

Public Document Pack

AT A MEETING of the Corporate Parenting Board of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester on Tuesday, 28th March, 2023

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
* Councillor Tim Davies

Also present: Cllr Heron, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Cllr Forster, Executive Member for Education

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Fran Carpenter. Cllr Tim Davies was deputising for her.

47. 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.

48. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 were reviewed and agreed as a correct record.

49. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

50. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded the Board that in the past month, 48 events had been put on, which allowed Members an opportunity to meet children, foster carers and social workers. Eight of the events had been attended by three Members.

She asked Members to try to attend at least two events per month and explained that some were virtual and at different times of the day. The Chairman went on to explain that the Board had a responsibility to have an understanding of the care experienced young person and be able to evidence the impact of responses to their voices.

She reported that there was a plan for an open dialogue with the children, social workers and carers on how the Board can achieve this.

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

Cllr Tustain had made a visit to Basingstoke and met foster parents where she could listen to the concerns they had. She welcomed a workshop where the Board could have a discussion on how they could make improvements to engagement, and asked that some of the events to which the Board had been invited be clarified.

Cllr Henderson had attended two children's homes, in Winchester and Basingstoke. She commented that she had seen how skilled the Acting Manager was. She had also met a seventeen year old Afghan and was impressed with the social worker and all of the people supporting him.

Cllr Wade had visited an unaccompanied asylum seeker and was impressed at how Hampshire was working with him. In particular, he was very impressed by the school and the social worker who was present. He had also attended a New Forest monthly team meeting and had explained to the staff what the Corporate Parenting Board does. He agreed that the Board should engage and listen to better understand the voice of the child in order to be better placed to make decisions and make a difference.

The Board discussed the need to include solutions for improvement onto the action plan, so that progress and impact could be monitored.

A suggestion was also made that Members could be offered the opportunity to shadow social workers to gain a better understanding.

52. **FEEDBACK FROM OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT ON CHILDREN IN CARE**

The Board received a verbal report with feedback on the OFSTED focussed visit on children in care from the Deputy Director of Children's Services. It had been a two week inspection, which included looking at data and policies. The outcome had been extremely positive, with 'impressive practice' having been highlighted in the letter from OFSTED.

There were three recommendations which would be on the Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan. These related to:

- The timeliness of initial, and review of, Health Assessments for children in care.
- Independent Reviewing Officer capacity.
- The voice of the looked after child at the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Board discussed ways to ensure that the voice of the child is heard by the Board, for example, by arranging for children and young people to attend the Board outside of its public meeting.

Resolved:

The Board noted the update on the Feedback from the OFSTED focussed visit on children in care.

53. **NATIONAL REVIEW - CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND COMPLEX HEALTH NEEDS PLACED IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS - SUMMARY REPORT**

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services regarding the National Review – Children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings.

The officer explained that the purpose of the report was to respond to a request from the Child Safeguarding Review Panel to the Director of Children's Services to review the placements of children in care placed in children's homes jointly registered with independent special schools. This National Review was the result of a widespread abuse scandal in Doncaster, and all Directors of Children's Services had been asked to undertake the two following urgent actions:

- To review the placements of Hampshire children placed in children's homes jointly registered with independent special schools. Ofsted later clarified that this relates to a total of fifty-nine schools. Hampshire had fourteen children placed in eight of those schools.
- That the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) reviews all information about those settings recorded by the LADO over the last three years and ensures that robust action was taken and all relevant LA's were contacted where necessary.

The Board heard that the review had been a significant piece of work, with more children being looked at than the review had asked for. The main outcomes were that:

- There were no significant weaknesses or concerns for any child reviewed. It had confirmed assurance in the processes in place and highlighted some things to take on board.

- There had been one school where there had been a previous 'inadequate' Ofsted grading. The care of the Hampshire children had already been under significant scrutiny and had recently been removed from the setting.
- All Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals over the last three years had been reviewed.

In response to questions, the Board heard that:

- Given that this review found no issues and provided assurance that a robust quality assurance process is in place, a regular review of this type is not seen as a proportionate use of time. Moving forward however, the key questions asked would be kept under review to ensure none were missing.

Resolved:

The contents of this report and the addendum report were noted by the Corporate Parenting Board.

54. **ANNUAL REPORT - CARE LEAVERS**

The Board received an annual report on the activity of the Care Leavers Service from the Director of Children's Services. The officer introduced the report and outlined the responsibilities of the corporate parent 'to do everything that can be done for every care experienced young person to give them the opportunities that other children and young people get' and also reminded the Board of the Council's Pledge to Care Leavers.

The Board welcomed the report and agreed that care leavers require a good quality of care and discussed the areas in which these young people have lower outcomes, for example, the number that enter the criminal justice system.

The Board agreed that the aim of reduction in care leavers entering the criminal justice system should be included in the Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan as an area of priority and metrics included in the next report.

The Board heard that all care leavers are written to annually three months either side of their birthday.

