

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY
PANEL
22 JUNE 2016
5.00 - 6.35 PM**



Present:

Councillor Heydon, Mrs Ingham (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Temperton, Brossard (Substitute) and Peacey (Substitute)

Also Present:

Doug Jennings, Bracknell Forest Carers Association
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mrs McCracken
Councillor Mrs Birch
Councillor Ms Hayes

57. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

58. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Jennifer McCracken be elected Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel for the current municipal year.

59. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Sandra Ingham be elected Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel for the current municipal year.

60. Minutes and Matters Arising - 9 March 2016

The minutes of the meeting on 9 March 2016 were approved.

Matters arising

Minute 48 – Councillors Mrs Temperton and Mrs Birch were now mentors to three year 11 looked after children.

At the Big Ballot Event held on 4 May 2016, Looked After Children voted for the Children in Care Council to focus on contact arrangements with friends and family during the year ahead.

Minute 50 – In relation to CAMHS Provision for Looked After Children and Local Transformation Plans for Improving Child and Adolescent Mental Health it was noted that a pilot to include ADHD clinics in schools was being looked at.

61. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

62. Panel Announcements

Resignation of Stephanie Rae

Panel members were advised that Stephanie Rae had resigned from the Panel due to personal matters and recruitment to replace Stephanie in train.

Youth Offending Service Inspection

The Panel was advised that the inspection took place in April and the inspectors found the quality of work to be excellent. There were many key strengths identified and some areas requiring improvement. The inspection report and action plan will be going to The Executive in July 2016.

Larchwood Short Break Unit

Members were advised that Larchwood once again judged as outstanding in its recent annual inspection. The Inspector liked the work that was undertaken with the children and the ethos of the home. Peter Hodges, Head of Service for Looked After Children, said it was well worth it for those Panel members who had not yet visited Larchwood to make arrangements to do so. Lorna Hunt said she would facilitate this.
(Action: Lorna Hunt)

Asylum Seekers

Councillor Mrs Temperton gave an update on Care Leavers in Bracknell facing deportation. One had been given 30 months leave to remain and would need to apply again after 25 months. The Council was helping this young person with employment to help build their CV.

Panel was updated about one care leaver now living in Liverpool and the issues they currently faced.

Members were advised about one young individual who was currently taking GCSEs and who had applied to Slough College to do mechanics. Councillor Mrs Temperton said there was concern that the individual may not achieve the required grades for their application to be successful and she planned to meet the Principal at Slough College in order to support the application.

Care Leavers

Councillor Barnard advised that scheduled work with Karen Roberts would take place in the summer.

Placements and Short Breaks

Councillor Mrs Ingham updated Members on the work undertaken since the last meeting. Regular meetings had taken place with Peter Hodges and had focused on the recruitment of foster carers specifically for teenagers and the use of social media for recruitment and retention of and support to foster carers. A joint innovation bid by Cornerstone has been submitted to the Dfe for specialist recruitment, training and mentoring of foster carers, covering Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, Wokingham and RBWM. Cornerstone currently work with Adopt Berkshire.

Short breaks were discussed with the aim of recruiting two or three foster carers who could offer short break support to families, nurturing children with additional needs. It was felt that recruitment could take place within local networks including schools and emergency services. Councillors Iain McCracken and Tina Mackenzie-Boyle would be approached for leads which would be passed on to the Looked After Children's team. **(Action: Councillors McCracken and Ingham)**

Fundraising for the 2017 LAC achievement awards had been looked at and The Grange and The Hilton Bracknell would be approached so see if either would sponsor the event by donating their venue and food. The Virtual School would look to local businesses for gift donations for the event in return for promotion of their business.

Regulation 44

It was noted that Councillor Ms Suki Hayes was booked to carry out Regulation 44 visits with Sarah Roberts.

Work Experience and Apprenticeships

Panel was updated that Kashif Nawaz was looking to approach companies in Bracknell and local businesses to see if they could provide opportunities to those seeking work experience or apprenticeships.

Youth Service and Leisure Provision for Looked After Children

It was agreed this would be carried forward to the next meeting as Councillor Mrs Gill Birch was not present.

