

Corporate Parenting Group Minutes
Held on Tuesday 26th March 2013
At Wallasey Town Hall (Committee Room 2)

Present

Cllr Tony Smith (Chair)
Simon Garner, Acting Head of Branch
Councillor Tom Harney
NAME REDACTED
NAME REDACTED
NAME REDACTED

Julia Hassall, Acting Director
Councillor Pat Williams
Councillor Cherry Povall
NAME REDACTED
NAME REDACTED

Apologies

Councillor Wendy Clements	Derek Kitchin, Head Teacher, WASH
Hazel Griffiths-Jones, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, CAMHS	
David Armstrong, Acting Deputy Chief Executive	
Ian Platt, Head of Housing	
NAME REDACTED	NAME REDACTED
NAME REDACTED	NAME REDACTED
NAME REDACTED	

1. Introductions and Welcome

Councillor Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the meeting there had been a number of apologies due to people being on leave.

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

Agreed as a true record

3. Matters Arising

(i) Update on Virtual School Standards

NAME REDACTED was due to report on the targets which she had received back from Wirral schools but had sent her apologies as she was unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that this would be carried over to the next meeting.

Action: NAME REDACTED to feedback on the targets she had received back from schools during the next meeting

(ii) Foster Carers Marketing Strategy

Simon Garner informed the meeting that the foster carer's campaign is going well and is currently meeting the targets which were set in relation to the number of foster carers being recruited.

Action: A report to be presented to the Corporate Parenting Group later in the year.

4. Update on Being Healthy

Simon Garner informed the meeting that the Corporate Parenting Strategy contained an action plan which identified objectives that needed to be achieved to ensure children in care were remaining healthy. The following reports were circulated and a Power Point presentation was given:

a) Looked After Children Health

NAME REDACTED spoke to the meeting about the health of looked after children on Wirral and provided information on health assessments for looked after children for the period from November 2012 to February 2013. She also highlighted the good practice, progress, challenges and future plans which are continually taking place to improve the experiences and health of young people. She informed the meeting that a Designated Nurse for Looked after Children and additional administrative support had been recruited to the LAC Health Team and a Designated Doctor for looked after children will be appointed shortly.

Action: NAME REDACTED to provide statistical information in relation to the health of looked after children to the Corporate Parenting Group on a regular basis.

b) Nice Action Plan

Simon Garner, Acting Head of Branch for Children's Social Care and NAME REDACTED spoke about the Nice Action Plan. NAME REDACTED informed the meeting that extensive consultation had been carried out with a range of professionals to look at meeting the requirements of NICE and SCIE statutory guidance which consisted of 52 separate recommendations for looked after children. Wirral identified six manageable recommendations within their action plan to change and improve practice particularly in terms of joint working and information sharing. Simon Garner updated the meeting on the work which had been undertaken to date in relation to each of the six recommendations.

c) Transition Protocol

NAME REDACTED talked about the current transition protocol and the impact on looked after children. He outlined the purpose of the protocol, how it worked in practice and informed the meeting that the existing protocol was in the process of being reviewed and re-written.

d) Healthier Homes

NAME REDACTED informed the meeting that looked after children often suffer more physical and emotional health problems than other young people and the longer term outcomes remain worse than their peers. He talked about Wirral's Healthier homes standard which all residential settings now have which has proved to be very successful for promoting healthier lifestyles issues for looked after children. A fostering version of Healthier Homes has been written and shared with appropriate key workers in the local authority. Wirral therapeutic foster carers have received training in this standard and the Fostering Task

Force are looking at options for taking Healthier Homes forward in the fostering agenda. Healthier Homes has received national recognition through the CYP Now awards and the standard is now being used in other local authority areas.

e) Health Challenge Champions

NAME REDACTED talked about the New Health Challenge Champions which is an award winning initiative aimed at extending the success of Wirral's nationally recognised Healthier Homes standard. It was originally aimed at young people 'at the edge of care' but has since helped young people engaged with the youth justice system and care leavers to develop skills and motivation to safeguard their own wellbeing. It involves a series of 5 key wellbeing challenges for young people covering the key areas of wellbeing:

- Staying Happy
- Eating Well
- Keeping Active
- Doing the right thing around alcohol, drugs and smoking
- Good relationships

Health Challenge Champions won the 'Wellbeing for All' Category in the North West Public Health Awards in 2012.

5. Children In Care Council Update

Simon Garner informed the meeting that NAME REDACTED had sent her apologies as she was on annual leave. A copy of the minutes from the last Children in Care Council meeting which was held on the 20/02/13 and a report outlining the consultation which was carried out with young people who had undertaken GCSE's in the summer of 2012 had been circulated prior to the meeting for information.

Councillor Smith and the elected members at the meeting agreed that they would like a report on how pupil Premium is spent for Year 10 and Year 11 in Wirral schools and what impact this having on young people and how many looked after children are attending homework/ revision classes after school.

Action: Julia Hassall, Director to write to all schools asking for a progress report and facts about what individual schools are doing for looked after children.

6. Welfare Reform on Care Leavers

Simon Garner presented a report to the meeting on the impact of welfare reform on care leavers. He informed the group that care leavers are already vulnerable to social exclusion because they have to make the transition to adulthood much earlier than most other young people. It is thought that the additional changes which have been introduced to the benefit system will also make it more difficult for care leavers to move from education into employment. For this reason it is likely that the number of occasions that the Local Authority will need to support

young people as 'good corporate parents' will increase to avoid them becoming destitute.

Most Local Authorities currently offer a care leavers grant of £1,500 to help young people meet the costs of transition. NAME REDACTED has written to Local Authorities to ask them to increase this amount up to £2,000. Wirral is currently reviewing its 16+ services for children in need and looked after children to ensure tighter support plans are in place and to strengthen welfare support. This includes reviewing its leaving care financial policy.

7. Any Other Business

(i) Letter from NAME REDACTED

Simon Garner informed the meeting that he had circulated a letter for information from NAME REDACTED prior to the meeting in relation to improving outcomes for care leavers.

(ii) Link to the National Children's Bureau Corporate Parenting Website

A link had been embedded into the Agenda for a new website which had been produced by the National Children's Bureau to support Local Authorities in their corporate parenting role. The website will be producing a range of materials to include:

- Briefings to help councillors to understand their responsibilities
- Exercises to enable local authorities to judge the effectiveness of their governance arrangements
- Tips on working with children in care councils
- Practice examples
- Signposts to further information

(iii) Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 18th June 2013 at Wallasey Town Hall, Committee Room 2 (4.00pm – 6.30pm)