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NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loxley House, Station Street, on 16 September 2019 from 2.31 pm - 5.02 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Cheryl Barnard (Chair)
Councillor Jay Hayes (Vice Chair)
Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Rebecca Langton
Councillor Maria Watson
Councillor Cate Woodward

Absent

Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Georgia Power

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Helen Blackman - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Colin Brooks - Service Manager, Children in Care
Clive Chambers - Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
B G)
M-K G) Children in Care Council representative
C H)
Jon Rea - Engagement and Participation Lead Officer
Sophie Russell - Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement
Alison Wakefield - Service Manager, Children in Care
Zena West - Governance Officer
Jordan Whatman - Project Officer, Children in Care

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Georgia Power – work commitments
Councillor Nicola Heaton – leave
Matthew Jenkins
Sophie Russell

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

20 MINUTES

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21 CORPORATE PARENTING

Clive Chambers, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, gave a presentation on the statutory guidance surrounding corporate parenting responsibilities, distributed with the first publication of the minutes.

Councillors and Children in Care Council members raised the following points during discussion of the presentation:

- (a) other departments within Nottingham City Council should be invited to future meetings in order to prioritise corporate parenting responsibilities for all departments;
- (b) early and ongoing mental health support for children in care is vital – they need help and support to overcome traumatic experiences;
- (c) the concerns and issues faced by care leavers are different to those of other young adults, and it is important to ensure that a safety net or emotional support is in place. Care leavers require empathy, sympathy, practical support and advice, and a solid foundation of life skills and budgeting before they become care leavers;
- (d) funding is being sought for children in care to help develop peer support groups. One of the outcomes is train care leavers to become mentors for future care leavers. Care leavers will also benefit from being mentored by older care leavers as part of this project;
- (e) the Board recognised that caseloads for front line social workers will impact on their capacity to provide children with a good level of support and in future would like to discuss this in more depth. The services monitor caseloads and this will remain a priority. The most important aspect of supporting children in care and care leavers is to listen to those children and young adults affected. Engagement with the Children in Care Council, open conversations, and feedback through Have Your Say all help to give a better picture of the needs of Children in Care and Care Leavers, in their own words;
- (f) Nottingham City Council works hard to meet the needs of Care Leavers but the impact of austerity means that there are challenges to this;
- (g) a presentation will come to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board detailing the different accommodation types offered for Care Leavers;
- (h) young people highlighted that social opportunities and gatherings for Care Leavers may be useful, as well as for specific cohorts of Care Leavers such as young parents. Discussions have been ongoing to seek funding to support such groups in future;
- (i) one particular success which has had positive feedback from young people is the Safe Families pilot project, where volunteers mentor and befriend families and young people in the community;
- (k) a copy of the meeting schedule for future Children in Care Council meetings will be distributed with the first publication of the minutes, and Councillors are welcome to attend the Corporate Children in Care Council meeting. This will offer the opportunity for members to hear first hand from young people;

- (l) representatives from the Children in Care Council expressed a desire to help Councillors understand the issues affecting Care Leavers, and for Councillors to help to change the narrative surrounding Children in Care. There is a tendency in wider society to portray them as individuals who may well have complex problems but they are not “problem children”;
- (m) over the last 6 years the council has done an enormous amount to try and invest differently in this system. This has included for example establishing a multi systemic therapy team, to try to prevent children coming into care in the first place, and have helped hundreds more families stay together. For those who come into care, the Council has moved from large homes to smaller homes, with increased options for children to stay in one place for longer;
- (n) a representative from the Children in Care Council noted that they felt review meetings at a child’s school were not appropriate, as it singled out children as being different, and impacted on their education and their social lives. They discussed ideas about how we could plan for these meetings differently. This will be raised with the Virtual School, schools and IROs;
- (o) Councillors and colleagues thanked the representatives from the Children in Care Council for attending the meeting and sharing their honest experiences.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the presentation;**
- (2) thank the Children in Care Council for their contribution to discussions;**
- (3) use the influence of the council to increase the range of support and opportunities made available to children in care and care leavers.**

22 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Alison Wakefield, Children’s Social Care Service Manager and Colin Brooks, Leaving Care Service Team Manager, presented the Care Leavers Annual Report 2018/19. The following points were raised in discussion:

- (a) PAs often work with traumatised young people who can present as being angry and upset rejecting services. However many can later use services when they feel more ready. As a result of knowing that some Care Leavers need more time and proactive attempts to engage them, a Keeping in Touch policy is in place that means that PAs will continue trying to keep in touch with young people, even if they have previously refused support;
- (b) a recent review of the local offer for Care Leavers indicates that Nottingham City Council compares favourably to other local authorities. Discussions are underway to evaluate the impact of extending the Council Tax exemption beyond the current limits;
- (c) colleagues regularly meet with young people, to look at the issues they raise, encouraging them to advocate for themselves and others. This is also an

opportunity for the Council to learn from their experiences in order to improve service delivery.

RESOLVED to note the information.

23 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

Jon Rea, Engagement and Participation Lead Officer, gave a verbal update on the Children in Care Council, highlighting the following points:

- (a) many young people don't wish to be involved with the formal setting of the Corporate Parenting Board, but Councillors are welcome to attend meetings of the Corporate Children in Care Council to hear directly from young people in a less formal setting;
- (b) the Children in Care Council has been involved in the Social Worker training programme, and have helped with recruitment of the Corporate Director for Children and Adults;
- (c) where possible, Councillors should look to offer shadowing opportunities to young people from the Children in Care Council, so they can understand Councillor's roles and how the Council works;
- (d) an update on the results of the Have Your Say survey will be coming to the next meeting of Corporate Parenting Board, and may help to inform future agenda items.

RESOLVED to note the update, and thank the representatives from the Children in Care Council for attending the meeting.

24 IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY'S CHILDREN IN CARE – EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

This item was deferred to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

25 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

This item was deferred to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

26 FORWARD PLANNER

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the forward plan;
- (2) note that an item on IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) will come to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board, following publication of the related action plan.

Corporate Parenting

September 2019

Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers

Statutory guidance for local authorities

February 2018

What is Corporate Parenting

- The role that councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. Local authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers
- A strong corporate parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about those children and care leavers as if they were their own.
- This is evidenced by an embedded culture where council officers do all that is reasonably possible to ensure the council is the best 'parent' it can be to the child or young person

What functions does this apply to

- All services have a role in providing these opportunities for looked-after children and care leavers.
- The areas where consideration of the corporate parenting principles are of most relevance are: education, social care, housing, libraries, leisure and recreation, strategic policies (such as health and well-being plans) and local tax collection
- The Duty to Cooperate

Corporate Parenting Principles

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people



Corporate Parenting Principles (cont)

- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.



Corporate Parenting Principles (cont)

- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

Findings from The Conference for Care Experienced People



Top ten messages

- We need more love in the care system, including displays of positive physical affection
- We want to be seen as individuals worthy of respect
- Relationships are critically important
- Instability and loss of continuity in our lives is made worse through pressure in the care system
-

Top ten messages

- Mental Health and wellbeing are our biggest worries
- The impact of the care experience does not end at 18, 21 or even 25
- Our sense of who we are is important
- Having our say is essential

Top ten messages

- We need to know about our legal rights and entitlement
- Nobody knows more about what it means to be in care than we do

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