



Corporate Parenting Group

Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday 21 March 2017
Wallasey Town Hall

In Attendance:

Councillor Tony Smith (TS), Chair
Councillor Chris Meaden (CM)
Councillor Treeria Johnson (TJ)
Sheila Murphy (SM)

Councillor Wendy Clements (WC)
Councillor Alan Brighouse (AB)
Julia Hassall (JH)
Janet Simon (JS)

Kerry Mehta (KM)

Care Leavers Council

Minutes

Apologies:

Deborah Gornik, Councillor Phil Gilchrist, Councillor Cherry Povall, Lindsay Davidson,

ITEM

ACTION

1. Introduction and Welcome

Chair, Councillor Tony Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies

Apologies as above.

3. Minutes from Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes from the last meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Previous Action: Information was requested on which universities our young people are attending and outcomes. [REDACTED] will compile information regarding this.

There are 14 care leavers studying further education beyond A levels.

4. Standing Items

Councillor Chris Meaden expressed personal interest – [REDACTED]

4.1 Children's Engagement & Participation Service

████ informed the Group of a video which has been recorded by the Care Leavers Council raising concern around the service they receive. Care leavers feel they require support around feelings of isolation and finances which are key issues.

There will be a consultation with care leavers at Moreton Family Centre on Thursday 23 March 2017 at 4.15pm which everyone is welcome to attend. This will be really important for auditing and monitoring care leavers and also for developing the service, with the introduction of more personal advisors.

There is currently a recruitment drive for personal advisors and █████ reported that there have been over 100 applications for an additional 16 posts. The plan is that all the personal advisors will be in post by the end of May. It is important for developing the service that care leavers are involved in the interview process for the posts so they feel involved, this will contribute to co-producing the revised service. Personal advisors will meet different care leavers to gain an insight of what care leavers want and how we deliver this. We need to look at training for personal advisors to ensure they are qualified in areas of housing, benefits, youth work alongside Policy and Procedures. A joint action plan will provide a positive way forward. This process will take time but will ensure good relationships.

A questionnaire was sent out to over 400 looked after children and care leavers in December 2016 and there have been over 90 responses. The main priority so far is fostering, with some feedback that there is insufficient information about finances. Other issues are that there is a lack of information for young people; not having a consistent social worker/having too many changes of social workers, and the "Right Side of Care" website is not easily navigated. More focus groups are required to engage young people and concentrate on these areas.

The "Listen to Me Awards" will be held at Birkenhead Town Hall on Thursday 20 April 2017, 5.00-7.00pm. These awards are for people who have been nominated by young people who have made a difference to their lives. Everyone is aware they have been nominated and by whom. Certificates will be awarded and nominees will also receive a citation letter.

4.2 Dataset and Performance

████ presented detailed data in different formats. The purpose of presenting data and whether this is to be presented in detail or in shortened form were discussed with █████ and the Group. The relevance of different types of data was discussed. The Group discussed data in respect of children missing from care in detail, including the length of time missing and where children go when missing. TS raised the need for further reports to be correlated around ages of children being reported missing and the work being done by Catch 22 to undertake interviews

when they return and also to look at patterns and trends. [REDACTED] agree to bring a proposal to the next Corporate Parenting Group about relevant performance data. [REDACTED] will put a list of suggestions together and email this out to the Group.

TS stated this information should all be joined up. The focus needs to be on the dataset being sent out well in advance of Corporate Parenting Group. We should look into children missing from care. Discussion took place around young people training Police to build good relationships and support children who have been missing to reduce missing episodes.

Further information was discussed such as 125 children who had been looked after since September/October last year. 60 of these case files were looked at and these were confirmed they needed to become looked after, but also opportunities to intervene earlier.

4.3 Safeguarding

KM discussed the contents of her report. Nationally regarding children looked after 26% of children are on Section 20 (voluntarily accommodated) and a question was raised around are we rushing into care proceedings too quickly. We currently have [REDACTED] in care in secure accommodation. We have a high level of participation in LAC reviews from young people. We have received 110 "Right Side of Care" information (which children have completed) returned.

