

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

2nd March 2021

TITLE: Corporate Parenting Panel Update.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Scrutiny accepts this Corporate Parenting Panel update for the period October 2020 – November 2020, following on from the previous update of the July – September 2020 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.

Reports and data from officers are scheduled regularly on the agenda as well as Regulation 44 visits to the Children's homes.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

KEY DECISION: YES/ NO

DETAILS:

The corporate parenting panel met in October and November 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.

Following discussions held at Scrutiny on 9th September and further discussions with the Chair of Corporate Parenting panel, invitations to the September panel were extended to members of the Scrutiny panel.

Composition of panel

Councillor John Walsh (chair)

Elected members

Head of Service Looked after Children

Head of Inclusion & Virtual School Headteacher

Corporate Parenting Officer

Service Manager, Looked after Children

Service Manager, Next Step (leaving care)

Barnardos, Children's Services Manager

Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children & Looked After Children (NHS Salford

Clinical Commissioning Group)

Team Manager, Residential

Service Manager, IRO service

October Panel

Unfortunately, a minute taker was not available.

Report on the Independent Reviewing Officers was presented which was of a high quality provided a good insight of what was happening in social work services

There was a recommendation for a letter to be sent to children's homes to acknowledge their hard work over the pandemic.

November Panel

Year-end Fostering report was presented. Recruitment was discussed with a variety of ideas and plans for next year. The focus scheme has been fairly successful, at the end of March there was 23 households. This year a number of respite carers resigned.

Training has been varied, the current programme was amended due to the pandemic to enable training to be accessed virtually, the online training programme has been successful and this will continue for next year, with some face to face training opportunities anticipated.

Currently the fostering team are working with present foster carers who are interested in becoming Route29 hub carers and also have two members of Route29 staff training to become foster carers. There are some really good examples of how well the relationship is working between the fostering service and Route 29.

Cllr Walsh discussed the Greater Manchester approach. Salford are currently engaged in the GM discussions around fostering and invest to save models. Mike suggested for elected members to challenge themselves to get one person recruited to fostering. Cllr Collinson suggested utilising the education achievement awards – that ceremony makes us feel incredibly proud, suggested for foster carers to bring two people along to the event to show the amazing work achieved. Word of mouth is the best recruitment.

Since Covid, Salford Council have supported foster carers from the beginning with the main communication being online. Social workers undertook a RAG rating exercise for each foster carer. Foster carers have been amazing and adapted extremely well with home schooling with creativity and without complaint. Salford agreed and enabled some additional financial support for carers. At the beginning of the pandemic, for 12 weeks they received an extra £10 per child which was gratefully received. Their work and commitment has been recognised consistently.

The Care Leavers Pledge was discussed. This is regarding the work that was been offered from the housing providers – For Housing, Pendleton Together and Salix. The majority of our young people are in accommodation provided by those three larger organisations. Some providers have offered different things.

Route 29 had an Ofsted monitoring visit - the Ofsted inspectors provided positive feedback by the offer of Route29 and the prevention strategy within the wider community to lower the possibility of adolescents coming into care. When there is a full inspection we should be expecting really positive feedback. There were no requirements and no recommendations.

Barton Moss was under additional lockdown having had positive Covid tests from some of the young people. All staff are now wearing facemasks. Numbers have been significantly lower since March. There are no unnecessary admissions and no unnecessary movements of people leaving Barton Moss site.

Overall

Elected members were assured that services were continuing to support young people, during 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. Elected members continue not to be part of the visiting regime at present, but this will be regularly reviewed and risk assessed.

Devonshire Road –received a further visit from Ofsted and were assured on their second visit that the issues had been addressed and Devonshire road is fully compliant.

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.

Despite an increase in young people's mental health impacted by covid, officers continue to go above and beyond and adapt their practice in line with the challenges of the restrictions.

The Corporate Parenting panel continues to link well with the Fight for Change Council and key officers in Children's Services to ensure relevant reports and data are provided to elected members each month.

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

CONTACT OFFICER: Sayma Khan TEL NO: 0161 779 7800

WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES: All