

Minutes of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL held on TUESDAY
22 JANUARY 2019 at 6.30 pm

- Present:** Councillor Miles (Chair)
Councillors M Bradburn (Vice-Chair), Brown, Cannon, Clancy and
D Hopkins (Substitute for V Hopkins)
- Officers:** M Heath (Acting Director [Children's Services]), J Rabbitte (Head of
Delivery Corporate Parenting), D Elliott (Post 16 Improvement
Officer [(CLA), Virtual School]), E Hosking (Participation Youth
Worker [Children's Social Care]) and S Muir (Committee Manager)
- Apology:** Councillors Akter, Brunning and V Hopkins (Vice Chair)
- Also present:** Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member for Children and Families) and
6 Young People

CP17 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None received.

CP18 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 13 November
2018 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

CP19 OFFICER UPDATE

(a) 2019/20 Corporate Parenting Panel Work Plan

The Head of Delivery, Corporate Parenting, indicated that
future reports would include strategies to improve outcomes
for Young people in Care and Care Leavers. Colleagues
would be asked to interrogate and report on the statistics and
data in a manner that could be understood by lay people and
also explain the terminologies and jargon used in the Looked
after Children Sector.

It was anticipated that by reporting on a quarterly or half
yearly basis, trends would be identified that would be
monitored by the Corporate Parenting Panel. The data could
include:

- Placement of Children in Care (e.g. whether kinship
placements, close to Milton Keynes);
- those with an Adoption Plans;

- Health and Dental records; and
- those not in Education or Training (NEET).

Acting Director [Children's Services]) indicated that the data would provide the Panel with an understanding of the demography of Children In Care and the direction of travel of various themes. After a few months of information had been received, comparisons could then be made and the Panel would be in a position to provide meaningful challenge, evidenced by the data. National information could also be included to put the Milton Keynes figures in context.

Councillor D Hopkins indicated that in future, the data could also be compared with Children In Care in other local authorities.

Councillor Cannon indicated that the timeliness of the data to be included in the report would also have a bearing on how often and when the when the report came to the Panel e.g. annual achievement data.

Councillor M Bradburn indicated that the top ten Key Performance Indicators should also be included.

Following a discussion, Councillor Miles (Chair) indicated that initially the data should be presented on a quarterly basis if it was concerned with the well-being of Children in Care; however it was noted that data concerned with Achievement, was usually only available on an annual basis. These time frames could be reviewed at a future date.

(b) Key Lines of Enquiry

The Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) indicated that Key Lines of Enquiry could also be considered that drilled down in to various topics identified by the data analysis. These could include the Stability of Placements, which was when young people were moved between foster carers, how many Young people moved into Permanency (e.g. Adoption) and also what Milton Keynes Council was doing to improve the lives of its Looked after Children.

RESOLVED -

1. That it be noted that statistics would be provided about the key themes on a quarterly basis, where possible.
2. That the ideas for the 2019/20 Work Plan be noted.

CP20

PRESENTATION BY YOUNG PEOPLE - "WORLD SKILLS UK LIVE" AT THE NEC, BIRMINGHAM

The Panel received a presentation by two young people who explained their recent visit to World Skills Live at the NEC in

Birmingham. They also explained that they were part of a group of 5 who had taken part in the trip.

The young people indicated that they had enjoyed the visit as the exhibition was very informative and had given them many different ideas of future career paths and the training and apprenticeships that were available to achieve these. There were also interactive activities that they participated in that made the visit memorable and added to their enjoyment. These included Virtual Reality headsets and quizzes to match them with careers.

The Acting Director [Children's Services]) asked the young people if they would recommend the exhibition to a friend and they agreed they would because it was very interesting and introduced them to many career and training ideas that they didn't know about.

In answer to questions from the Panel, the young people also indicated that:

- they felt that the schools didn't prepare them for the wide variety of jobs and careers that were available; seeing for themselves was much more valuable;
- they would recommend that more groups of Young People went next year;
- it was also suited to year 7 or 8 to attend before they chose their future subject options; and
- it showed jobs that either boys or girls would be attracted to such as Construction – all could do any of the ideas put forward.