4.4 Care Leavers

The Pathway Plan ensures that care leavers are prepared for independence, engaging in training and recruitment and feel part of decision making going forward. Social workers are assessing needs through the Pathway Plan and what we are providing is meeting our statutory duty. There are currently 212 care leavers post eighteen. However, there were issues regarding recording. We are in touch with 90 plus percent of care leavers and contact is appropriate, we are engaging with the care leavers to ensure they are living safe and appropriately and they are engaging in education.

There is a commitment to review the Local Authority's Policies and Procedures and there is a need to look at the mental well-being of care leavers and care leavers can often struggle with loneliness. We are focusing on what we can provide to support them and we are making a concerted effort to keep in touch and know that our care leaver are safe.

4.5 Fostering and Adoption

An update from the last Corporate Parenting Group is that there are an additional 100 young people in foster care. Authorisation has been given to recruit 5 additional posts in the Fostering Team. This is really good news and the primary focus will be on recruiting new foster carers. SDQ's should initially be completed by the foster carers as the people who know them well supported by social workers. There is now a pathway on Liquid Logic for foster carers and they now also have secure email which foster

carers are using. There is an increase in the Family Mentors Scheme with existing foster carer working with families to prevent children becoming looked after, there are some success stories and this is evidence it is working. New foster carers have a peer mentor and also a supervising social worker to support them any time of the day and Family Mentors have additional training and support.

Regarding Adoption, the "Mersey Regionalisation Consortium" is being formed as part of a government initiative. This consists of four Local Authorities; Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley and Wirral. This will help our children. During the past 6 months this has moved at pace. This idea will create a Hub based in Halewood, this provides the specific need for transport links for adopters and social workers. The building is community based and includes a children's centre, space for training, a sensory room and the facility for direct work with children. Four Local Authorities will have a spoke based in each Local Authority but their main base will be Halewood. Liverpool is the host and all four Local Authorities will link up with each other. Staff will be seconded into the regional agency which is to be called AIM (Adoption in Merseyside) on Wirral's terms and conditions.

The benefits of this approach are that we will have 3 partner agencies. Best practice will also be an outcome due to learning a lot from each other. By January 2018 this should be fully operational. Staff and children should not see any day to day difference other than receiving a more timely service and increased choice of adopters to match children. A paper on the "Mersey Regionalisation Consortium" will go to Cabinet on Monday 27 March 2017 and is set to be signed off as we move towards Devolution.

4.6 Health

In most of the required areas there is an upward trend with the review of assessments. There is a plan to improve notifications with an alert being set to Health. HH has had discussions with the Liquid Logic team to request whether this is possible. There are good outcomes for immunisations and these have increased from 83% to 93%. There are 7% outstanding and this is due to declined immunisations. Out of borough notifications for looked after children are constantly being pursued, there is improvement this quarter and there is an escalation process in place.

Within the Primary Care Service 100% of children are registered with a GP. The new SDQ form "Emotional Health and Wellbeing" goes live on 1 April 2017. SDQ forms are being completed on Liquid Logic and scoring is also on Liquid Logic which feeds into health assessments which are linked into access to consultation to CAMHS. Health has taken on board what was raised by OFSTED, "where are care leavers" as this is a joint responsibility.

4.6 Education

There are high expectations for tests undertaken and progress has been made to reflect that the young people are reading, writing and using

mathematics in Key Stage 2 which is positive. Attendance overall for looked after children and young people is 94.5%. [REDACTED] will become the full time Virtual Headteacher from 1 April 2017. [REDACTED] will be improving liaison with Education and Social Care.

4.7 Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan

[REDACTED] has re-looked at the work done around the Corporate Parenting Group Strategy and what we have promised. This is a 2 year strategy. She has looked at the 20/20 Pledges within the Wirral Plan and is working to develop an action plan linked to what young people have asked for, along with impact measures, she is setting up a meeting to set targets and identify lead people for each activity. [REDACTED] will be taking it to the Children in Care Council with the promises they have asked us to make.

5. Any Other Business

None

6. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 16 May 4pm – 6pm, Room 1, Wallasey Town Hall