

## **Report for Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) 11 October 2019**

### **Children in Our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG) Update**

The last CIOCSG was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019 and will continue to meet 6 weekly.

Items discussed were:

- Children in Our Care (CIOC) Action Plan
- Placement with Parents Regulations (PPR's)
- Virtual School Update
- CIOC numbers
- The Journey of the Looked After Child/Young Person placed out of the area.

#### CIOC Action Plan

Updates were provided. CIOC action plan will be amended with the additional column of 'outcomes'. The plan will be reviewed in February 2020 with progress being shared with the CPB following this.

#### Placements with Parent Regulations (PPR's)

Children who reside with their parent(s) subject of an interim or full care order are subject to PP Regs. All of these children are subject to an ongoing assessment process. Part of this process is consultation with partner agencies.

There is an expectation that partners will provide relevant information in respect of each child which will form part of the child's planning.

CIOC group members were advised that there has been a noticeable increase in the delay in receiving responses from partners which can delay and cause drift in permanency planning for children. Partners are to raise this issue within their own agencies.

Reassurance is being sought that the police have systems in place to 'flag' any child living with a parent(s) subject to PP Regs.

#### Virtual School Update

A report is on today's CPB agenda, sharing headlines of the work of the VS.

Overall CIOC are performing extremely positively in relation to their educational attainment.

#### CIOC numbers

We currently have 560 children looked after, a number which cannot be sustained.

We are currently reviewing a number of ways in which we respond to vulnerable children. Focus is now placed on preventing children from coming into care by prioritising additional resources with increased focus on supporting children, either in returning to the Borough or going home.

Research continues to tell us that outcomes for teenagers being brought into care are poor and placing children at a distance can make them more vulnerable.

This change in practice will mean a change in culture in how we respond to the needs of vulnerable children and will require a partnership approach if we are to safely reduce our numbers.

### The Journey of the Looked After Child/Young Person placed out of the area

The Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership have commissioned 'Taye training' to undertake a review of children and young people placed at a distance from their home Local Authority.

The review will seek, via an evidence-based approach, to address: -

- Current numbers of children/young people placed out of their home area of Hartlepool and Stockton.
- The geographical locations of such placements.
- Whether the required notifications were made each time a child was placed at a distance from his/her home local authority.
- The rationale behind why a child/young person was placed out of area.
- The impact of placing the child/young person at a distance to include if the plan was successful and led to improved outcomes for the child/young person.
- How effective are we as a multi-agency system in early planning when a child is placed out of area?
- Whether, once in placement, a child's needs were met as defined by their care plan.
- The effectiveness of the ongoing care planning arrangements and role of the home authority partners in ensuring the quality of care and support.
- The responsiveness of the home authority partners to any emerging or new needs for the child/young person.
- Where there any specific (therapeutic) requirements that were needed from the placement and were those/are they being met.
- How effectively the continuing relationship between the child and their allocated social worker is sustained.

### Working Methodology

- The paper review of approximately 40 – 50 cases during the time period 2017 – 2019, for those children/young people placed out of the Local Authority area of Hartlepool and Stockton.
- Due to Stockton having significantly more cases, the agreed proportion to be 60/40 for review.
- Whilst a full cross section of age ranges will be included and considered, the majority will focus on the 10-15 years age category.
- A mixture of foster placements and residential placements are to be reviewed, and familial placements excluded.
- The review to focus on the key lines of enquiry as below:-

The journey of the child/young person from commencement through to placement, addressing:-

- The reason the child/young person came to notice of social care.
- The reason the child/young person became a looked after child/young person.
- The rationale for the decision to place them out of area/distant placement.
- Identify if the relevant out of area agencies were informed and in a timely manner.
- Identify if the relevant authorities were sought, i.e. DCS – distant placement.

These will be done by reviewing the: -

- Care planning process
- Placement
- Case Reviews

To note; this will include ascertaining if the child/young person was placed at the centre of the work throughout the process.

From the initial review of case files – identify key emerging themes which demonstrate good practise or where areas for improvement exist. The report will comment separately for Hartlepool and Stockton. However, the executive summary will jointly reflect both areas.

Upon completion, the findings from the review will be shared with CPB.

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