63. Adoption Statement of Purpose and Annual Report

The Panel received a report on the Adoption Statement of Purpose and Adoption Service Annual Report 2015-16 from Hilary Loades, Adopt Berkshire. The purpose of the reports was to review the progress made since some adoption functions had moved to Adopt Berkshire in December 2014.

Data for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 in Bracknell Forest included:

- As a result of the collaboration with Adopt Berkshire, all six children who had plans for adoption at some stage in 2015-16 had been placed with adopters and were awaiting the final making of an Adoption Order.
- Eight children were placed with adopters (two were now the subject of adoption orders).
- Two children had placement orders (these children were now adopted).
- Nine children had adoption orders granted in 2015-16.
- No child was placed for adoption from overseas.

Hilary stated that improved cooperation between all four contributing local authorities and collaborative working had enabled all children with complex needs to be placed as well as older children with special needs.

Adopt Berkshire was supported by the Cornerstone Partnership to achieve its service aims in a number of areas, including the recruitment of adopters, the provision of mentor support and the delivery of training to potential, prospective and approved adopters at all stages of the adoption process.

Hilary said regionalisation was on the Government agenda and The Department of Education had published a paper in June 2015 titled 'Regionalising Adoption' which proposed the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies involving Voluntary Adoption Agencies. The aims included speeding up matching children with adopters, improving adopter recruitment, ensuring that high quality adoption support services were available and reducing costs. Hilary said Adopt Berkshire was highlighted in the document as being a model of good practice and the Panel was advised that work was being undertaken with other local authorities for Adopt Berkshire to become part of a Regional Adoption Agency.

The latest Scorecard, which was introduced to address delays in the adoption process, related to data from 152 Local Authorities for 2012-15. The figures showed that the time taken between court approval and placing children for adoption for Bracknell Forest was 435 days which was significantly higher than the target of an average of 121 days. However, this masked the positive story that Bracknell Forest and Adopt Berkshire had been able to find adopters for children such as a sibling group of school age who had developmental delay. Hilary said it was testament to the partnership with Adopt Berkshire that adopters had been found to take older children with complex needs and added there were currently no older children waiting to be placed. Hilary advised there were now more parents who wanted to adopt than there were children waiting to be placed and the future expansion of Adopt Berkshire pointed to even more success in this regard. Doug Jennings, foster carer, had fostered two school aged boys with special needs who had moved into their adoptive placement. The move had gone exceptionally well and they had been all well supported and prepared by Adopt Berkshire and the children's social worker.

In response to Member's questions, the following points were clarified:

- Special Guardianship Order – this was an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian when adoption was not an appropriate course of action. The order enabled a child to remain within their family and provided the security of day-to-day parenting but did not end the relationship between the child and their birth parent(s).
- Letterbox Arrangement – when a child had been placed a letter from the adoptive parents was sent to the birth parents or grandparents to reassure them of their commitment to the child. Going forward, letters and information could be exchanged twice yearly, in some cases with the participation of the child if they wanted to contribute, until the child reached 18 years of age. The hope was that the exchange would be beneficial to the child in helping them understand their situation.

The Panel thanked Hilary for attending and presenting the report.

64. **Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report**

The Panel received a report on the Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report. The report gave an overview of Panel activity between April 2015 and March 2016.

Eleven new foster carers were recruited over the period which exceeded the target of 10. There continued to be a need to recruit for children of all ages, particularly for over 10s to reflect the LAC population need. The team were down on a Recruitment Officer post but it was hoped the position would be filled within the next couple of months.

The Foster Panel had eleven members which included an independent Chairperson with a legal background, three Social Workers, a foster carer, a LAC nurse, three independent members and a Councillor which was Councillor Barnard.

Foster carers already received a lot of support from the team and it was intended for this to be built on by joining forces with Cornerstone if the innovation bid was successful. Whilst Cornerstone was set up to help improve the adoption process it was felt the Foster Service could benefit from their research and provision of training and education. It was felt that if foster carers could learn the same type of skills as adopters there would then be no change in the style of parenting during the transition

from foster care to adoption. The Fostering Service was keen for carers to also receive guidance from mentors and for them to be supported by a wider network..

