

AT A MEETING of the Corporate Parenting Board of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester on
Wednesday, 7th December, 2022

Chairman:

* Councillor Ann Briggs

* Councillor Phil North
* Councillor Fran Carpenter
* Councillor Pal Hayre
* Councillor Juliet Henderson

* Councillor Wayne Irish
* Councillor Arun Mummalaneni
* Councillor Jacky Tustain
* Councillor Malcolm Wade

35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present and no apologies were noted. Deputy Members Cllrs Davies and Crawford were also in attendance.

36. 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.

No declarations were made.

37. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

38. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

39. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to a list of briefings that Hannah Leat had circulated and stressed how important it was that members of the Committee engage with these and with the HIVES as much as possible.

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

Cllr Carpenter reported that she had attended two Looked After Children reviews related to children in care preparing for independence and to leave care, which included independent reviewing officers and social workers. Positive experiences were observed, with examples such as driving tests achieved.

She had also attended a Missing, Exploited, and Trafficked Children Team meeting which had a wide membership including headteachers, the Youth Offending Team, the Willow Team and Hampshire Constabulary. 18 cases had been discussed, including the following topics; county lines, theft, shoplifting, drug dealing, 'muling' and sexual exploitation.

Cllr Wade had also attended a Looked After Children review, which included mainstream activities and centred around an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Cllr Hayre had visited two Family Centres. She reported that whole families were involved and praised the contributions of the County Council staff.

Cllr Briggs had visited a centre for a reconciliation meeting. She reported that it was performed sensitively, with the use of an interpreter.

Cllr Crawford had received an invitation from Wellington Primary School. He had also taken the opportunity to promote the 'Open Your Door' campaign on social media.

41. **HAMPSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of the Virtual School's work and focus during the academic year 2020-2021.

The Board heard about:

- The role of the Virtual School Head, the statutory responsibilities and the collective responsibility to improve educational outcomes.
- The aspirations, including ensuring that teams can support children in school, improve stability and that all children attend a good or outstanding school.
- The priorities, which include the provision of good advice and guidance to ensure children can progress into further education, employment and training.
- A policy document, published by the school, which makes the expectations and arrangements clear around Pupil Premium Plus funding for looked after children.
- Improvement, which had been seen and sustained in GCSE results for the children in care cohort.

- Absence rates, which were below the national average. No Hampshire child had been permanently excluded, but there had been 93 suspensions. The reduction in fixed term exclusions remains a key priority.
- All children in care should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and the PEP audits had helped to drive improvement by looking at things such as whether the plans were suited to the child.
- An Education Plan for Adopted Children, which had been developed to ensure that requirements are embedded for previously looked after children.
- The Virtual College is well established and the percentage of looked after young people securing a place in post 16 education, employment or training is higher than that achieved nationally.

In response to questions from Members, the Board heard that:

- It is currently difficult to benchmark attainment and that the aim was to ensure all children were progressing well.
- Educational attainment can be dependent on how long a child has been looked after and that Hampshire fares well against other Authorities. Targets are difficult to set because of the varying number and needs of the children in the cohorts.
- The Virtual School headteacher and her team work with the Inclusion Support Service and Educational Psychology, and are informed of any exclusions – they also continually monitor attendance to reduce fixed term exclusions.
- The PEP system is in the process of being reviewed to allow better auditing and monitoring.
- The drop in Key Stage 4 performance in 2019 was related to a change in the way exam results are published and graded. It is difficult to compare year on year results.

Resolved

The content of the report was noted and the Board noted the absence of formal assessment and use of other assessment methodologies in 2021 requires a qualitative approach to reporting.

42. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN HEALTH ASSESSMENTS - UPDATE

The Board received a presentation from the designated nurse for Looked After Children. She explained the Rapid Improvement Event that had taken place in October 2020, which identified a backlog of health assessments. A dataset had

been provided by the Local Authority which helped identify the scale of the backlog and an improvement plan which has been established by the Integrated Care Board.

