

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY
PANEL
21 SEPTEMBER 2016
5.05 - 7.17 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs McCracken (Chairman), Mrs Ingham (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Mrs Temperton and Peacey (Substitute)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Heydon and Ms Hayes

73. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest declared.

74. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting on 22 June were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Minute 62

Sarah Roberts informed the Panel that Larchwood Short Break Unit were planning a carol singing event, and agreed to circulate the details of this. **(Action: Sarah Roberts)**

Minute 62

Kashif Nawaz reported that the first apprentice had begun work in the Virtual School, and another apprentice had begun work through supported employment. Extended work placements had been run through the summer, and it was hoped that this would happen again next summer.

Minute 68

A System Without Tiers was agreed as an item for the December meeting and as an ongoing item for discussion. **(Action: Sarah Roberts/Lizzie Rich)**

Minute 69

Cllr Temperton requested information on alternative provision for care leaver accommodation following cancellation of Waymead Conversion to flats. Work was underway by Simon Hendey to look at future alternative accommodation options for care leavers.

Minute 70

It was confirmed that following consultation with members, the meeting would remain at 5pm. This would be reviewed in March with a change of day being another possible alternative.

75. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

76. **Panel Announcements**

Power of Parenting Fundraiser July 2016

The inaugural Power of Parenting Fundraiser had taken place in July 2016 and had been attended by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle. The event had been well attended and had been a successful fundraising event whilst raising awareness of fostering in general. The funds raised are to help care leavers at university and the Charity's founder is Paul Adams (a Bracknell Forest Foster Carer).

Achievement Awards

The Achievement Awards had recently taken place, and had featured the launch of the Children in Care Council film. Attendees commented that they had particularly enjoyed the talk by the foster carer.

Several Members expressed their regret at not being able to attend the event and requested that the date for the next Awards be agreed by the December 2016 so that more Members may be able to attend. **(Action: Peter Hodges and Life Chances Team)**

Link Member reports

It was agreed that the Link Member reports would be circulated with the minutes.

77. **Health of Looked After Children Report**

Sharon Hickson, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children attended the meeting to present a report on the Health of Looked After Children.

Sharon reported that Berkshire Health Foundation Trust had undergone a recent Care Quality Commission inspection and so she had been required to assist in the West of Berkshire. The inspection had been thorough, and inspectors had gone out to visit clients and groups to experience the work of the trust. The following recommendations relevant to Children's Services had been included in the report:

- Inspectors commented on the need of a review of staffing levels
- As the role of Designated Nurse for Looked After Children did not sit within the Clinical Commissioning Group, a service level agreement was required and was not yet in place
- Concerns had been raised in the report regarding the writing of health plans and assessment, but staff had asked for further clarification on this.

Sharon commented that while the Bracknell Forest inspection was awaited, Health colleagues had been praised during recent inspections at Slough and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and were confident in their practices.

Regarding Looked After Children, Sharon noted that the majority of Bracknell Forest Looked After Children were placed in the area which was useful for Health professionals as it was easier to see the children in person. Those who had been placed out of area had often been placed in specialist placements due to their additional needs.

Of children who had been Looked After for more than 12 months, 100% had the correct immunisations, 93% had seen a dentist regularly with five children refusing, and 100% had had health assessments. It was noted that these statistics were above average and were very positive. Health professionals were routinely notified by the Local Authority of any significant changes to a child's situation.

Concerns were raised regarding delays in seeing those children who had been placed out of area within the designated time frame, and it was requested that this be escalated to bring all visits within the correct time scales.

Sharon notified the Panel of the concerns regarding Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers within BHFT. There were concerns regarding the number of children, as there was no additional funding offered with which to fund their health care. It was noted that other Local Authorities in Berkshire had received the children directly without being placed by central government, which was a concern.

There was significant training ongoing within BHFT. All staff had undertaken Child Sexual Exploitation training, and some were attending SEMRAC meetings.

With regard to Emotional and Mental Health, it was reported that previous CAMHS concerns were being addressed due to the increase in their funding. Looked After Children were a priority to CAMHS. Strength and Difficulty Questionnaires (SDQs) were increasingly being used and a process for their use had developed.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Historically, unaccompanied asylum seekers in Berkshire had been placed in the specialist lodging in Slough with whom BHFT have a good relationship. Sharon commented that at the height of the war in Afghanistan, there were lots of children coming but following a significant dip in numbers, it was noted that it would be a learning curve for staff if significant numbers were placed in Berkshire. Currently Bracknell Forest had agreed to take two unaccompanied asylum seeking children from Kent as part of the national reallocation program.
- Handwritten assessments were undertaken with children, which was felt to be more personable than typing whilst listening to a child.
- Pamper packs given out by Slough Children's Trust were encouraged by members, and officers were asked whether anything like this could happen in Bracknell Forest.
- The idea of Slough's Wellbeing Team was well received by members, and it was requested that something similar or joint working with Slough could be established for Bracknell Forest Looked After Children. Members were reminded that Slough have many more Looked After Children than Bracknell Forest and that this would be an additional cost .