In answer to a question from a Member, officers agreed to look at what others are doing to learn any relevant lessons to improve contact.

Since the Pandemic, mental health and wellbeing issues have been seen and some people have not re-entered the education system.

In response to questions from Members, the Board heard that all district and borough councils are engaged with, a joint protocol is being developed and that Corporate Parenting responsibilities extend as much to borough and district councils as to the County Council.

The Board discussed ways in which to engage with the district and borough councils and share good practice. They agreed that:

- a letter should be sent to Leaders of Borough and District Councils regarding Corporate Parenting Responsibilities and sharing good practice.
- The Chairman and officers would visit Borough and District Councils to raise awareness regarding corporate parenting responsibilities.
- Data regarding any measurable outcomes of the impact of the council tax discount scheme, leisure passes and access to apprenticeship schemes would be sought and reported back to the Board.

Resolved:

The Board noted the good outcomes that are being achieved by Hampshire's Care Leavers and the plans of the Care Leaver Service to continue to improve those outcomes further in 2023.

That the Board continues to offer support and challenge to the Care Leaver Service in maximising the offer for Care Leavers.

The Board continue to promote the corporate parenting responsibility Hampshire County Council and the district borough councils hold.

55. **CARE PLAN AUDIT AND IRS UPDATE**

The Board received a presentation on the Care Plan Audit. The officer explained that:

- 240 audits had been completed, the findings of which were illustrated in age brackets for context.
- 87% of children had felt their life had improved since becoming looked after. Those who had not replied positively could have just entered care or been in the under 4 age group.
- The 72% response from parent that their child's life had improved was an exceptionally good score.
- The Children in Care Team and the social workers aim to bring together everything the child needs and work to ensure that care Plans are signed by the children and their parents.
- Childrens' views, thoughts and wishes are taken into account within the Care plan.

The Board and officers discussed the need to reword the survey to achieve clarity on whether parents had not been asked to contribute to their child's care plan or had declined the opportunity.

In terms of Personal Education Plans, children had made good progress since becoming looked after and schools had made use of the Pupil Premium. Emotional/Mental Health needs was a growing area of need.

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

- emotional/mental health needs might not mean a need for referral to CAHMS, but to a SENCO or alternative.
- Significant progress had been made on resolving the backlog of health assessments and regular meetings are held between officers and their health colleagues.

Officers agreed to keep the Board updated on the completion of timely Health Assessments for looked after children, and provide a further report on the progress of Care Plan Audit actions in due course.

Resolved:

The Board noted the contents of the presentation on the Annual Care Plan Audit 2022.

56. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE IN CARE

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services informing it about the provision of placements for children with disabilities who are in the care of the Local Authority.

The officer introduced the report and explained that disabled children are treated as any other child. There is a small cohort of 63 disabled children and complex needs can make them difficult to match, other non-disabled children can be equally difficult to place due to their needs. Every child has a 'My Life, My Future' Plan.

The officer confirmed that children are placed permanently, but circumstances can change and so are kept under review.

The Board noted that these children were some of the most vulnerable and requested an annual report on children with disabilities in care.

Resolved:

The Corporate Board noted the content of this report.

57. UPDATE ON THE PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN FOR 2023

The Board received a report from the Director of Children's Services providing an update on Participation and on the progress made against the Participation Strategy and plans for further developments in 2023.

The Board heard that:

- The aim is to ensure that voices are used strategically to improve services by providing more routes for its influence.
- Two new independently facilitated Councils had been introduced for Children in Care and Care Experienced Adults, an action plan had been developed and OFSTED had confirmed that the Service had been moving in the right direction.
- A Participation Network is being built to share learning and resources.
- There is a review of the processes used to capture and respond to feedback to make questions more strategic and become smarter with technology.
- Events are being run to reach a wider cohort of young people in care or with experience of care.

The Board were very positive about the report and looked forward to the future developments.

Officers will provide a further update to the Board in due course and include 'instigate change' to the slide presentation which demonstrates the Action Plan for 2023: the next iteration of our participation journey.

Resolved:

The Board:

- Noted the contents of this report.
- Continues to endorse the priorities for participation in 2023.

58. **HAMPSHIRE HIVES**

The Board received a presentation about the Hampshire Hives, a review of the last 12 months and future development.

The officer and gave an overview of the Hive Model and explained that:

- More Hives were needed, with a further seven planned for April 2023, bringing the total to 23 providing a capacity of 482 fostering families.
- Birth children were included to give them opportunities to develop relationships with other birth children.
- There are plans for overnight stays, the inclusion of residential homes, and care leavers being given the opportunity to attend family events.

The officer outlined the impact of Hives, one year in as described on page 80 of the agenda pack and case studies with views of fostering families.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that:

- Emergency foster carers and those out of the County were included.
- New Hives are being developed in areas where carers have requested them.
- Just under half of foster carers are opting in to the Hives.

The Board was supportive of the Hives initiative.

Resolved:

The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

Chairman, Corporate Parenting Board