



CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD MINUTES

25th July 2022 at 3.30pm

Present:

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)
Councillor Brasted, Silvester, K Swinburn and Wheatley

Officers in attendance:

- Joanne Hewson (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for People, Health and Care)
- Kierrah Bott (Interim Team Manager)
- Adele Harty (Strategic Lead Partnerships, CSRS and LADO)
- Keith Nicholson (Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After)
- Beverly O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Jennifer Steel (Head of Inclusion)
- Claire White (Head of Practice Performance and Quality)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Cracknell – Portfolio Holder for Children and Education

CPB.1 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

The board appointed Councillor Paul Silvester as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board for the Municipal year 2022/23.

CPB.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Hudson, Councillor McLean, Katie Chadwick, Pippa Curtin, Vicki Lawson, Murray McDonald, Angela Rawlings, Yvonne Shearwood, Jo Spender, Rob Walsh.

CPB.3 ACTION TRACKING

The board received a report that updated them on the action tracking for the Corporate Parenting Board in North East Lincolnshire.

It was confirmed that a report on recruitment and retention of staff within Children's Services would be brought to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

RESOLVED – That the tracking report be noted.

CPB.4 UPDATE FROM CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT BOARD

The board received a verbal update on the continuous Children's Services Improvement Board.

Ms Hewson updated the board on where the local authority was with the Children Services Improvement Plan. She noted that improvements had been made around the audit and governance of children services and Ofsted had noted changes that had been made for the better. They were about to start rolling out the training for all staff, as well as all Elected Members. There had been a large recruitment process for business support staff and family support workers, who would alleviate some of the paperwork social workers have to undertake. A large recruitment process had also taken place in South Africa to recruit new social workers. They had been able to make job offers to a lot of highly skilled and motivated social workers whilst visiting South Africa, who hopefully will all be starting with us in October.

One member asked why the local authority went to South Africa to recruit. Officers confirmed that South Africa practice is very similar to UK legislation and they gain the same qualifications as the UK. The retention of staff was also a lot better and a package of support of help would be provided when moving to the UK. Ms Hewson confirmed that they would also make sure local staff were given the same opportunities as the newly recruited, so they were not seen as separate cohorts.

RESOLVED – That the Children Service Improvement plan update be noted.

CPB.5 CHILDREN AND LOOKED AFTER ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

The board received a presentation on Children Looked After annual performance analysis.

One member felt a word in the report gave the wrong understanding of the information being given. Ms White agreed and resolved to update the report. The Chair asked about the rising numbers of children being placed with independent foster carers. Ms White stated that they try to use as

close to home as possible but depending on the child's needs, they can sometimes be restricted on placements. Ms Hewson added that the local authority did well in terms of the number of children we placed close to home compared to our statistical neighbours. Ms White stated that the foster carer recruitment programme and the review of children's homes and placement sufficiency would generate some more capacity, although the priority focus is to prevent children from having to enter care in the first place.

One Councillor asked whether they were doing more directed work in deprived wards. Ms White stated that they were currently looking at what work was being offered in our deprived wards, and strengthening the partnership approach to early help and prevention to enable a more targeted approach.

RESOLVED – That the Children and Looked After Annual Performance analysis be noted.

CPB.6 VOICE AND INFLUENCE ANNUAL REPORT

The board received the Voice and Influence Annual Report.

RESOLVED – That the Voice and Influence Annual Report be noted.

CPB.7 QUALITY AND PRACTICE REPORT

The board received the Quality and Practice Report.

The Chair asked about the social workers academy and what the retention was like coming out of that programme. Officers confirmed that as part of the recruitment model they were looking into employees' terms and conditions to help with maintaining a better retention rate. Ms Hewson stated that they would work with neighbouring authorities so that they offered the same to their workforce, this would alleviate employees leaving NELC to go elsewhere.

The Chair believed that it would be useful to receive an update from People and Culture on the terms and conditions the workforce would be offered.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Quality and Practice Report be noted.
2. That People and Culture come to a future Corporate Parenting Board to review the terms and conditions employees would be offered as part of the Social Worker Academy.

CPB.8 VIRTUAL SCHOOL – APRIL PROGRESS REPORT

The board received the Virtual School - April progress report update and an Attainment Report for Primary Age children looked after for the Summer Term 2022 (*please see attached*).

One Member asked about the out of school activities available to looked after children. Mr Nicholson confirmed that after school activities stopped completely as a result of the series of partial school closure periods from March 2020 onwards. As the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted in schools, after school activities were gradually being offered on a more frequent basis at the majority of schools. However, the Virtual School also provides funding support for foster carers who request this when arranging evening, weekend and holiday activities for the children in their care.

Mr Nicholson stated that the children would normally be referred to the Aspire Panel because they were at risk of exclusion from mainstream secondary academies. However, he confirmed that referrals had gone down significantly. For instance, there have been no permanent exclusions of looked after students in the last four years. Many students who became looked after at age 13 or 14 were already attending alternative provision.

He stated that members could advocate for children and young people at risk of exclusion and if needed In Year applications could be submitted to the Admissions Service to request a transfer to a more suitable Academy.

RESOLVED – That the Virtual School update be noted.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.25 p.m.