer (Assistant Director Children's Services) and Barbara Starns (Team Manager, Independent Chairs).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Brailsford be elected as Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for the 2013/2014 municipal year.

**COUNCILLOR D BRAILSFORD IN THE CHAIR**

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor J D Hough be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for the 2013/2014 municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Samantha Edwards (Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust), Ted Normandale (National Youth Advocacy Service) and Marilyn Graham-Williams (Foster Carer)

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell (Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health Services and Children's Services)

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4. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

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

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 April 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6. VOICES FOR CHOICES (V4C) MINUTES (THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL) HELD ON 23 APRIL 2013, 21 MAY 2013 AND 18 JUNE 2013

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Voices for Choices (the Looked After Children Council) meetings held on 23 April, 21 May and 18 June 2013. Members were encouraged to look at the V4C Website as it provided a lot of information.

Colin Hopkirk took the Panel through the minutes, following which the ensuing points were noted:-

- Following the Who Cares Trust event 'Listen Up' in London on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013, the Panel were advised that it had been a success with a number of other local authorities showing an interest in the Web App developed in Lincolnshire. It was anticipated that the design company, also based in Lincolnshire, would benefit from repeat business as a result.
- Work was in progress with the LPAC group to try and ascertain the issues for children in care in respect of bullying. The group of children currently supported would be consulted to find out their perspective and what they feel would be necessary to improve their situation and to reduce bullying.
- Key links with the Children & Young People Strategic Partnership was helping to shape the plan to take the issues forward.
- It was agreed to bring a brief presentation of progress on the Web App to a future meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the minutes from the Voices for Choices Executive meetings held on 23 April, 21 May and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013 be noted;
2. That a future presentation on the Web App be given to the Corporate Parenting Panel and that this be added to the Work Programme.

Colin Hopkirk and Beth Tibbles-Hammond left the meeting at this point and did not return.

7. VISITING MEMBERS LOG

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the visits to Lincolnshire children's homes from April 2012 to March 2013.

Janice Spencer explained that this was last year's log and acknowledged that the Panel should now be considering April, May and June data. Due to the recent elections and the need to establish new Visiting Members, work was ongoing to ensure that the new members were appropriately prepared to undertake the visits.

It was stressed that these visits were crucial and that OfSTED would judge the local authority on these visits. Members were expected, therefore, to undertake their visits and in the event that these were not undertaken, an escalation process would be followed. Members were encouraged to advise officers of any change in circumstance which would prevent them from undertaking visits and to do so as soon as possible to enable them to put other arrangements in place.

It was confirmed that visits to Haven Cottage and also Strut House had been done but that the follow-up reports had not yet been received.

**RESOLVED**

That the Visiting Member's Log 2012-2013 – Quarterly Report and comments made be noted.

**8. PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Janice Spencer introduced the report which provided progress information for Quarter 4 2012/13 on items relating to this Panel only. Confirmation was received that future meeting dates would be scheduled to correlate with performance reporting to ensure the Panel were in receipt of the most current data.

Councillor B W Keimach left the meeting at 11.50am and did not return.

During consideration of the report, the following points were noted:-

- NI063 – it was explained that if permanent places had been secured for some children this target would have been met. Officers were currently looking at the number of children who had suffered disruption if carers required a different form of support. It was agreed to report this information on a quarterly basis.
- NI147 – some care leavers felt unsafe in their accommodation. Kerry Mitchell and her team work with them to ensure any issues are rectified.
- Although the targets set for EET appeared to accept that 30% of care leavers would not be in EET this was the way the target had been set for local authorities. It was acknowledged that there would always be a percentage who would not be in EET purely due to the challenges and circumstances attached to care leavers and it was felt that a 70% target may be aspirational. It was suggested that the narrative for that performance indicator could be more detailed which would explain the difficulties faced.

Councillors S R Dodds and B Adams left the meeting at 12.00pm and did not return.

**RESOLVED**

That the Performance Report be noted.

