



Minutes of the meeting of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL held on MONDAY 29 APRIL 2013 at 9.30 am

- Present:** Councillor Miles (Chair)
Councillors Brock, O'Neill, Small and Zealley
- Officers:** G Tolley (Director of Children's Services)(Part) N Rayner (Assistant Director [Children's Social Care]), C James (Safeguarding & Quality Manager) and S Muir (Committee Manager).
- Also Present:** Cllr Dransfield (Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Life Long Learning).
- Apology** Councillor Bradburn

PC86 MINUTES

With reference to Minute CP82, the Panel noted that the appropriate training would be arranged separately to the normal Training Programme.

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 4 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the word "Strategy" being deleted from the title to Minute CP84.

PC87 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None

PC88 UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Director of Children's Services advised that the Director of Children's Services at Central Bedfordshire Council had written to ask if it would be possible for two elected Members of its Corporate Parenting Panel, together with a Senior Officer from Children's Services to attend a future meeting of this Council's Corporate Parenting Panel on an observational basis. It was suggested that a reciprocal visit to Central Bedfordshire Council could be arranged at a later date.

RESOLVED –

The Panel looked forward to welcoming visitors from Central Bedfordshire Council to a future meeting.

**REGULATION 33 REPORTS AND MEMBERS VISITS
DECEMBER 2012 – FEBRUARY 2013.**

The Panel received details of the Regulation 33 Reports for the period December 2012 – February 2013 and noted that all visits undertaken for the reporting period judged the homes to be good or very good.

The Panel noted that all visitors had reported observations of good interaction between staff and the children with evidence of happy, settled and content children in the homes. Visitors had noted that the appropriate interventions to manage behaviours and respond to both children's individual needs and the needs of the group, had taken place.

The Panel also noted that health and safety was considered to be good and evidence of risk assessments being completed had been noted. Fire checks and drills were up to date in all units. However, in January 2013 the fire check had been overdue at The Walnuts, although this was immediately undertaken once identified.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**CHILDREN'S HOMES – INTERIM INSPECTIONS
RECOMMENDATION (REGULATION 33 AND MEMBERS VISITS)**

The Panel discussed the report which highlighted the recommendation relating to the effectiveness of the current Regulation 33 visiting arrangements, emerging from the recent Interim Ofsted Inspections of the three children's homes. It was reported that work had been carried out to improve quality assurance work in the homes and Member contact with young people and their parents

The Panel noted that that Member visits should now have a different focus and reporting format to that used by officers when undertaking inspections. It was suggested that current visiting arrangements should be replaced with twice yearly "events" at each home (6 in total) using a pre planned "Coffee Morning/Surgery style" arrangement. This approach would enable young people who were using the service, their parents, relatives and relevant professionals to be invited to talk directly to councillors.

The Panel further noted that with regards to Member visits:

- These were undertaken within statutory timescales and reports produced in a timely manner;
- Period of reporting by Members had been increased from 7 to 14 days.
- In the last reporting period one Member visit had taken place in January 2013 to Furze House;

- Officers were awaiting a response from Ofsted as to whether copies of the Regulation 33 reports should be supplied to Ofsted;
- Members were encouraged to be shown around the homes by young people and their parents and this would continue under the new arrangements;
- Member visit dates had been booked until April; dates for June onwards were currently being worked on and Panel Members would be notified in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the proposed changes to Member visits endorsed.

PC91 MILTON KEYNES FOSTERING SERVICES REGULATION 35 REPORT, 1 OCTOBER 2012 – 31 DECEMBER 2012

The Panel received the Milton Keynes Fostering Services Regulation 35 report, 1 October 2012 – 31 December 2012.

The following issues were highlighted in response to issues raised in the report:

- Paragraph 4 - The Assistant Director [Children's Social Care] to provide a separate response on the impact data about the effectiveness of the 12 month advert in MK Hospital magazine for Foster Carers.

It was suggested that "LINK" could be another advertising channel.

- Paragraph 10 – Family and Friends

It was explained that children were placed under Regulation 24 Care Planning, Placements and Case Review Regulations (England) 2010 (Temporary Approval of a Connected Person as a Foster Carer) whilst full fostering assessments took place. Often these cases involve the Courts and ultimately resulted in a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), to secure permanence for children within their extended family.

In connection with this the Panel heard that:

- In some cases relatives needed ongoing support by sharing parental responsibility with Children's Social Care.
- Some "temporary approval for connected persons" cases did not succeed for various reasons.
- It was rare for Children's Services to oppose the Court's intention for the child to be homed with a relative.
- The requirement for viability assessments to be provided to the court quickly, put a pressure on the service. However,

assuming children and carers were properly assessed, the placements tended to have good success rates as they kept children within their extended family; any disruptions were tracked and monitored.

- Paragraph 16 – Child missing from a Foster Home; the Committee noted that a child had been missing on two occasions.
- Paragraph 20 – Fostering Team Staff matter; the Committee noted that an interim arrangement had been in place. An Assistant Manager had been recruited with a start date in late May 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

PC92

TODAY'S CHILDREN, TOMORROW'S FUTURE (TCTF)

The Panel considered the report outlining activities relating to Milton Keynes Council's Children in Care Council.

It was noted that the Panel had met with the Children in Care Council in March 2013 and reviewed the progress of actions agreed at the September 2012 Today's Children, Tomorrow's Future meeting.

The Panel heard that there were difficulties for young people in finding suitable housing accommodation when they moved to independent living. Currently the young people were given a list of street names and 2 alternative homes to look at by Housing Services which they felt was not sufficient. The young people had stated that they had difficulties in affording to equip and furnish accommodation. This was being addressed by the use of purchasing cards by officers and support with accommodation issues would be raised with Housing Services.

