

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY
PANEL
9 MARCH 2016
5.05 - 7.15 PM**



Present:

Councillor Mrs Jennifer McCracken
Councillor Mrs Gill Birch
Councillor Ms Suki Hayes
Councillor Mrs Sandra Ingham
Councillor Mrs Mary Temperton

Also Present:

Doug Jennings, Bracknell Forest Foster Carers Association
Councillor Dr Gareth Barnard

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Peter Heydon
Stephanie Rae, Independent Lay

45. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

46. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting on 9 December 2016 were approved, subject to the following amendment in Minute 35:

For clarity, it was agreed that Councillor Mrs Temperton's update be updated to read 'One young person had been shot shortly after going back because he was so westernised. 10% of Bracknell Forest care leavers are asylum seekers.'

Matters arising

Minute 35 – It was reported that the Elected Members' Christmas Collection had raised £648, and an additional £250 donation from Bracknell Regeneration Partnership. The money had been spent on gift vouchers, food parcels, toiletries, and had also helped to fund a trip for Care Leavers to go go-karting. It was requested that the thanks of the young people be expressed to members' for their generosity.

Minute 37 – Information regarding good practice of Independent Visitors had been circulated to members, and it was requested that a feature on advocacy services and independent visitors be added to the September 2016 agenda.

(Action: Lizzie Rich)

47. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

48. Panel Announcements

Terms of Reference for Link Officers

Elected members had agreed to take on a specific linking role, on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Panel. The links would be to one or more of the following areas:

- housing and 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 for looked after children
- listening to looked after children/young people.

A local authority officer from within Children's Services had been identified as the point of contact for each elected member. The elected member and the officer would meet regularly to discuss their particular area. Where appropriate the councillor would use their skills and contacts to support service development in that area. The councillor would report back to Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel on any activity they have been engaged in or awareness and learning they can share.

Asylum seekers

Councillor Mrs Temperton gave an update on the Muslim looked after children in Bracknell Forest who had been travelling to London and Slough to find religious and cultural support. Cllr Mrs Temperton had contacted the Bracknell Muslim group who had agreed to meet and support these children and young people locally.

Councillor Mrs Temperton encouraged panel members to watch the programme *Deported to Afghanistan* by the BBC. She expressed ongoing concern for the looked after children in Bracknell facing deportation, and gave an update on their situations. One had received extra time to stay in the UK, and another had been asked to reapply for leave to remain.

Work experience and apprenticeships

Kashif Nawaz updated the panel on provision of work experience for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, and was particularly grateful for Councillor Heydon's support. It was reported that Kashif was taking a proposal regarding Council Apprenticeships to Corporate Management Team for their support.

One Care Leaver had been appointed as an apprentice at the Virtual School, and would be starting soon. Four looked after young people were on work placements, and twelve more were expected to start work placements soon.

Kashif asked panel members to consider being mentors for year 11s. There were ten year 11 looked after children, at least three of which needed mentors. One of these was an asylum seeker. Kashif commented that any elected members who volunteered to be mentors would receive support from the Virtual School. Mentors would visit the mentees once at the end of April, once at the end of July and once at the end of August. It was commented that elected member mentors would provide experience of the world of work to the children.

Councillors Mrs Temperton and Mrs Birch volunteered.

Placements

Councillor Ingham commented on the promotional work ongoing to promote fostering in Bracknell Forest. A website had been developed to demonstrate the possibilities outside of the constraints of the Bracknell Forest website, although this was not yet live and password protected. A4 and A5 posters had been distributed to all Conservative members for their wards, and a feature in the Hanworth councillors' leaflet had been published. Two videos had been created to demonstrate fostering from the point of view of foster parents, and there had also been work on a fostering Facebook page.

An afternoon tea had been organised for Conservative members to promote fostering.

Youth Service and Leisure Provision for Looked After Children

Councillor Mrs Birch reported on the work ongoing with Wellington College, including a request to deliver the 'Do You Know' training to teachers and pupils in the Autumn. Wellington College have also offered a Mindfulness course, and a low ropes course to the Looked After Children, amongst other courses.

A Duke of Edinburgh course was being developed specifically for Looked After Children. It was hoped that this would give the young people something to aim for, and would be an asset on their CV.

Big Ballot Event

The second annual Big Ballot Event for Looked After Children would be held in the Council Chamber on 4 May 2016. This would be an opportunity for Looked After Children to review how well the council were delivering on their Pledge to Looked After Children and to vote on the issue they wished their Children in Care Council to focus on during the year ahead.