Panel was advised that Cornerstone was a Social Enterprise and Limited company sponsored by the Department for Education. It was founded and run by two adopters with experience of the adoption process who were using their personal and business experience to help improve the process. Services provided by Cornerstone included:

- The recruitment of adopters relevant to the profiles of children waiting in a local area – in particular hard to place children including older & BME children, sibling groups and children with disabilities.
- Peer mentoring for each adopter as they moved through the process of being assessed and matched.
- Providing approved adopters with therapeutic parenting training and ongoing knowledge development giving practical parenting strategies, skills and information needed to tackle some of the challenges that come with adoptive parenting.

Doug Jennings updated the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel on the activities of the Foster Carer Association, they meet on a monthly basis, including coffee mornings for social support. Foster carers also ran a successful stall at the recent local Donkey Derby which garnered interest from prospective foster carers.

65. **Private Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report**

The Panel noted a report on the Private Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report.

Panel were advised that a privately fostered child is one who was under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) who is cared for, or it is proposed to be cared for, and provided with accommodation by someone other than:

- A parent of his/hers
- A person who was not a parent of his/hers but who had parental responsibility for him/her
- A close relative of his/hers, i.e. aunt/uncle/step-parent/grandparent/sibling but not a cousin or great-aunt/uncle,

and she/he had been cared for and accommodated by that person for 28 days or more, or the period of actual fostering was less than 28 days but the private foster carer intended to foster him/her for a period of 28 days or more.

The responsibilities of the local authority in relation to private fostering were primarily to respond to a notification of a private fostering arrangement by visiting and assessing whether the welfare of the privately fostered child was being satisfactorily safeguarded and to provide ongoing monitoring and support to children who were privately fostered. Work was held within the Family Placement Team and then allocated to the appropriate area team.

During 2015-16 the Family Placement Team reviewed and amended the following aspects of the private fostering process:

- Increased the number of agencies they visit to promote private fostering.
- Reviewed the cue cards for social workers and professionals
- Reviewed the letter that was sent to boarding schools requesting information about a child who may be privately fostered during school holidays.
- Reviewed the private fostering policy and procedures.

- Developed links with the Early Years to enable information to be translated and shared for families whose first language is not English and develop awareness about private fostering.
- Reviewed the current web pages and changed the location of the private fostering information

Members were asked to note that an action plan was in place for 2016-17 to continue this review and updating process. The full action plan was set out in the report and included:

- Reviewing the Bracknell Forest website pages for Private Fostering and to include Private Fostering notification forms that parents and carers could use.
- Ensure Statement of Purpose 2015/16 uploaded.
- Continuing to develop links with Early Years and ensure information is translated and produced in the appropriate language.
- A review of the Private Fostering Audit tool.
- A review of the electronic recording system to provide a more streamlined system which continued to support Private Fostering arrangements.
- Quality assure new private fostering arrangements by Head of Service within 42 days of notification.

Peter Hodges advised Panel that there were two private fostering arrangements that had parental consent within Bracknell Forest. The report stated that the number had been as high as five but three of these children were no longer the subject of private fostering arrangements due to now being over 16 years old or returning to the care of parents.

Panel members discussed children who received home education. Children receiving home education were monitored by the Targeted Services Team, the children's work could be viewed and their parents spoken to however the team could not meet with the children themselves. Members were advised that children were home educated for a variety of reasons; some parents believed passionately in home education or were dissatisfied with school education provision, some children were on the cusp of exclusion and some families could not meet routine requirements to get the child to school regularly or on time.

66. Review of Corporate Parenting Strategy and CPAP Terms of Reference

The Panel was asked to consider the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Sarah Roberts, Policy and Research Officer, said the point of the report was to review the two areas that had been adopted in June 2015 regarding the development of the Panel in relation to Membership and Councillors' roles. CPAP members had agreed to review these pilots in twelve months with a view to incorporating them permanently into the strategy if successful.

Over the past year two lay members had been recruited to CPAP, Doug Jennings and Stephanie Rae. Doug is a Foster carer and member of the Bracknell Forest Foster Carers Association and Stephanie is a care experienced individual. Unfortunately Ms Rae had since had to resign due to a change in her circumstances and a new member was being sought.

Since June 2015 CPAP members had undertaken a specific 'link role' on behalf of the Panel in the following areas:

- housing/care-leavers

- asylum seekers
- work experience and apprenticeships for looked after children
- education of looked after children
- health of looked after children
- placements and short breaks
- leisure/social activity for looked after children
- listening to looked after children/young people.

