

Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Friday, 8th October, 2021.

Present: Cllr Barbara Inman(Chair), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Officers: Rhona Bollands, Michael Henderson, David Willingham

Also in attendance: Sarah McNulty (NTFT), Vicky Davidson Boyd (ATV)

Apologies: None

1 **Evacuation Procedure**

The procedure was noted.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2021 were confirmed as a correct record

4 **Adoption Tees Valley Annual Report 2020-2021**

The Board considered the 3rd full annual report of Adoption Tees Valley, which was the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), for the 5 Local Authority Councils of Darlington; Hartlepool; Middlesbrough; Redcar and Cleveland; and Stockton.

The Annual Report covered the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. This period had been impacted by the national Covid 19 pandemic, and the year reported on had been characterised by adoption activity which had been conducted within the amended regulations and restrictions that had been imposed because of the public health emergency.

The pandemic had brought some significant challenges and the service had developed and piloted some new ways of working, which were outlined in the report.

- Early permanence had been embedded in a more systemic way, with a clear pathway for adopters wishing to offer this placement type.
- The service had worked with the University of East Anglia research “Moving on to Adoption” to trial a model of Introductions and Placement planning, which supported moving children in with adopters at a pace they need.
- The service had developed the “Assessment to Support Pathway”, enhancing the continuity of preparation for adoption, and adoption support, using the underpinning model of Secure Base, and PACE parenting.

- A new Friends and Family training module was now offered to all adopters and their support networks.

Discussion and key points:

- There had been strong adoption activity in Stockton, with 26 Adoption Orders in the 20/21 year.
- No children had waited an unduly long time to be adopted.
- Children were being adopted close to the areas that they were from, which helped with maintaining a child's sense of identity and logistics around providing support.
- Members noted the backlog in Life Story work. It was explained that the process sat with ATV, but this had been reviewed and it had been agreed that it was more appropriate to be developed with each child's social worker. Capacity had been identified in social work teams and a digital tool had been identified to assist.

RESOLVED that the update and discussion be noted.

5 Children in Our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG) Update

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

Discussion and Key Points:

- It was important to continue to improve elected member and partner engagement with Children in Our Care. It was explained that a the annual CIOC event, with elected members, would be arranged in due course. Work with the Let's Take Action Group, to improve engagement, was ongoing.
- It was suggested that a members' policy update be arranged, focusing on the role of elected members, as Corporate Parents.
- Members noted the complexities associated with individuals making donations to Children in Our Care, via their pay, however, there were other avenues that may be utilised to provide support.
- It was explained that Children in Our Care were prioritised for Dental Health Care and this was being highlighted, again, with providers.

Reference was made to an issue that was emerging, during Children in Our Care Annual Review Assessments, around the availability of geek bars, which was a form of vaping product that contained extremely high levels of nicotine. The Board asked that the issue be raised within relevant Council services and the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted and actioned, as appropriate.

6 Forward Plan

The Board noted its Forward Plan.