

Minutes of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL held on TUESDAY
20 SEPTEMBER 2016 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Miles (Chair)

Councillors Cannon, Clancy, Crooks, Green, V Hopkins and Nolan

Officers: M Bracey (Corporate Director - People), N Rayner (Service Director [Children and Families]), S Anderson (Named Nurse in Child Care), C Baines (Named Nurse in Child Care), E Hosking (Participation Youth Worker - Children's Social Care), M Mellor (Virtual School Head-Teacher), J Roberts (Independent Reviewing Officer) and S Heap (Committee Services and Scrutiny Manager)

Apology: Councillor Betteley

CP09 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None received.

CP10 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 12 July 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to Councillor Nolan's attendance being recorded.

CP11 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Panel considered the Annual Report 2015/16 of the Independent Reviewing Officers.

The Panel noted that it was the role of the Independent Reviewing Officers to assure the quality and oversee the care planning for all children in the Council's care.

It was highlighted that there had been significant changes and developments for the Independent Reviewing Officer service during this year which had included a number of staff changes which were now bedding in and an increase in the number of looked after children.

It was also noted that the report consolidated and developed some of the key themes from the comprehensive Annual Report issued in 2014/15.

In answer to questions from members of the Panel it was noted that:

- (a) in order to be able to communicate effectively with children whose first language was not English, Independent



Reviewing Officers made use of interpreters generally from the Community Language Service;

- (b) for looked after children who were in long term foster care, while the annual reviews were quite formal in line with Regulation, mid-year reviews were less so and were tailored to comply with the contact preferences expressed by the young persons;
- (c) the management reporting structure was such that the Independent Reviewing Officers were able to express any concerns openly to management and there was a commitment to resolving them at team and service manager level without further escalation to the Service Director or the Director of Children's Services. This was both at an individual case level and at the service level. A practice example of this was when the Independent Reviewing Officers wrote a paper about practice concerns in the Corporate Parenting Social Work team which were discussed with the Head of Service who addressed the concerns through the Corporate Parenting Team Development Plan, which had previously been reported to the Panel on 17 November 2015 (Minute CP25 refers).

Independent Reviewing Officers were also encouraged to come forward with initiatives for service improvements, an example being the involvement of Independent Reviewing Officers in the induction process for new social workers;

- (d) the plans for young people who were in voluntary care ("Section 20") were monitored to ensure that the plans remained appropriate and parental decision making about the young person was robust and appropriate;
- (e) the apparent falling rate of participation in reviews by parents could be partly attributed to the increasing number of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people entering care, but that this was an area of focus and improvement for the service;
- (f) it was recognised that the speed of distribution of the outcomes and the minutes from childcare reviews needed to be improved and efforts were being made to improve the turnaround time;
- (g) despite the unusual level of recent staff turnover in the Independent Reviewing Officers team, a high priority was given to staff retention and a number of experienced staff had been recruited. Measures were also being taken to increase the resilience of the service by broadening the responsibilities of Independent Reviewing Officers and child protection conference Chairs to enable them to undertake each others' roles; and

- (h) to support the approach to increase resilience, all staff were trained in their roles and initiatives were being taken to ensure that staff across the service also had an understanding of each other's roles and where appropriate share skills.

The Panel also reviewed and noted the Objectives for 2016/17 which were designed to continue the service improvements which were already underway.

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be received and officer colleagues concerned thanked for their work and for the report.
2. That the responsible Cabinet member be requested to address with officer colleagues the Panel's concerns with regard to the apparent delays in issuing Minutes from Childcare Reviews and receive assurance of active monitoring of future performance in this respect.

CP12

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL - OUR VOICE

The Panel noted that it was a key statutory requirement for Local Authorities to ensure that children in care participated in and contributed to decisions about their lives and to the development of services which were provided for them. As a result the Council had established a Children in Care Council (now known as 'Our Voice').

The Panel received details of participation and engagement with children and young people in care and care leavers which had taken place since the last meeting of the Panel in July 2016, particularly details of the 'Summer Sensation' Programme, which provided holiday activities for young people in care, and the 'New2UK Summer Programme, both of which had been well attended and had been well received.

It was reported that young people in care had been involved in a number of interviews for key members of staff, including the Corporate Parenting Team Deputy Manager and were also involved in the Supported Accommodation commissioning process.

The Panel discussed how its members and other councillors could more actively engage with the young people in care.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Panel, at its next meeting, consider ways in which it can more actively engage with the young people in the Council's care.
2. That the good work in encouraging participation and engagement by young people in care and care leavers be welcomed.

MILTON KEYNES ANNUAL REPORT ON THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN IN CARE 2015/16

The Panel received an overview of the statutory health service provided to Milton Keynes Children in Care from April 2015 to March 2016 which was aimed at providing assurance to stakeholders, including Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council, that the service provider, Central and North West London Milton Keynes NHS Trust, was compliant with National Guidance and providing high quality services which met the health needs of our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

It was reported that the Care Quality Commission had recently undertaken a review of services for looked after children and safeguarding in Milton Keynes and the findings which were still awaited would be circulated to members of the Panel once received.