The report stated that Link Members reported to CPAP on their activities via Panel Announcements in December 2015 and March 2016 and the roles appeared to be making a positive contribution

A move to formally extend membership to Doug Jennings was proposed together with a move to formally adopt Member's link roles as part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy by Councillor Mrs Ingham and seconded by Councillor Heydon. All Members were in favour of both proposals.

67. **Larchwood Regulation 44 Visits Annual Report**

The Panel were required to note an update on the Larchwood Regulation 44 Visits Annual Report from Sarah Roberts.

Since the last report to CPAP six Regulation 44 visits to Larchwood had been undertaken by Sarah Roberts between October 2015 and March 2016. The reports from the last six months' visits had been very positive:

- The atmosphere in the home was happy and relaxed.
- The home was secure and in good physical condition with improvements made to the indoor and outdoor areas specifically in response to individual children's needs.
- There was a stable core of permanent staff supported by regular relief staff and there was evidence of good, supportive relationships within the team.
- Good induction and training and development opportunities were made available for new members of staff and evidence in supervision files demonstrated that individual training needs for all staff were being identified and met.
- Reflective group supervision was now being provided and was appreciated by staff. Staff meetings had been used to celebrate achievement and build the team.
- Positive relationships between staff and young people were clear in both unit records and direct observations with excellent one to one work observed.
- There was evidence that young people participated in a variety of activities that they enjoyed and had fun.
- The views, wishes and feelings of young people had been actively sought and there was evidence of them influencing practice.
- Care plans were detailed and demonstrated good communication with parents and other professionals. Staff were considering how to address cultural needs within the plans. Multi-agency working was evident in plans specifically to address behaviour management.

Since April 2015 members of the Conference and Review Team had participated in undertaking some visits with Sarah. Going forward the Conference and Review team and the QA Officer would again be included in the rota. In addition, Councillor Ms Suki Hayes had taken a lead role for Larchwood and would accompany Sarah on a number of visits.

68. **Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Panel were required to note the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy which was presented by Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People and Learning.

The report was valuable in that it highlighted the issues faced by children and young people with mental health problems. In response to feedback from service users, the report set out the challenges to reduce waiting times, increase resources to meet the demand for early emotional wellbeing interventions, free up specialist mental health staff to work more closely with partners such as schools and provide better pre- and post-diagnostic support for those waiting assessment of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The developments planned for 2016 – 2019 include:

The Best for All

- a. To improve casework liaison between the specialist mental health service and all schools.
- b. To support all schools in Bracknell Forest to continue to be Healthy Schools.
- c. To improve the coordination of training in mental and emotional wellbeing, offering evidence-based courses where possible.

Better Information

- a. To run a successful anti-stigma campaign which increases the understanding of mental ill-health among children, young people and their families.
- b. To review and improve pathways for early mental and emotional wellbeing support across Bracknell Forest.
- c. To make recommendations for routinely collecting better health and wellbeing information about our children and young people.

Early Intervention

- a. To improve the support provided to children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder, both before and after diagnosis.
- b. To increase the training delivered about perinatal mental health and for health professionals to provide better support for vulnerable new mothers.
- c. To establish a successful, blended, counselling service for young people.

Specialist Care

- a. To increase specialist provision for children and young people with eating problems and earlier support for those suffering psychosis.
- b. To achieve better outcomes for young people whose care transfers to the adult mental health service.
- c. To increase the in-patient capacity at the Berkshire Adolescent Unit.

The Panel were advised that work was being undertaken with Bracknell & Ascot CCG on the issues and the CCG had increased funding to help deliver on the challenges including early intervention in order to prevent decline into serious mental distress.

A System Without Tiers

The Government's new strategy, 'Future In Mind' (DH 2015a), sets out a clear pathway for children with mental health needs to access the right services and its key themes were promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention, and the change within CAMHS into a service without tiers. Future In Mind proposes a conceptual shift to a whole system approach that shifts focus to the outcomes of interventions and supersedes the current, escalator model with services defined by increasing

severity or complexity of condition. Janette advised Members about the Thrive Model which would see a move from a CAMH system commissioned around tiers to a broad spectrum of emotional wellbeing and mental health support and services that tries to draw a clearer distinction between treatment, on the one hand, and support, on the other.