Members heard that:

- 386 children have outstanding initial health assessments (including refusals and those who live outside of the area).
- 323 children have outstanding Review Health Assessments (163 of these are out of the area).
- Actions have been taken to address the backlog, including; GP capacity being increased in the Hub, a referral pathway and the development of a contract has resulted in children now starting to be seen.

A joint review of looked after children health assessments found that a more consistent model was required with clarity on how the needs of the children are going to be met. Findings have been fed back to providers The next steps and future model were described to Members, including the national statutory responsibilities and guidance.

In response to a question from Members regarding timelines for clearing the backlog, it was confirmed that a contract would be in place in April 2023 and the backlog would be cleared by September 2023 and that expectations were written into the contract.

The Board wanted to feel confident that there is a solution, but warned about the lack of capacity of other partners.

Resolved

The Corporate Parenting Board noted the content of the presentation.

43. **MODERNISING PLACEMENTS PROGRAMME**

The Board received a presentation from the Strategic/Operational Lead on the Modernising Placements Programme (MPP).

They heard that the programme sits under the wider transformation umbrella and looks at how 'we ensure that we only have the right children coming into care.'

Members heard that there are 10 issues that the MPP has been designed to address including:

- An increased number of children with complex needs who we are struggling to support
- Increased placement instability and in complex needs – how do we support children so they can stay with their foster carers?
- How do we focus on targeting people to become foster carers?

Key aims include:

- Increasing enquiries and conversion from enquiry to approval.
- To establish a community around foster carers. It has been agreed to grow and develop the Hive model which has been extremely successful.
- The Foster Carer Vacancy Management App, to allow foster carers to keep up to date.
- Ensuring foster carers feel valued and supported and they can be retained.
- Supporting foster carers out of hours.
- Reducing the amount spent on Independent Fostering Agencies.
- Ensuring carers have the training they need.

Resolved

The Board noted the content of the presentation.

44. **THE FAMILY CONNECTIONS SERVICE**

The Board received a presentation from the Director of Children's Services about the Family Connections Service and the work being done to keep children within their family networks where possible.

Members heard that after a review of the connected carers assessment team, a single Family Connections Service was formed in 2021. This allowed the sharing of knowledge with a county wide team.

The officer also explained:

- Its role is to support children to stay with carers who are known to them and within their friends or family network.
- The difference between the Care Order and the Special Guardianship Order.
- Arrangements for the provision of special guardianship support services in their area to meet the needs of special guardianship carers.
- That a post has recently been recruited into to provide support required.

Resolved

The Corporate Parenting Board noted the update on the work of the Family Connections Service.

45. **MISSING, EXPLOITED AND TRAFFICKED UPDATE**

The Board received a presentation (agenda item 11 in the report pack) from the Director of Children's Services providing an update on the Willow Team – making a difference.

The Board heard:

- About the current themes and risks, for example child sexual exploitation, County Lines and youth violence and how these are underpinned by trauma.
- How the Willow Team sits within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and has a wider link into the county, bringing insight from other areas, including Hampshire Constabulary, supporting communication and intelligence.
- That a specialist Police team works with the Willow team.
- 6,500 professionals have received training.
- More focus is planned on 'grooming' risk.
- There is a new process for National Referral Mechanisms (NRM).
- There is a plan to make more use of social media.

Superintendent Karen McManus (Hampshire Constabulary) reiterated the good joint working with daily meetings and that the Willow Team are always called upon when there are issues.

The Board thanked the officers for the work they were doing.

In response to Members' questions the Board heard that:

- Crimestoppers is the correct way to report crime in a non-emergency situation.
- The Police cannot always give specific feedback to residents, due to vulnerable nature of the children.
- Social media bullying and child suicide does not fall under the remit of the Willow Team.

Resolved

The Board noted the content of the presentation.

