

Part 1: Open to the Public – Item No.

or

Part 2: Closed to the Public – Item No.

REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - PEOPLE

TO

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL

ON

9th September 2020

TITLE: Corporate Parenting Panel Update: Including the wellbeing of LAC and care leavers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Scrutiny accepts this Corporate Parenting Panel update for the period April-June 2020 as the first in a series of regular updates of the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Corporate Parenting Panel meets monthly to discuss issues pertinent to the care and wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers.

As well as reports and data received from officers, Regulation 44 visits to the Children's homes are a standing item on the monthly agenda.

During the period April – June 2020, much of the panel time has been devoted to receiving updates from the social work services during the Covid 19 restrictions.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

KEY DECISION: YES / NO

DETAILS:

The corporate parenting panel met in April, May and June 2020.

All the panels were held virtually by way of Microsoft teams and the attendance was in line with that of the pre-Covid restrictions.

The panel is attended by a core group of elected members however, this does not truly reflect the assigned membership numbers of the panel.

The April panel considered the first annual report of the i-Start project which outlined the project up to 1st April 2019.

The project was developed in response to discussions with the Fight For Change Council, who informed senior officers that being brought into care always had an impact on children and young people's emotional health and that any change of placement is traumatic.

In what is a fine example of listening to the voice of the child, the Strategic Director for People agreed after meeting with young people, to reassign funding for the project.

i-START, (I- Stronger and resilient together) screens and assesses all children looked after for six weeks or more using the carer SDQ, the Assessment Checklist for Children/ Adolescents (ACC/ACA) and the ACC/ACA+ version which offers information about positive emotional wellbeing. Children and young people meeting the clinical threshold on these measures are offered a CAMHS consultation and getting help (i-Thrive). Those below the clinical threshold receive advice about maintaining their positive emotional wellbeing and signposting to other services (i-Thrive). Children and young people needing more help and risk support, move across to the in-house CAMHs for LAC service STARLAC (Salford therapeutic and referral for looked after children) service.

The key outcomes of the assessment pilot are:

- All LAC have an emotional wellbeing and mental health screening baseline that is linked to their general health assessment, education plan and care plan
- For looked after children to receive advice and signposting, getting help, getting more help and risk support (i-Thrive) when they need it rather than relying on a referral being made

In June, the panel considered the IRO Footprint report, which is an analysis of the IRO footprint on looked after children's files and an evaluation of the impact to the

outcomes for the child. The IRO Footprint Analysis was informed by case file audits, reflective discussions with professionals and a focus group. The focus group identified that practitioners used their best endeavours to ensure that children's care plans were meaningful and progressing within the required timescales.

The key findings of The IRO Footprint Analysis was that the IRO footprint was proportionate to the needs of the child, although this could be strengthened. Recommendations included improved recording of informal challenges and consistency in the recording of IRO SMART recommendations.

The report highlighted Outstanding case examples as well as feedback from professionals, carers, parents and young people.

In all three of the panels, elected members received updates from key services on how they were continuing to support young people and care leavers during the Government restrictions, including the challenges faced and the innovative practice adopted.

Elected members were assured that the services were continuing to support young people, despite the government restrictions.

A standing item on the panel every month is the regulation 44 visits to children's homes, which are usually carried out by an Independent Visitor alongside an elected member. During the initial period of lockdown, in line with Ofsted guidance, the visits reverted to virtual visits undertaken solely by the independent visitor.

Conclusion

The wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers has continued to be at the forefront of the integrated looked after children service throughout the period of government restrictions.

Officers have adapted their practice in line with the challenges of the restrictions, by using the updated laptops provided to social workers and have undertaken virtual visits via Microsoft teams and other platforms.

All looked after children and care leavers have a covid 19 risk assessment on file, which agrees the way contact and keeping in touch will be undertaken. All these assessments have managerial oversight and signed off by a social work manager,

Where there are increased concerns about the progress or welfare of a child, assessed fragility in the placement or, as the need arises, visits have been undertaken with staff using PPE equipment and maintaining social distance.

The virtual school has supported the role out of additional resources to children in care during lockdown to support their remote learning. Schools have also maintained links with our looked after children throughout lockdown.

The STARLAC service has continued to offer advice and support to young people and their carers, many of whom have struggled with anxiety or with abiding to the restrictions.

KEY COUNCIL POLICIES: n/a

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS: n/a

ASSESSMENT OF RISK: n/a

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: n/a

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: n/a

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: n/a

HR IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: n/a

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: n/a

OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED: n/a

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WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES:

All