

# Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Friday, 9 August 2024.

**Present:** Cllr Lisa Evans (Chair), Cllr Paul Rowling (sub for Cllr Pauline Beall), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Lynn Hall (sub for Alex Griffiths) Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Tony Riordan (sub for Cllr Sally Ann Watson)

**Officers:** Jane Smith, Majella McCarthy, Michael Henderson, Debbie Farrow, Janet Wilson, Jane Edmends

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Norma Stephenson, Ryan Davies, Lisa Robinson, Lee Brown, Louise Addison, Sarah Massiter

**Apologies:** Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Alex Griffiths, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

## **CPB /24**      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **CPB /24**      **Corporate Parenting Commitments**

Members were provided with a draft document detailing commitments to the support of children in our care and care leavers in the borough of Stockton on Tees.

Discussion and points raised:-

- Consultation with children and young people in our care had provided a clear message that they wanted their corporate parents to develop the document, themselves.
- It was explained that the commitments did not include the ringfencing of Council apprenticeships to care leavers.
- Members noted the high number of care leavers who were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Officers agreed that this was concerning and there were dedicated workstreams to look at this. It was agreed that an update report on NEET be provided to the October meeting.
- The document's format would be changed following consultation with design and print, and others.

RESOLVED that

1. the content of the document be approved and further work on its format be undertaken by officers.
2. an update report on NEET be provided at the October meeting of the Board

## **Adoption Tees Valley – Annual Report**

Members considered the Adoption Tees Valley (ATV) Annual Report 2023/2024.

It was explained that ATV had continued to thrive and develop as a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), with this year seeing a greater degree of pan regional partnership working with neighbouring North East RAAs- Adopt Coast to Coast and Adopt North East. ATV had also progressed the partnership with the North East Integrated Care Board (ICB) through innovative work, together, in developing the Multi-Disciplinary Adoption Support Service- MDASS. Regional partnership working had enabled the RAA to draw funding from Adoption England for development and positive impact, aligned to the objectives in the National Adoption Strategy. Adoption England had recently published its own strategic plan for the forthcoming 3 years, and ATV had continued to develop in line with national strategic priorities.

The Board considered areas of work during the year, including:

- Governance
- Key performance Indicators
- Children referred, permanence planning, linking and matching
- Recruiting, preparing and approving adopters
- Early permanence
- Adoption support
- Voice and influence of young people and adoptive parents

Priorities going forward would include:

- Recruiting locally
- Children's voices
- Learning from disruption
- Early Permanence planning

Key points and discussion:-

- The Board noted the very good engagement that ATV had with families
- Adoptive families were encouraged to advise their child's school, that their child was adopted. This allowed schools to access additional funding.

- Members noted the added pressures on families during the transition from primary to secondary school. Families often asked for support from ATV during this time.
- Work around disrupted placements was a priority. There had been some issues with older children and ATV was looking at their needs in greater detail and considering the adequacy of the preparation and training of adopters. Training, for the families involved, had been during Covid and had been undertaken remotely. It was suggested that this may have been a factor, in the disruption. In addition most of the affected placements were outside the Borough. This further highlighted that identifying our own adopters was important.
- ATV had a high number of enquiries, from people wishing to be adopters. However, the conversion rate, to being an adopter, had proved challenging.
- ATV had a very stable workforce and staff retention had not been an issue, since its establishment in 2018.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted and actioned where appropriate.

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### **Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2022/2023**

The Board was provided with the Virtual Head Teacher's Annual Report for 22/23, together with an associated presentation.

The report was a summary of work undertaken by the Virtual School and the achievements of the Children in our Care whose education the Council supported and oversaw for the academic year September 2022 to August 2023.

The report included details of:

- Extended duties of the virtual school
- Key indicators
- Attendance monitoring, Exclusions, missing from education
- Educational Outcomes
- Pupil Premium Plus
- Interventions
- Attachment aware and trauma informed journey
- Challenge and Support
- Accountability
- Engagement and Celebration

Members also received updates on case studies previously provided to the Board.

Key points and discussion:

- Working with partners around the attainment gap had been very positive.
- Work was beginning on developing a partnership approach to exclusions and looking at a more inclusive curriculum.
- The presentation provided to members would be circulated and would include validated data.

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

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### **Development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The Board considered a presentation relating to the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Partners were asked to be involved in joint discussions to develop the strategy and actions, as a local area. It was envisaged that following these discussions the Strategy and Action Plan would be submitted to the Board's October meeting, for approval. Officers would contact partners to arrange discussion sessions.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted and joint discussions take place, with partners, to develop a Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan, prior to consideration, of a draft, at the Board's October meeting.

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### **Forward Plan**

Members discussed the Forward Plan.

Partners were asked to consider what items they could bring to future meetings of the Board.

Members that had any areas of challenge, that they felt should be included on the plan, could raise them with the Chair, at any time.