The Post 16 Improvement Officer [(CLA), Virtual School]) indicated that Panel members would be invited to assist with the trip and that funding of more groups to attend in future years would be investigated.

Councillor Miles (Chair) thanked the young people for their presentation and indicated that he supported more young people being able to attend World Skills Live, and similar exhibitions in future years.

The Panel also heard from Councillors Cannon and Nolan (the Cabinet member for Children and Families) during consideration of the presentation.

RESOLVED -

That the presentation be noted and future similar visits be encouraged.

CP21

PRESENTATION BY YOUNG PEOPLE - SPORTS AND WELL-BEING PROGRAMME

The Panel received a presentation from five young Asylum Seekers who had taken part in activities at Caldecote and Willen Lakes and

at the Outward Bound Centre in Aberdovey, Wales. They explained how they were benefiting from the experiences that were organised as part of the Sports and Well Being Programme the NEW2UK Group.

The group also explained that most had only been resident in the UK for a maximum of 18 months, originated from different countries and they really enjoyed the opportunities to meet new friends in similar positions to themselves, take part and learn new skills in all the sporting activities that they had taken part in and visit other parts of the UK.

They particularly liked the football activities and had attended events organised by MK Dons.

Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member for Children and Families) indicated that MK Dons were in the process of working up some proposals that included pre and apprenticeships schemes for young Asylum Seekers and also to improve participation with Children in Care and also suggested that the Community Foundation be approached for funding for activities.

In answer to questions from the Panel, the young Asylum Seekers also indicated that:

- they were a group of about 15-20 of a similar age;
- they were starting to feel more settled now and their ability to speak and write English was improving and they asked for more support and tutoring in English in order that they could improve their GCSE results in English, maths and science subjects; and
- when they first arrived, they found the immigration process very stressful and frustrating as it was a complicated process that took a long time. Not being able to speak English also added to the stress as they were unable to ask questions and articulate how they were feeling and there was no-one available to explain or support them.

Councillor Nolan also clarified that many young Asylum Seekers were introduced to the Council by the Red Cross who also gave support with language and immigration issues. The Virtual School could also be contacted about further help with English classes.

The Acting Director (Children's Services) explained that the Immigration processes for young asylum seekers were quite complex and this presented challenges for the Council and the young asylum seekers to work through.

Councillor M Bradburn indicated that she might be able to assist with finding funding sources

The Participation Youth Worker [Children's Social Care]) also indicated that the Youth Worker, in the Youth Faculty provided good

support to the young asylum seekers and had built up a good relationship with them.

The Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) indicated that the experience of presenting to the Panel also helped the young people's development and it would be helpful to the Panel to receive regular updates from the young asylum seekers group. She also noted the comments about funding sources and additional English lessons. She was also aware that the refreshments at activities should reflect healthier lifestyles, different cultures and customs that young people and adults could enjoy together.

RESOLVED -

1. That the presentation be noted and future similar Visits be arranged.
2. That the additional tutoring in English be sought.
3. That support with Immigration process be investigated.
4. That external funding be sought for further sporting activities.

CP22

ADOPTION SERVICE - 6 MONTHLY REPORT: 1 APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Panel considered the Adoption Service six monthly report which was introduced by the Head of Delivery, Corporate Parenting.

The Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) summarised the data for the period, indicated that the Council would be joining the Regional Adoption Service with Central Bedfordshire Council from 1 April 2019 and explained that any data missing from previous reports would be investigated.

In response to a question from Councillor D Hopkins who asked if the current Adoption Panel Members would move to the new Adoption Panel, the Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) confirmed that they would. Additionally a new advisor had recently been appointed that had brought new rigour to the process.