In introducing the report it was emphasised that there was a joint approach to providing the health checks for both young people coming into care and those who remained in care, with close working between the Social Work Team and doctors at Milton Keynes Hospital. This helped ensure that doctors, when making their assessments, had all the relevant information available, including the necessary consents. Where the necessary consents were not in place there was an escalation process with the Social Work Team to help speed up the process.

The Panel noted that information from other sources, such as Thames Valley Police which undertook extensive health checks on newly arrived asylum seekers, was to be used to inform health assessments. This was a new protocol which had been developed alongside the Thames Valley Police Health Team.

The Panel also noted that the increase in young people coming into care was stretching services and as a result, to meet demand, the number of clinics was being increased, including clinics taking place on Saturdays.

In answer to questions from members of the Panel it was noted that:

- (a) clarification would be sought as to the projected number of 0 - 4 year old children included in section 2.1 of the report;
- (b) young people leaving care, while no longer receiving formal health assessments as a statutory duty post 18 years, were still supported with advice, information and sign posting to other services. The young people were also provided with their personal health information when they left care;
- (c) it was considered that the Children in Care Health and Social Care Forum was a valuable forum and that it was planned to include representation from the young people in care at the Forum,

- (d) there was a robust process for assessing the age of asylum seekers, in line with national guidance and case law;
- (e) there has been no incidence of HIV diagnosed amongst Milton Keynes looked after young people;
- (f) that as the report had been approved by the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust's Safeguarding Board it would be published on the Trust's Website. The report could also be received by the Milton Keynes Children's Safeguarding Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board, if those bodies wished to receive it; and
- (g) while health assessments from other bodies such as Thames Valley Police and Youth Offenders Centres were useful in informing the statutory health assessments, they could not negate the duty to undertake statutory health assessments.

The Panel reviewed and noted the Objectives for 2016/17, including ways of quality assuring the health assessments made by the doctors.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children's Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board be recommended to receive and review the report.
2. That the report be received and health colleagues concerned thanked for their work and for the report.

CP14

VIRTUAL SCHOOL EXAMINATION FEEDBACK

The Panel received the headline results in Key Stages 1 and 2 and GCSEs achieved by young people who were the responsibility of the virtual school.

The Panel noted that at Key Stage 1 results had been better than predicted. However, at Key Stage 2 results had not been as good as expected, possibly due to the increase in the required standards, and at GCSE the percentage of young people in the Council's Care achieving 5A* to C had not been as high as hoped.

The lead member noted the individual achievements of some of the young people, including one young person who had achieved 11A* to C grades and another young person who had achieved good results and is being encouraged to stay in education and attend university. It was hoped that positive experiences such as these would encourage the young people to stay in education if it was suitable for them and, where possible, to remain in their main stream schools, where they are known and supported, to pursue their A level studies.

The Panel recognised the role to be played by teachers and care staff alike to encourage those young people able to remain in

education and fulfil their potential and to ensure that the young people were aware of the opportunities available.

RESOLVED -

That the report on Key Stages 1 and 2 and GCSE results be received.

CP15

REGULATION 44 REPORT AND FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLOR VISITS

The Panel noted that Regulation 44 visits had been made to the Council's children's homes during July and August 2016.

The Panel also noted that Councillors Crooks and Nolan had visited both Furze House and Westminster House recently.

Councillor Crooks reported that he had received a very favourable impression in terms of the quality of the care provided by the staff and their relationships with the young people.

Councillor Crooks also reported that he had been approached by parents during his visit to Furze House who had raised the issue of respite care and it was also an issue mentioned by parents when he visited Westminster House.

Councillor Miles, the Chair of the Panel, informed the Panel of his informal visit to the Summer Activity Scheme held at the Mathiesen Centre, and how impressed he was at the range and quality of the activities available.

RESOLVED -

1. That details of the visits be noted.
2. That the Panel be circulated with a briefing note on the availability of respite care at the Council's Children's Homes.

CP16

OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Panel received a brief update on the ongoing Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING 8.30 PM

ADDENDUM TO MINUTES

Information following the Corporate Parenting Panel query relating to GP participation in the Safeguarding Forums:

'The Safeguarding forums are for the Lead Safeguarding adults and Children GP identified in each practice and also the practice managers. We have a total of 28 practices in MK. The GP forums are very well attended by all the practices throughout the year. LAC is spoken about at these forum but also the processes that each GP practice should have in place in regard to LAC that are registered ,are included in the yearly GP safeguarding training and in the practice Safeguarding policy .

The GP practices are supported by the MKCCG Designated Safeguarding Leads, the Named Safeguarding GP for Milton Keynes and Our specialist Primary Care Safeguarding Nurse who regularly offer support ,advice and safeguarding supervision to the practices across Milton Keynes'.

Andrea is also very happy to be contacted directly by any member who may have further queries:

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Carol Baines

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