

Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Wednesday, 17th October, 2018.

Present: Cllr Di Hewitt (Chairman)

Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Officers: Martin Gray, David Willingham, Jackie Ward, Jamie Wassell, Janet Wilson, Michael Henderson (SBC); Trina Holcroft (CCG), Sarah McNulty (NTHT), Jacky Duncan (Corner House Youth Project), James Hadman (Catalyst)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: All members were present

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Role and Purpose of the Board**

Members were provided with the Board's Terms of Reference, which had been agreed by Council.

It was explained that the Board had been established, in part, to respond to the recommendations of a peer challenge and to move to a more formal arrangement, providing a more visible and appropriate level of accountability.

Members noted the Board's links with a Children in Our Care Strategic Officer Group. The Group had the role of implementing the Our Family Strategy, under the direction of the Board.

The Board was reminded of the legal requirements associated with Corporate Parenting and the Council's specific roles in this regard. It was noted that, in Stockton, the Corporate Parenting role spread far beyond the Council and all partners recognised the role and responsibility that they had in supporting looked after children. It would be important for appropriate partners to be represented at the Board and/or the Officer Group, to be fully involved in setting and steering priorities and driving their delivery.

It was noted that, in terms of the voluntary sector, there would be discussions between Catalyst and voluntary organisations, such as Corner House and Eastern Ravens, to agree appropriate/flexible representation on the Board and the Officer Group meetings.

RESOLVED that the role and Terms of Reference of the Board be noted.

3 **Our Family - Strategy and Priorities for 2018/19**

Members considered the Our Family strategy, for children in, and leaving, our care 2018 - 21.

Members recognised the Board's role in directing the vision for young people in care, and leaving care, and it was agreed that it was important for it to identify three key priorities for 18/19. It was noted that identifying priorities would not curtail work in other areas and that work would continue, there would just be a particular focus, by the Board, on its priorities. The Board Members and attendees formed break out groups to identify potential priority areas. The following priorities were identified:

- Mental Health including therapy, prevention, building resilience, support for carers, building relationships. Developing strong and trusted relationships ran through the whole strategy. This was contained in the strategic priority around health.
- Growing Up - Rights and Responsibilities, including transition and independent living (see priority 7 of the strategy, focused on the transition to adulthood and to leaving care)
- Early Years in Care - ensuring the best support and opportunities were in place for our children. This was specifically related to priority 2, where the importance of safe and healthy relationships was key for children and young people entering care.

It was agreed that the Strategic Officer Group would consider the priorities and identify the issues involved, what might be undertaken quickly and what may need some longer term work. This could be reported to the Board's next meeting for comment and strategic steer.

RESOLVED that;

1. The Board's priorities for 2018/2018 be:

- Mental Health
- Growing Up - Rights and Responsibilities
- Early Years in Care

2. the Board receives a report from the Strategic Group that considers the Board's priorities, looks at the challenges/ issues involved and identifies what might be done fairly quickly and what would need more medium/long term work.

4 Terms of Reference of the Strategic Officer Group and Update

The Board considered the Terms of Reference of the Children in Our Care Strategy Delivery Group. The Group would help deliver the strategy and priorities identified by the Board.

There was particular discussion about membership, the wide range of organisations that would be represented and the strong links with the Board. A list of the membership of the Officer Group would be circulated to the Board with high level detail of their roles.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference be endorsed.

5 Care Leavers Local Offer

The Board received a report relating to new guidance and legislation, outlining the duties for local authorities to support care leavers.

Members were provided with details of the current offer and some proposals for its development to meet the new requirements.

The new legislation stipulated that care leavers support would be across the following areas:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Education and Training
- Employment
- Accommodation
- Participation in society

There would be consultation with care leavers and partners in November/ December 2018, with an outline plan being in place by January 2019 and sign off by the Council's Cabinet in March 2019.

RESOLVED that:

1. the proposals around development of the local offer be endorsed.
2. the arrangements for consultation and next steps be noted.

6 Children in Care Council - Update Presentation

The Board received a presentation on Stockton's Children in Care Council, which was a group of young people who were passionate about shaping and improving the services which were offered to Young People in Care, in Stockton and across the North East.

The presentation covered the following areas...

- Consultation
- Transport
- Recruitment
- Family Time
- Working with External Agencies
- Regional Children in Care Council
- Independent Support
- Surveys
- Lets Take Action Group Activities
- Reaching the wider Children in Our Care
- Apprentices
- Future dates and Opportunities to collect views from Young People.

Consideration would be given to how the Board could interact with the Children in Care Council. It was noted that some of the Children would be more than

happy to attend meetings of the Board and would feel comfortable doing so. However, it was suggested that a better approach would be for Board Members and support officers to meet with the Council in an informal environment. This could be considered further, outside the meeting.

RESOLVED that the presentation and discussion be noted and actioned as appropriate.

7 Performance Report for Children's Home Outcomes

Consideration was given to a report that provided the Board with Stockton's Children's Homes performance, in comparison to the national picture, and provide assurance of the quality of those children's homes, operated by Stockton Borough Council.

Outcomes nationally had been improving year on year. This trend had been replicated in Stockton, with all six of the Council's homes consistently achieving 'Good' and 'Outstanding' grades, following inspection

It was explained that Stockton's four 'Outstanding' children's homes were within the top 18% of all Children's homes, in England with its remaining two 'Good' homes being in the top 64%.

Members agreed that the performance report revealed the exceptional standards that homes in Stockton were achieving and this provided considerable assurance for Members.

The Board asked that its thanks be passed to the staff contributing to the current performance levels.

RESOLVED that:

1. the high standards of performance, being achieved by Stockton's Children's Homes, be noted, and applauded, and the Board's thanks be relayed to appropriate staff.
2. that a further report be provided, following Ofsted's annual release of comparative data.

8 Forward Plan.

The Board considered its Forward Plan. Any necessary updates, coming from this meeting would be made.