(Action Peter Hodges to explore possible learning from Slough)

Members thanked Sharon for her report and for attending.

78. Educational Achievements and Destinations of Looked After Children

Kashif Nawaz attended the meeting to present the Examination and Test Results of Looked After Children in Bracknell Forest for the year 2015-16.

It was commented that it was difficult to directly compare exam results year by year, but that the set of exam results for 2015-16 were above the national average for Looked After Children. It was suggested that this was due to the Local Authority tightening the allocation of the Pupil Premium grant, as schools were now required to submit a spend plan for grant. This had given the Virtual School a greater insight into the use of resources for Looked After Children.

Kashif highlighted that academic achievement was not limited to time spent in school, and he thanked the Youth Services team with their support in providing off-site visits for the Looked After children.

Of KS2 pupils, Kashif commented that the two pupils who had undertaken examinations both had an SDQ score of 25 and had performed well. It was suggested that a higher SDQ score would relate to a better performance, but work was ongoing to expand on this theory.

Of KS4 pupils. Kashif commented that all pupils who had undertaken GCSEs this year could progress onto their Post-16 plan, and 85% of the Year 11 cohort had made their expected progress. Further analysis of these results would be included in the Virtual School Annual Report.

Kashif commented that he was very pleased with these results, and that he would know in more detail about Bracknell Forest's performance following a South East Virtual Schools' meeting later in the year.

Arising from questions, the following points were noted:

- 80% of Bracknell Forest Looked After Children attended a school which was either Good or Outstanding rated by Ofsted, although the schools were not necessarily in the borough.
- The post-16 destinations were a mixture of in-borough and out of borough schools and colleges.
- One Care Leaver had graduated this year with a first class Law degree.
- It was requested that data around English as an Additional Language be added to the Achievements data. **(Action: Kashif Nawaz)**
- Members suggested that in future looked after children should receive a card from CPAP congratulating them on exam achievements.

Members thanked Kashif for his report and for attending.

79. **Life Chances Team Annual Report 2015-16**

Peter Hodges, Head of Looked After Children and Kashif Nawaz, Head of Virtual School presented the Life Chances Team Annual Report 2015-16.

The Life Chances Team is a multi-agency virtual team who met once a month. The membership of the team had been amended to reflect the changing number of looked after children population who are now predominantly over the age of 11 years. Any referrals which come to the Life Chances Team are discussed at meetings, and actions assigned to partner agencies as a result of discussion. Each child referred was allocated a red, amber or green progress indicator.

It had been recognised that children engage with different people in different ways, and this was monitored to ensure the child was in contact with the best professional for them.

A key success of the team had been the agency learning, as professionals had taken lessons away from cases unrelated to them which would prove useful when a similar case arose in their local area. A single meeting had also proved an efficient use of professional time.

In relation to arising questions, the following points were raised:

- Although not directly involved in the team, the CAMHS database could be accessed by the Life Chances Team and a link contact had been provided. Peter reported that Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive of Bracknell Forest Council had agreed to challenge the deficit in CAMHS involvement in the Life

Chances Team at a higher level. Members reiterated their request that an update on progress of the CAMHs System without Tiers implementation be brought back in December.

- Relating to a case study included in the report, Kashif commented that often the best solution for a child was for all professionals to allow the child a fresh start at a different school, as professional involvement can be quite overwhelming.
- It was requested that the date of the Life Chances Conference be circulated in advance to allow Members to attend. **(Action: Peter Hodges)**
- A foster carer recruitment officer had been recruited and will particularly focus on foster carers for teenagers.

80. **Youth Services Provision for Looked After Children Impact Report**

Judy Galvin and Darren Berry attended from the Youth Services team to present the Youth Services Provision for Looked After Children Impact Report.

It was reported that of the 41 Looked After young people who fall within the remit of Youth Services, 29 had engaged with wider universal youth services and targeted services including sexual health, substance misuse teaching and one to one support from a targeted youth worker.

A three day residential for looked after children to Runways End had been carried out over the summer holidays. Darren reported that rather than the anticipated group of 13-16 year olds, there had been two groups of 11-13 year olds and a 13+ group. A range of activities had taken place, including First Aid training for which the older group were accredited. The trip had encouraged the children to develop life skills including cooking, budgeting and cleaning. A care leaver had been brought on the trip as a young leader, which had proved a valuable experience.

Four Looked After young people had enrolled in the Duke of Edinburgh course, and one young person had received his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award in May 2016.

Members thanked Judy and Darren for their report and for attending the meeting.

81. **Looked After Children Commissioning Strategy**

Peter Hodges, Head of Service: Looked After Children reported on the Looked After Children Commissioning Strategy.

Further requirements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers had been added to the report, as Ofsted had provided guidance on suitable placements for them.

Peter reported on the success of permanency as evidenced by the increase from 5 children granted Adoption Orders or Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) in March 2012 to 19 granted the same in March 2016. The key strategic aim was to develop placements in the borough.