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9. "TELL US WHAT YOU THINK" SURVEYS 2012/13

Consideration was given to a report which was presented by Tara Jones, Head of Service – Regulated Services, and provided a summary of the 2012/13 responses to the survey and the subsequent service improvements.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

- In relation to "coping with money" it was asked if any more could be done in relation to training and the provision of ongoing information to the children. It was confirmed that, from an early age in foster placements, children are taught how to manage their pocket money, for example. Training was provided to foster carers to assist them in teaching children how to manage money going forward.
- Additionally, specific 2 day courses were being provided by the Credit Union, who currently manage the budgets of young people. Their bills, including rent, bills and any outgoings would be taken at source and they would only then have access to the money left over. Work was ongoing with young people to provide some regularity and teach them about personal responsibility, i.e. if they don't physically attend the Job Centre they will not then receive their money.
- The Web App developed for young people also had a budget calculator but it was suggested that every time a meeting of young people was held, some budgetary training be incorporated or have someone available that they can approach if needs be. It was agreed to raise this with V4C for their views.
- Members were pleased that all children were engaged in clubs or hobbies and that the funding of one additional activity for each child had been taken up.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Councillor W J Aron left the meeting at 12.15pm and did not return.

10. ADOPTION REFORM PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report which provided background information on an adoption reform programme being implemented by the Government. During discussion of the report, the following points were noted:

- Although not complacent, officers appeared confident that the work undertaken and the performance within Lincolnshire in regard to adoption would make it difficult for this function to be withdrawn from the Local Authority under the new policy.
- A total of £1.2m had been ringfenced, some of which was to be used alongside the "Foster to Adoption" Campaign.
- The approval of adopters within Lincolnshire was increasing with 22 assessments being undertaken in June 2013.
- One of the challenges was to find adopters who were willing to take sibling groups and those larger sibling groups with age ranges from 0 to 10, for example. This was a national issue, however, and not particular to Lincolnshire.
- Adoption Activity Days had proved successful and provided an opportunity for potential adopters to make a connection with children in a relaxed setting. Six activity days per year were planned although, due to the number of adopters being approved, it was thought two more days would be required.

- Preparation training days were being explored with the East Midlands Consortium, including shared dates and reservations of at least two places for Consortium members in case they were unable to attend the day scheduled in their own county, thereby reducing any further delays in the process.
- An update position was requested within six months.

Councillor R Wootten left the meeting at 12.30pm and did not return.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That Adoption Reform Programme Update be added to the work programme for a future meeting.

11. FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

John Harris introduced the report and explained that this report was presented to the Panel on a quarterly basis and outlined what service was provided, how many carers there are within the county and what their role is.

During discussion the following points were noted:-

- Even if a child is placed from another county, the responsibility for that child remains with the home county.
- Education courses were being rolled out to foster carers with a specific officer working with foster carers. Progress would be shown in the next quarterly report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12. FOSTERING SERVICE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

John Harris introduced the document which was a statutory requirement to provide for the public and was presented for information only. It was noted that Appendix 3 had not been included in the agenda pack as this included personal details and was, therefore, not required to be published.

The Chairman asked members to contact John Harris directly should they require any further information on the Statement of Purpose.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Councillor J R Hicks left the meeting at 12.50pm and did not return.

13. INDEPENDENT CHAIR SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which was a statutory requirement under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.

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Councillor Mrs S M Wray left the meeting at 12.55pm and did not return.

During consideration, the following points were noted:-

- Concern was noted that despite the report indicating at section 6 (Qualitative Information about the IRO Service) that the target appeared to have been met, user feedback suggested that more than half of young people reported that they had not, in fact, been involved in choosing the day of their review, the time, venue or who attended. It was stressed that reports should not include misleading information and it was agreed that this would be raised with health visitors.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

14. BARNARDO'S LEAVING CARE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Panel considered a report which provided an opportunity to review and reflect on the Leaving Care Service Annual Report for 2012/13.

During discussion of the report, the following points were noted:

- Further explanation was given on how young people were supported in reaching specific levels to then move on to apprenticeships. Work preparation training, including educational support, and work based training were available via certain programmes. It was noted that many care leavers are successful and attend university but it was acknowledged that a small number need additional support.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

15. LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Ted Normandale was unable to attend the meeting but asked that any queries or questions on the report be forwarded to Tracy Johnson, Scrutiny Officer, who would collate and forward as appropriate.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

16. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

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

The Panel were informed that future dates of the Panel would be discussed with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and circulated to members once agreed. The dates would take into account performance deadlines to enable the most current figures and position to be included in reports.

It was also suggested that a one hour training session be held at the start of the next few meetings to increase the Panel's knowledge of different topics.

RESOLVED

1. That the work programme as presented be approved.
2. That a programme of training sessions be agreed.

The meeting closed at 1.25pm.

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