

Corporate Parenting Board

Monday 22nd March 2021 at 6.00 p.m.

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020; and conducted according to the Councils Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution.

Board Members Present:

Councillor T. Wilson (Chair)
Councillor. T. Jukes (Vice-Chair)
Councillor M. Nazir
Councillor M. Statham
Councillor C. Statham

Officers Present

David Hughes	Children and Young Persons Champion
Alison Jones	Designated Nurse LAC (Clinical Commissioning Group)
John Dunning	Interim Children's Commissioner for Walsall CCG
Colleen Male	Director, Children's Social Work
Zoe Morgan	Group Manager (Corporate Parenting)
Lorraine Thomson	Head of the Virtual School
Helena Baxter	Apprenticeship Programme Lead

Welcome

At this point in the meeting, the Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and explaining the rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers, which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage. Members confirmed that they could both see and hear the proceedings.

148/20 Introductions and Apologies

There were no apologies for the duration of the meeting.

149/20 **Substitutions**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

150/20 **Minutes**

A copy of the minutes of the meetings held on 15th February, 2021 were submitted.

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th February, 2021 copies having previously been circulated to each Member of the Board, be approved and signed by the chairman as a correct record.

151/20 **Young People Engagement**

The Children and Young Persons Champion spoke to the report (annexed) and highlighted the salient points.

The Board were informed that since the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board, the Children in Care Council (CiC) has continued to meet virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions. The report covered the period January and February 2021.

Feedback received from young people (who had received supported housing) indicated that they felt well supported by their social worker/personal adviser. Many young people felt that the grant allocated to care leavers to buy essentials was not adequate. The Authority was considering this issue. Additional young people had been recruited to join the membership of the Children in Care Council, and there was a plan to increase the numbers further.

Young people had been sitting on virtual interview panels for positions within Children's Services, and this had been a positive experience for them.

The Chair thanked the Children and Young Persons Champion and the young people who had attended the Shadow Board directly prior to the meeting. Members were assured that the grant received by care leavers to equip new homes would be increased, which was a result of the Boards influence. It was also stressed by the Chair that the input from young people, who took part in the interview panel, was taken into consideration and played a part in decision-making.

A Member asked if there was SEND representation on the CiC, Officers confirmed that this was the case. Members commended the work carried out at the CiC, as feedback indicated that it had a positive impact on young people.

Resolved:

That the Young People Engagement report was noted.

152/20 **Health Services for Looked After Children Interim Report.**

The Designated Nurse LAC introduced the report and highlighted the salient points. The core activities of the CCG, in relation to LAC, were described and included:

- Initial health assessments.
- Review health assessments.
- Care leaver summaries.
- Adoption and fostering reports.

It was suggested that the Board receive a further report in September 2021 to ensure that Members were receiving the most up to date cleansed data.

Priorities set for 2021/22 were included within the report, and the CCG were keen to receive feedback from children and young people to enable identification of priorities.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on services was described, although new ways of working were developed and had been successful. A restoration plan was in place to be operational from 1st April 2021.

The Children's Commissioner stressed that the Flash service detailed within the report was a local authority service. A more detailed report on mental health and well-being could be taken to the Board in the future; however, Members were assured that services had continued throughout the pandemic with face-to-face appointments for those in crisis.

Members welcomed the suggestion of a young person health champion. A Member asked what could be done to increase engagement from GPs. It was suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic might have impacted on this as GPs were engaged very well and worked alongside the CCG to safeguard LAC.

A Member expressed concern around transition arrangements in place for mental health services for young people aged 16- 18 years. It was stressed by Members that this needed to be improved for LAC. The Chair thanked health care colleagues for their contribution and dedication over the last 12 months.

Resolved

That the Health Services for Looked After Children Interim Report be noted.

153/20 Care Leaver Pre Apprenticeship Programme

The Apprenticeship Programme Lead presented the report and spoke to the presentation highlighting the salient points. The Committee were informed that the 'Care Leavers pre-apprenticeship programme' sat within the Authorities 'Apprenticeship Programme'. The Committee were advised that apprenticeships were reviewed to determine the reasons for success and failure. Working with Partners was important to ensure that external opportunities were available to Care Leavers. It was acknowledged that this was a work in progress and there was further work to be done to ensure success.

A Member asked how the Service would engage with local businesses, the Programme Lead stated that the Service planned to work with 'Walsall Works', Kick Start, and use social media to increase awareness of the opportunities to work with apprentices. It was noted that care leavers continued to be placed in maintained schools during lockdown.

Resolved:

That the Care Leaver Pre Apprenticeship Programme was noted.

154/20 Virtual School Annual Report

The Head of the Virtual School explained the statutory duty to provide an 'annual report', the purpose of this report was to outline the activity of the Virtual School and report on the 2019-20 educational outcomes of Walsall's looked after children and the work carried out to support the education of looked after children during the Covid-19 pandemic. The salient points of the report were highlighted (annexed). The Virtual School worked very closely with schools; complex case meetings were held which identified children who were at risk of exclusion. The Virtual School carried out Personal Education Plans (PEP) to meet unidentified needs of young people who had come into care. The Committee were informed of the work completed to support children during lockdown, and children in care were encouraged to attend school. Priorities for the future were to further develop the virtual school offer. There would be a focus on improving post-16 PEP, and there would be an aim for all schools in Walsall to be attachment aware. Relationships with post-16 providers would continue to be developed and it was acknowledged that more could be done to support young people with this. The training offer to schools would be continued, and a CAMHS practitioner would be commissioned to support schools for young people in care.

It was noted that the 'Virtual School Annual Report' was not included in the committee paperwork. It was agreed that this would be circulated electronically and annexed at the next meeting of the Board.

Clarity was provided around pupil premium funding, and assurance was provided to Board Members that the child's voice was considered in all situations and decisions were made in the child's best interests.

Resolved

- 1. That the Virtual School Annual Report was noted.**
- 2. The Virtual School report would be tabled at the next meeting.**

There being now further business the meeting terminated at 8 p.m.