Janette said there was good momentum to drive the Thrive model forward in order to remove barriers to services and treatment which existed with the current 3-tier system. Councillor Heydon said monitoring the progress of A System Without Tiers should be a priority for this Panel and proposed that it was an agenda item for a future meeting.

69. **Performance Management Information**

The Panel received the performance management information from Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer, Children's Social Care.

The stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement information demonstrated that 17 under 16 year old looked after children had been in their current placement for more than 2 years. There had been 27 looked after children under 16 and in care for 2.5 years. The key challenge during 2015/16 had been the number of children who had more than 3 moves, this was 17.5% This was being closely analysed and monitored by the Head of Service for Looked After Children and the Innovation Bid with Cornerstone would greatly assist with placement stability.

The adoption or Special Guardianship of children in care had increased to 19 (25%) at the end of the year from 15 (17%) in December 2015 and each of the two previous years. This good performance with permanency was a key priority for the service.

The timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption was just outside of target, with twin girls being placed a few days after being waiting for 12 months.

28% of children in care lived more than 20 miles from Bracknell Forest, a slight decrease from December 2015. For many of these there were ongoing plans to bring them closer to Bracknell and it was commented that as many placements as possible were found in Bracknell Forest.

The ward data of Looked After Children's originating home address showed that 15% of all looked after children came from Hanworth, 13% from Old Bracknell and 12% from Crown Wood.

The ward data of children Becoming Looked After 2015-16 (originating home address) showed that 12 children came from Harmans Water, 11 from Old Bracknell and 7 came from Crown Wood. The data demonstrated these children did not come from large families but from families with an average of 2 children. It was noted there were no Children's Centres located within Harmans Water and Crown Wood and some Members felt this lack of provision meant families were not able to benefit from early intervention unlike The Oaks and Great Hollands where families could and did ask for help and receive support. Janette Karklins agreed to look into the data regarding this..

(Action: Janette Karklins)

The number of children who had their annual Health Assessment on time was high at 97%, but a few young people had refused to have a Health Assessment. Bracknell

Forest had a dedicated nurse for LAC who engaged with young people, including those who refused Health Assessments, to encourage them to do so.

The number of children who had a dental check on time demonstrated a slight decrease from March 2015, mainly due to an increase in the number of children who refused to attend a check-up.

The percentage of care leavers who were in suitable accommodation at year-end was 100%, the same as at December 2015, but was an increase on the previous year.

The percentage of care leavers (aged 19, 20 and 21) in education, employment or training remained the same at year-end as December 2015 at 57.1%. The number of NEET care leavers was reviewed monthly; some were unable to work or train because they were parents or had health issues (progress was being made in supporting those with child care responsibilities to attend college). Work continues to support young people who are NEET to secure sustainable education, employment and training.

Members agreed the Children's Social Care performance indicators were good and Janette Karklins said that early intervention work over the last five years and huge investment in social work staff had both had a positive impact. Janette said a report detailing the factors which had led to the good indicators was being taken to CMT and would be circulated to Members.

(Action: Janette Karklins)

70. AOB

Janette Karklins asked Members to ensure that if they were unable to safely secure CPAP papers that they disposed of them in the confidential waste as some information was confidential and sensitive.

Members were advised that Councillor Mrs Jennifer McCracken had proposed that future meetings were brought forward to 4PM. Members said they would prefer that the start time remained at 5PM but Sarah Roberts said she would obtain feedback from Members not present today.

(Action: Sarah Roberts)

71. Dates of Future Meetings

21 September 2016 5pm Council Chamber, Easthampstead House
7 December 2016 5pm Council Chamber, Easthampstead House
8 March 2017 5pm Council Chamber, Easthampstead House

72. Items for Forward Plan

September 2016

Health of Looked After Children Annual Report
LAC Commissioning Strategy
IRO Annual Report and Chief Officer's Response
Education Achievements and Destinations of Looked After Children
Larchwood Annual Report and Statement of Purpose.
Life Chances Team Annual Report
Youth Services Annual Report
Looked After Children: Life Skills Programme
Advocacy and Independent Visitors Services

CHAIRMAN

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