Members requested a briefing on types of Residential homes used by Bracknell Forest and the rationale for using these rather than foster care and their impact. A report was requested for September **(Action: Peter Hodges)**

Members thanked Peter for his report.

82. **Inspection Framework and Preparation Update**

Sarah Roberts presented to Members on the Inspection Framework and gave a Preparation Update.

Sarah reported that an inspection of Bracknell Forest Children's Services was imminent, and updated members on the ongoing work to prepare including developing the stability of staff teams and strengthening leadership and governance. It was noted that inspectors would be looking for evidence of strong leadership and partnership working. Notice of an inspection would arrive on a Monday morning.

It was requested that the possible dates for the Standard Inspection Framework be circulated. **(Action: Sarah Roberts)**

83. **Looked After Children Missing from Home and Care**

Sonia Johnson, Head of Specialist Support, Children's Social Care reported on Looked After Children Missing from Home and Care.

Covering the period April 2015 to March 2016, there were an average of 100 Looked After Children, 72 of whom were over 11's. During the 12 month period, 23 children had been reported Missing on a total of 100 occasions. 20 children had been reported Absent on 52 occasions. 32% of total Looked After Children had been reported as either Missing or Absent over the year. Sonia commented that officers were unsure how this data compared to that of other authorities as there was no national data available.

There were no particular peaks during the year or around any event in the year. There had been more boys reported missing than girls (64% and 36% respectively), but Sonia reported that this was reassuring as it meant that missing boys were being reported correctly. The peak age for Looked After Children to be declared Missing was 16/17 years old, compared to 13/14 years old for all children. Sonia commented that this was also reassuring, as it meant that foster carers were positively reporting right up to the age of 18. There had been 10 Missing children from residential homes on 52 occasions, and although it was recognised that this reflected the national trend, it was agreed that there was work to be done.

If a Looked After Child was reported missing, their Risk Assessment would be sent to the Emergency Duty Team in their host Local Authority and to the Police.

There were 99 instances where a Return to Home interview was required, and 6 children refused these on 20 different occasions. 79 successful Return to Home interviews had been carried out, and 69 (87%) of these had been conducted within 72 hours. This was recognised as a significant improvement, resultant of improved partnership working.

Arising from questions, the following points were noted:

- It was understood that Return to Home interviews were effective at preventing future Missing episodes, as they identified the places where the young person was likely to go if they went missing again.
- The interviewer would always be independent of a residential home and the Over 11's team in order to identify any issues with their placement or their social worker. The best person to conduct the interview was always identified before a Missing episode occurred.
- There was a slight tendency to see a peak in Missing episodes following school holidays, although the peak in the January 2016 data related to one specific child with their circumstances.

- Looked After Children were generally an older cohort due to the promotion of Special Guardianship Orders for younger children. The older children were also often subjects of chronic neglect, around which there had been significant preventative work in more recent years.

84. **Larchwood Annual Report and Statement of Purpose**

Sonia Johnson, Head of Specialist Support, Children's Social Care reported on the Larchwood Annual Report and Statement of Purpose.

It was reported that significant interior design works had taken place at Larchwood in order to create a more aspirational atmosphere for the children.

There were two Bracknell Forest Looked After Children currently undertaking placements at Larchwood, with another beginning soon. A good response had been received towards the income target, with children from Slough and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead using the service.

Work was ongoing at Larchwood to prevent children becoming full time Looked After Children. This included giving respite to parents who needed a break, but also giving teaching to help them resolve the issues they were experiencing, such as lack of sleep. Staff at Larchwood would encourage parents to make use of the courses available once they had had a short respite break.

Work had been undertaken to improve the successful transition outcomes for children moving on to Adult Social Care and Waymead.

Members thanked Sonia for her report and for attending.

85. **Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel Terms of Reference Update**

Sarah Roberts reported on the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel Terms of Reference Update.

It was noted that the amendments were to include the position of two lay members as co-optees, and the link members roles.

The amendments were noted.

86. **Performance Management Information**

Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care reported on the latest Performance Management Information.

Members were provided with information regarding the location of Bracknell Forest Looked After children in the country, some had moved with their foster carers, gone to residential schools or had been placed in specialist units around the country. It was noted that the majority remained in and around Bracknell Forest.

Members asked that a report be brought to the December Panel on children in residential care, to include how placements are commissioned, the size of the home, if Education was on site and their progress. **(ACTION Peter Hodges/Kashif Nawaz)**

The focus of performance management was the number of children who had moved placements more than three times, and the recruitment of foster carers for teenagers. A new Life Chances Co-ordinator was being recruited to facilitate this.

87. **Dates of Next Meetings**

The next meeting was scheduled for 7 December 2016 at 5pm in the Council Chamber, Easthampstead House.

88. **Items for Forward Plan**

The Items for the Forward Plan were noted, and it was agreed that A System Without Tiers be added as a standing item beginning in December 2016.

CHAIRMAN