

# Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Friday, 6th August, 2021.

**Present:** Cllr Barbara Inman(Chair), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Tony Riordan (Sub for Cllr Sally Ann Watson)

**Officers:** Michael Henderson (MD's), Martin Gray, David Willingham, Jo Lee

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Mick Moore

## 1 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Beall declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 4 Annual Report of the Fostering Panel and Fostering Service, as she was a member of the Fostering Panel.

Cllr Tony Riordan declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 4, Annual Report of the Fostering Panel and Fostering Service, as he had been involved in emergency fostering.

Cllr Barbara Inman declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 4, Annual Report of the Fostering Panel and Fostering Service, as a member of her family had been involved in long term fostering.

## 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

## 3 Annual Report of the Fostering Panel and Fostering Service

Members considered a report that provided an overview of the work of the Fostering Panel and Stockton Borough Council Fostering Service between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

Members were provided with information relating to:-

- the role and operation of the Panel.
- the Constitution and membership of the Panel.
- the impact of Coronavirus on the Panel and Service.
- Quality Assurance.
- Data relating to suitability to foster applications and Foster Care Reviews.
- Long Term Fostering Matches.
- Feedback in respect of Panel Functioning.
- Training for Panel

The Committee noted the current position:

- At 31 March 2021 there were 177 approved fostering households, an increase of 22 from the previous reporting period (155).

- There were 103 mainstream approved foster carers (which has remained static from the previous year).
- There were 74 approved, connected carers, (this compares to 52 in the previous year).
- Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, 15 mainstream foster carers resigned (compared to 7 during the previous year). 5 of these carers retired from fostering due to age/ill health, 1 resigned due to being granted an SGO for the children in their care, and 8 for personal reasons. 1 carer continued to care for a child under a staying put arrangement.

Discussion:-

- Members noted that, in four foster care reviews, there had been no children's views received, where the Panel considered it would be possible to obtain those views. Officers continued to look into the reasons for this and would feedback to the Board.
- The Council continued to identify and support connected carers to keep children with trusted people in familiar settings.
- There was a clear process, relating to placements, including meetings with fosterers, ahead of placement.

RESOLVED that the update and discussion be noted.

#### **4 Children in Our Care Strategic Group Update**

Members received an update on the work of the Children in Our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG).

It was explained that the Group was currently refreshing its approach. Members noted that a Core Group was being brought together, made up of senior leads from within Children's Services, to work alongside the CIOCSG and would be used to identify tasks and drive forward change. Small task and finish groups would work on priorities, led by a Service Lead, with membership being identified across all partners, specific and appropriate to the work identified.

The CIOCSG would become a stakeholder meeting to look at specific issues, with partners. The current CIOCSG Terms of Reference would be refreshed to ensure the correct membership, and that aims and governance arrangements were clear and understood.

The Board noted and endorsed the Group's priorities:

1. To keep families together.
2. To develop high quality specialist provision.
3. To capture the voice of the child and use it to develop and improve services and practice.

A developing workplan would drive forward the change that was needed to

improve outcomes for Children in Our Care and Care Leavers. The Board was provided with details of the plan.

Members noted an update on the virtual school.

Discussion/ Points raised:

- The Board agreed that all member of the Council needed to have an increased awareness of their responsibilities, as corporate parents.
- There was a review of care leavers' accommodation. Commissioning would look to provide a diverse range of accommodation within the community. Potential providers had highlighted some promising ideas. The Board would receive an update on this at a future meeting.
- Care leavers were allocated a personal adviser, from 16 – 21 years old, and maintained positive, established relationships.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted and agreed.

## **5 Forward Plan**

Members noted the Board's Forward Plan.