The Panel were reminded that they had endorsed the national Care Leavers Charter in October 2012 and work to develop this locally in the Milton Keynes context was taking place with Care Leavers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That support with accommodation issues be raised with Housing Services

PC93

STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE 2013-2016

The Panel considered the draft Strategy for Children in Care 2013 – 2016.

The Panel noted that the draft Strategy addressed feedback from various consultation workshops carried out since the January Panel meeting and that the streamlined priorities would be valid for the next three years.

The Panel raised various minor drafting issues and noted that some data would be revised when 2012/13 figures are available.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft strategy be agreed
2. That the final version be sent to the Chair before submission to Cabinet.

PC94 MISSING CHILDREN IN MILTON KEYNES

The Panel considered the Missing Children in Milton Keynes report and heard that The Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board had identified missing children as one of three key priority areas for its 2013/14 business plan.

It was reported that Thames Valley Police would be adopting the newly approved Association of Chief Police Offices (ACPO) definition of a missing person.

It was reported that a number of actions were being undertaken to improve the accuracy of the data. However, there had been difficulties following up and obtaining background information about patterns of behaviour of some Looked after Children (LAC) from out of the area that were placed in care in Milton Keynes.

The Panel heard that in cases where a child went missing from school the school would immediately contact the child's carer. Additionally, the virtual school programme enabled monitoring and tracking of a child's whereabouts. Schools worked very hard to support Children in Care and would follow up immediately if a child was missing.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

PC95 IMPLICATIONS OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL ADOPTION DEVELOPMENTS FOR MILTON KEYNES CHILDREN IN CARE

The Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) presented the Milton Keynes Adoption Service's Improvement Plans which had been produced in the context of national policy and performance information and outlined plans to deliver a "step-change" improvement agenda, that utilised the recently announced 2013/14 one-off Milton Keynes Adoption Reform Grant.

The Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) explained that the grant would be used to move "hard to place young people" into "permanence placements" and to review the system, for working with other local authorities in the South East and Eastern Regions. Improvement models used in other local authorities such as Camden had demonstrated that by broadening the scope, e.g. by involving the local judiciary, outcomes for young people had been improved.

It was reported that the Reform Grant included provision to fund the national harmonisation of interagency fees. Currently, when Milton Keynes children were placed with non-Milton Keynes adopters from within the local adoption consortium, the interagency fee for such a placement was £6,000.00. Placement with adopters from another Local Authority outside the consortium arrangement was £13,000.00. The fee for placement with adopters approved by a voluntary adoption agency was currently £27,000.00. The Government was committed to implementing a single interagency fee which had not yet been set, but would likely be at or greater than the voluntary agency fee level. The ring fenced element of the Reform Grant included provision to cover this increase.

In addition, tailored home-finding for individual “hard to place” children, which include post-adoption therapeutic support, could be commissioned from specialist agencies for e.g. £65,000.00. Whilst a high one-off cost, this last option would be explored for a few individual children as it would deliver the benefits of adoption and be far less costly than on-going care costs to age 18.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Milton Keynes’ Children’s Services work to date to improve adoption performance be noted.
2. That the Panel receive regular updates of further progress during 2013/14.
3. That the one-off 2013/14 Adoption Reform grant be noted.
4. That the Panel receive regular updates on the level of expenditure and impact of the 2013/14 adoption reform grant.

PC96

SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

The Panel considered the progress of the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Performance Improvement Plan: 24 August 2012 – 24 February 2013

The Assistant Director (Children’s Social Care) reported that there were 3 points at “Amber”:

- Action 8 - Freeing, Discharging and Placement Orders.
The time frame had proved more challenging as it was dependent on court processes and some young people needed extended support before this could be addressed, but progress was being made. This was linked to the Adoption funding Item, as in the future, there should not be a ‘group of older’ children with adoption plans remaining in the care system.
- Action 14 - Ensure that the needs of children and young people in relation to their racial and cultural identity, religion and

disability are fully incorporated in assessment care planning and recording.

MK Children and Families to consider the diversity needs of and practice in response to Looked After Children (LAC), and, a report to be submitted in evidence by Children's Social Care to the MKC Children and Families Partnership Diversity Commission.

It was noted that this had been delayed as the Commission had been delayed.

- Action 15 - Improved Health outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC)
Promoting the Health of Children in Care: The Health Assessment Protocol for Health & Social Care Professionals was being revised and the process re-mapped.

It was noted that the Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) had met with partners in Health to progress this.

The Panel noted that the report referred to Looked After Children but this should now be Children in Care.

The Panel also heard that there were some areas of performance with partners that were being challenged. Some of the issues such as training records had been addressed and work was ongoing to address the remainder. Issues highlighted in the Improvement Plan had been included in the draft Strategy for Children in Care 2013 – 2016.

The Panel commented that there were a number of issues which it wished to monitor, including "Children Out Of Area" which was an issue highlighted in the meeting with the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection inspector. The Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) responded that Milton Keynes was a small geographical area in comparison to others in the region and it was difficult to compare like with like. However, the Head of Delivery Corporate Parenting was carrying out a detailed analysis of "Children Out of Area" and would bring the results to the next Panel Meeting

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the detailed analysis of "Children Out Of Area" be brought to the next meeting.

PC96 PROPOSED VISIT TO WESTMINSTER HOUSE.

The Panel heard that the newly built Westminster House had been approved by Ofsted and that Panel Members were invited to visit the completed building before it was occupied.

It was noted that the dates would be agreed direct with Members.

PC97

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday 17 June 2013 at 09.30.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.38 AM

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