Councillor Training

A training session on the work of Children's Social Care and the responsibilities of Corporate Parenting would be held on 3 May 2016

49. Foster Carers Association

The Panel welcomed Doug Jennings and Maggie Smith from the Foster Carers Association to the meeting.

The Foster Carer Association had been formed in 2015 and had met for the first time at Easthampstead House in October 2015. The Association aimed to support foster carers, promote the recruitment of new foster carers, encourage professional development and training of foster carers and provide some 'off duty' social time.

The Association had met twice since its first meeting, and was reported to be growing both in number and member contribution. 30 people had attended the Christmas event held at the Admiral Cunningham.

The group held a support group for foster carers to meet and chat over coffee every other Thursday. Councillors Heydon and Mrs Birch had visited this group recently. This group attracted between 6-18 people at each meeting.

It was reported that Peter Hodges, Head of Service for Looked After Children was involved with the Association, and had been looking at opportunities for professional development and training including evening meetings.

The Foster Carer Association were planning a number of events for 2016, including an adult-only quiz night in May, and a BBQ/Caribbean evening for families.

50. **CAMHS Provision for Looked After Children and the Local Transformation Plans for Improving Child and Adolescent Mental Health**

Andrew Moody, Head of Children and Women's Commissioning for the East Berkshire CCGs and Louise Noble Service Manager for CAMHS presented the Transformation Plan for Children and Young People 2015-20, particularly focussing on mental health.

The Future in Mind report set out a clear pathway for children with mental health needs to access the right services. Andrew commented that children's mental health had not received the attention that it should have done in the past. The key themes of the Future in Mind report were promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention, and the change within CAMHS into a service without tiers.

The Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing had been signed off by NHS England at the end of 2015, and set out details of the transformation plan.

Andrew reported that key objectives for CAMHS were to:

- Promote resilience for children and young people with mental health issues, enabling them to live normal lives with the necessary support
- Provide better support for families and carers, and improve signposting to care for parents as well as their children
- Promote peer support, including the use of social media
- Equipping professionals with the skills to respond to mental health needs, including training in counselling and autism.

Andrew reported on progress made with the transformation plan. The plan had been assured by NHS England and funding had been released in December 2015. A Working Group had been set up to drive the project, deal with funding and keep the project to account. Stakeholder engagement was being carried out, including with members of the public.

Andrew commented on the following priorities of the plan for 2015/16:

- Develop a local model for the Eating Disorder service
- Reduce waiting lists
- Develop a blended online and face-to-face approach to counselling with Kooth across the 3 CCGs
- Develop better services to support children and families post diagnosis for Autistic Spectrum Disorder, which the Berkshire Autistic Society were looking into
- Strengthen advocacy for children and young people in transition
- Improve the Psychiatric liaison for children and young people to prevent unnecessary admission to A&E or police cells in mental health crises
- Set up eating disorder services and monitor progress
- Work on an anti-stigma campaign, which Andrew commented had been successful
- Develop children and young people's IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) which relied on counselling and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) rather than drugs

The priorities of the plan for 2017-2020 were subject to change on a year-by-year basis, but Andrew commented on the following priorities:

- Implementing eating disorder waiting time standard
- Peer support and links to third sector providers including services such as Youthline
- Developing and running skills workshops in schools for children and young people who have self-harmed, funded by an underspend in the eating disorder budget

The next steps were reported to be to allocate funding effectively to deliver the 2016/17 priorities, develop a communications plan and monitor the success of 2015/16 campaigns.

Arising from members' questions, the following points were noted:

- The development plan for Berkshire Health Foundation Trust included a review of sites, and Andrew reported that he was hoping for satellite clinics which could provide help more locally to parents of children with mental health needs as well as the children themselves. Andrew agreed to circulate these plans.
- There were separate waiting lists for different mental health needs, and the most severe cases would receive treatment sooner. Andrew commented that the waiting times were still an issue for CAMHS.
- The Children and Young People's Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board had both engaged with CAMHS to develop the Emotional and Wellbeing Plan which was in draft. This plan was going to the Executive in June.
- There was not yet a plan for fast-tracking vulnerable youth offenders and looked after children into CAMHS services, although this was a priority in the plan. Andrew commented that he would be working with the Youth Offending Service to achieve this.
- It was noted that early intervention and prevention was hoped to combat the 'demographic timebomb' of children and young people's mental health needs. Andrew commented that CAMHS aimed to be a health service, rather than an illness service.
- If a patient moved out of area, their CAMHS support would follow them to their new local authority.

