

AT A MEETING of the Corporate Parenting Board of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester on Wednesday 5th July 2023

Chairman:
p Councillor Ann Briggs

a Councillor Phil North
p Councillor Pal Hayre
p Councillor Wayne Irish
p Councillor Arun Mummalaneni

p Councillor Fran Carpenter
p Councillor Juliet Henderson
p Councillor Alexis McEvoy
p Councillor Malcolm Wade

59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr North. Cllr Davies was present as the Conservative Group Deputy.

Cllr Crawford and Cllr Heron, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services were also in attendance.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

61. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

62. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations were received.

63. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked those members who had attended the recent training and hoped they found it as useful as they had.

The Chairman noted that they had been in contact with Chairman from other Authority's Corporate Parenting Boards to share best practice.

64. **BOARD MEMBERS FEEDBACK - ENGAGEMENT AND RECENT ACTIVITIES**

The Board heard from recent visits and engagements with Children's Services Teams from Cllr Carpenter, Cllr Hayre and Cllr Wade.

65. **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ACTION LOG**

The Director of Children's Services introduced the Corporate Parenting Board Action Log to Board Members. The purpose of the Log was to track actions to ensure they were followed up and reported back on. This could be actions arising from Board meetings or within the Directorate relating to Corporate Parenting.

It was hoped that this document would assist the Board on tracking the progress of issues and to engage with external partners such as the Police and Health professionals. It is also hoped that this document will help to record the 'voice of the child' and ensure feedback from young people is followed up on.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Board note and adopt the proposed Action Log as a method for recording actions associated with the Corporate Parenting Board.

66. **REFUGEE TEAM/UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN UPDATE**

The Corporate Parenting Board received a presentation from the Director of Children's Services with an update on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and the work of the Refugee Team, setting out its role and composition. Members also noted details of the UASC National Transfer Scheme which required local authorities to take 0.1% of their population 285 for Hampshire).

Officers noted the participation activities which were provided for UASC & refugee children and heard an overview of the challenges in this area and the Directorate's response to them. This included a shortage of Foster Carers, out of County placements and issues in relation to education and integration.

In response to questions members heard that:

- Language is not often an obstacle for Foster Carers.
- UASC received a trafficking assessment and safety plan which was regularly updated. Contact with family is not attempted until all the risks have been assessed and reduced when required.
- The percentage of UASC who enter the Criminal Justice System is the same as the general population.
- Placements are based on the young person's age and needs, rather than nationality.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Board notes the update presented on the Refugee Team and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

67. UPDATE ON CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE EXPERIENCED ADULTS COUNCILS

The Corporate Parenting Board received a presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing an update on the actions taken to improve participation through the Children and Care and Care Experienced Adults Councils.

Members were reminded of the action plan to establish the new Councils alongside a participation network to capture feedback for the Corporate Parenting Board. Officers set out the positive progress made on each of these initiatives.

The Board noted the details and plan for the co-design workshop for the Corporate Parenting Board, which seeks to share ideas on ways to hear the voice of children, young people and families with the aim to work together to shape services. This session will set the focus for the Board for the next 12 months.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Board notes the update presented on the Children in Care and Care Experienced Adults Councils.

68. HAMPSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

The Corporate Parenting Board received the 2021-22 annual report from the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire's Virtual School.

Members noted the overview of the Virtual School's work and focus during the academic year 2021-2022, along with the analysis of educational outcomes for Hampshire's cohort of children in care. Officers sets out the priorities for securing improved individual and cohort progress, educational experiences and outcomes for children in the care of Hampshire.

In response to questions members heard that:

- The team does not have the capacity to visit all Hampshire's schools so the team is working with colleagues to train Social Workers and Designated Looked After Children Teachers. It was noted that the team was also unable to attend all Personal Education Plan meetings. To assist with this the Team is looking to expand to better support schools and young people in the coming months.

RESOLVED:

That the Virtual School's priorities to secure further improvements to the educational outcomes of Hampshire's children in care are supported and that an update be provided in the Autumn.

69. **ANNUAL CHILDREN IN CARE REPORT 2022-23**

The Corporate Parenting Board received the annual report for 2022-23 for Children in Care from the Director of Children's Services.

The Board received an overview of the characteristics of Hampshire's children in care including their age, length of time in care, where children are currently living, the number of children in foster care, residential homes or other settings, the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and placement stability.

Officers set out details of social worker caseloads, noted that they were at a sufficient level for social workers to be able to dedicate sufficient time to children, regardless of their level of need. The report also provided information on children who go missing, evidencing how they are safeguarded from harm and risk of exploitation. This included UASC who are being looked after by Hampshire. Officers concluded by setting out the key areas of focus over the next twelve months.

In response to questions members found that:

- There is no set point during which a young person has been in foster care that adoption would be suggested, but visits are reduced when able and Foster Carers are kept aware of the options available to them.
- There is a Operational Missing Exploited and Trafficked (MET) meeting in each district which reviews high risk children. These panels are multi-agency and accompany return home interviews.
- The length of time that a child has been missing does not necessarily increase the likelihood of exploitation. High Risk Strategy meetings are held in response to these situations when necessary to review the risks.

RESOLVED:

The Corporate Parenting Board support the priority areas for Children's Services, in relation to our children in care as being:

- Strengthening the voice of the Looked After Child and impact on service delivery.
- Promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of the CLA Health Assessment process and service so that it meets the physical and mental health needs of Children in Care (including dental and immunisations).
- Improve the educational outcomes of Children in Care and effectiveness of the process and service, including the service provided by the Hampshire Virtual School.
- Improve placement stability and increase placement choice for Children in Care.
- Children in our care will be safeguarded from harm including, all aspects of exploitation.

- Increase opportunities for Children in Care to safely live outside of the care system through Special Guardianship (SGO) assessments and reunification to family where appropriate.
- Ensure the needs of all children seeking asylum in the UK are understood and met through new service delivery.
- Improve the training for all social workers for Children in Care resulting in measurable impact.

Chairman, Corporate Parenting Board