In response to a question from Councillor Cannon who asked that for how many of the Looked after Children, would adoption be the best outcome, the Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) indicated that the number of children currently best suited for adoption was 9 out of 300 children in the Council's care. However the Council also had a good record in placing Looked after Children with special needs.

The Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) also explained the Adoption process and clarified that currently 21 young people were in the various stages of the process of being considered for adoption and the oldest child that had been adopted was aged 15.

Councillor Cannon also asked how many Young People who were not adopted would be suitable for Adoption, and the Acting Director

(Children's Services) explained that officers were required to make a decision about the best way forward for a child, as adoption was not the only option; all the available other options had to be evidenced to the Courts before an adoption order was granted. It was a balance of a number of factors.

The Panel also heard from Councillor Nolan (the Cabinet member for Children and Families) who indicated that she had made a video with Foster Carers for distribution to special schools to generate interest in the Fostering and Adoption Service.

RESOLVED -

That the six monthly Adoption Service report and actions being taken be noted.

CP23

FOSTERING SERVICE REGULATION 35 - 6 MONTHLY REPORT

The Panel considered the Fostering Service Regulation 35 six monthly Report which was introduced by the Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting).

The Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) summarised the data and targets that had been achieved, in particular that there was a growing number of kinship fostering, which was where friends or family were fostering a young person under the Fostering Procedures. The trends were also showing that many of these were developing into Special Guardianship Orders.

The Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) also indicated that as part of the improvement plan, the current staffing structure had been reviewed. A new staffing structure has been implemented as planned that created two Fostering Teams instead of the current single team; one team concentrates on the recruitment assessment and preparation of carers and the other is concerned with the supervision of carers post approval by the Fostering and Adoption Panel. Additionally, two new roles had been created; that of Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer and Independent Panel Adviser. It was anticipated that these changes would bring greater focus on quality and adherence to regulations and National Minimum Standards.

With reference to the recruitment of Foster Carers, The Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) indicated that this had slowed down during the staffing review but a plan is in place to refresh the Marketing and Communications Strategy.

Councillor D Hopkins commented that as his Ward was adjacent to a Central Bedfordshire Council Ward he often saw Comms and advertising carried out by Central Bedfordshire on a postcode basis for Foster Carers, and parish council magazines or newsletters could also be used, and asked that these methods be followed up.

Councillor Nolan, The Cabinet member for Children and Families indicated that information about Foster Carers be included with the

Council Tax leaflets that would be circulated to all households in late February and Milton Keynes partners such as G.P's surgeries and Leisure Centres could also be used.

Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) indicated that various Comms methods were used which included Facebook and Twitter and that the feedback data from these was monitored. She also explained that the Service was in contact with all neighbouring local authorities about Forster Carer recruitment and met with them on a quarterly basis. However, some local authorities employed consultants to improve their offer which Milton Keynes did not do. Additionally, recent thinking from the Department for Education, had suggested that local councils merge into hubs to progress a regional approach, but there would be challenges with this approach.

In response to a question from Councillor Miles (Chair) who asked why the "Missing" episodes at 6(b) had increased in April 2018, the Acting Director (Children's Services) clarified that these related to episodes (short term missing) and not young people, as one young person could have 10 episodes. These could be for a variety of reasons; however the Service was aware that the episodes increased in better weather or school holidays. The missing periods were for less than 24 hours and related to all Looked after Children.

In response to a question from Councillor Miles (Chair) who asked the reasons why information with regard to 6(c) Use of Control, Restraint or Discipline and 6(d) Medication, Medical Treatment and First Aid Administered information had not been collected, the Head of Delivery (Corporate Parenting) explained that these issues would be addressed when the new teams were trained and embedded and this had been explained to OfSTED.

RESOLVED -

That the report and actions being taken be noted.

CP24

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE UPDATE

Councillor Miles (Chair) indicated that two steering group meetings had taken place in December 2018 and the final draft version of the revised Terms of Reference would be reported to the Panel at the March 2019 meeting.

RESOLVED -

That the update about the Terms of Reference be noted.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8.00 PM