It was noted that there were currently 358 children and young people on the waiting list for CAMHS without an appointment, and that the majority of these were waiting for Autism Spectrum Disorder assistance. It was noted that these children would have been assessed on the common point of entry, and would have received some support in the form of a letter to their school, and referral to external autism support groups.

In 2015/16, the East and West Berkshire CCGs had invested in CAMHS to fund 30 additional clinicians, most of which were already in post. Existing staff were also being funded to maintain their skills during this expansion period.

It was reported that CAMHS were looking at how to make their service more effective, and a part of this had been The Toolkit for health visitors, school teachers and other professionals. A focus on effective working had also led to Young SHARAN being implemented. Young SHARAN was an invitation-only online forum for people with different needs. There was currently provision for peri-natal mothers, but it was hoped that this would expand into children and young people's mental health needs. Louise also reported on ConsultMe, which

was a forum for GPs, nurse and other partners to consult CAMHS professionals. Louise reported the challenge was now to connect these online support services.

51. **Leaving Care Service Peer Review**

The Panel received a report on the Care Leavers Peer Review. The report gave an overview of the developments of the Care Leavers Service following the Safeguarding and Looked After Children (SLAC) Inspection in 2011. The report had been written following requirements of the peer review team, but had not raised anything not already known. It was reported that the team are a long way through the actions on the review.

A key feature of the report was transition, and it was commented that Staying Put was just one element of this. Plans were being put in place to deliver transition services earlier in the lives of Looked After Children. This work was reported to be ongoing. It was reported that disabled children were a key focus for this work, as the transition into adulthood was harder for disabled looked after children.

It was reported that the work resultant of the peer review had been successful. An officer had been recruited to work with NEET's one day every week, and apprenticeships were developing.

This report was commended as being a good example of co-working, and the panel thanked Karen for the report.

52. **Staying Put Report**

The panel received a report on a review of the Staying Put policy. The report had been signed off by the Executive in 2015, and work was ongoing to execute the actions in the report.

The Staying Put policy was welcomed by the panel as a good policy for the young people.

It was suggested that a 'buddy' scheme could be implemented for foster carers of looked after children going through the Staying Put scheme to provide support and experience. It was agreed that this 'buddy' scheme would be taken back to the team.

It was reported that there were three Looked After Children currently Staying Put, and more planned for once they reach 18.

Staying Put provision was not fully covered by central government grant and has an impact on local budgets for 2016/17.

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

- Young people who were 'staying put' sign a contract with their foster carers to ensure that the house and facilities were treated with respect. There would be regular meetings between foster carer, young person and a mediator to deal with any issues arising.
- Once a young person was 'staying put', the payment to former foster carers would come from several different sources including Housing Benefit, payment of which is occasionally delayed.

53. Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to any individual (Item 10)

54. 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 19 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 adoption or Special Guardianship of children in care had increased to 17% in December 2015.

The timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption had improved.

29% of children in care lived more than 20 miles from Bracknell Forest. Some were in long term foster families who may have originally lived locally but then moved away, others are either in residential or IFA placements.

It was commented that as many placements as possible were found in Bracknell Forest, in foster care situations rather than with an agency or at school.

The ward data of Looked After Children's originating home address showed that 16% of all looked after children came from Hanworth in December 2015. Since April 2015, 20% of children who had become looked after had come from Old Bracknell, and 18% had come from Harmans Water.

Information was circulated on the ages of children in care which demonstrated that the numbers of older children being looked after has increased over the past three years. Information was also distributed on the number of people receiving Adoption or Special Guardianship Order (SGO) allowances, currently this amounts to approximately £400,000 per year. When a foster carer decides to permanently care for a child in their care, through being granted an Adoption or SGO, they received two years payments post order, SGO orders granted through the courts may also attract payments depending on the eligibility of the applicants. All such payments are subject to annual reviews.

It was reported that figures for orthodontist referrals were not recorded, and children had been referred where necessary.

55. Items for Forward Plan

June

- LAC Commissioning Strategy (including Placement Sufficiency)
- Health of LAC Strategy six month update

- Larchwood Reg 44 visits Annual Report
- Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report
- Adoption Statement of Purpose and Annual Report
- Emotional Health and Well Being Strategy
- Review of Corporate Parenting Strategy and CPAP Terms of Reference

September

- IRO Annual Report and Chief Officer's Response
- Education Achievements and Destinations of Looked After Children
- Life Chances Team Annual Report
- Youth Services Annual Report
- Looked After Children: Life Skills Programme

56. **Dates of next meetings**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 22 June 2016 at 5pm in the Council Chamber, Easthampstead House.