

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 7 March 2018 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Bukky Okunade (Vice-Chair), Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Leslie Gamester, Joycelyn Redsell and Aaron Watkins
- Natalie Carter, Thurrock Open Door Representative
Joseph Kaley, Children in Care Council
Jackie Howell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
- Apologies:** Councillors Sue MacPherson (Chair), Martin Kerin and Sharon Smith
- In attendance:** Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Adriana Cimpean, Interim Service Manager for the Through Care Service
Paula Gregory, Designated Nurse
Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills
Claire Pascoe, Child Sexual Exploitation Manager
Keeley Pullen, Head Teacher for Virtual School
Janet Simon, Strategic Lead, Looked After Children
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

19. Minutes

The Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting held on the 6 December 2017 were approved as a correct record.

Paula Gregory requested that her apologies be recorded.

20. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

21. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

22. Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation

Claire Pascoe, Child Sexual Exploitation Manager, presented the report that had set out the actions that Thurrock Social Care had taken over the past year and what was planned for the coming year alongside the achievements made to date. Working persistently and collaboratively to safeguard the children of Thurrock from Sexual Exploitation and any associated harms by reviewing the current Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Trafficking position as assessed by the Thurrock Children's Social Care.

Claire Pascoe briefed Members on the key achievements in identifying and tackling Child Sexual Exploitation both internally and across Thurrock.

The Vice Chair thanked Claire Pascoe for the very detailed report and was pleased to hear that the Child Sexual Exploitation Manager was now a substantive post.

The Vice Chair questioned what training could be undertaken with private taxi drivers. Claire Pascoe stated that she would be interested to include private taxi companies into the training schedule but unfortunately many of these were licenced in London. Claire Pascoe agreed to make some enquiries and contact any such operators.

Councillor Redsell stated that Thurrock taxi drivers had to undertake further scrutiny under the Licensing Committee where as private drivers such as UBER do not.

Claire Pascoe stated that the figures quoted in the Thurrock Picture section of the report referred to Looked After Children.

Councillor Redsell questioned what training was being undertaken in Thurrock schools. Claire Pascoe stated that Local Safeguarding Children Board undertook training on Stranger Danger and Walk Online which would be directly communicated with Thurrock children and parents. These schemes had been recognised by Ofsted and between August 2016 and August 2017, 2207 children had received the Stranger Danger training.

Councillor Redsell stated that the 2207 figure did not seem a lot when compared to the number of schools and children in Thurrock. Claire Pascoe stated that the Local Safeguarding Children Board was commissioned to undertake this training to children of all ages in primary and secondary schools. Claire Pascoe agreed to obtain the exact number of those children trained and update Members.

Councillor Watkins thanked Claire Pascoe for the report and reiterated that training should be undertaken with all children whether in primary or secondary schools. That focus on training going forward should be paramount with more children having access to IT and with the introduction of more social media apps, with training being specific to the age of that child.

Paul Gregory requested the number of Looked After Children that formed part of those children currently assessed as being at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Councillor Watkins asked whether extra curriculum groups such as brownies, scouts and after-school clubs could benefit from this training. Claire Pascoe stated that this training should be made available from a broader approach but would be dependent on the capacity of the Local Safeguarding Children Board team.

Keeley Pullen, Head Teacher for Virtual School, stated that e-safety training formed part of the statutory curriculum in schools and that support for children and parents would be available.

The Vice Chair thanked Claire Pascoe and moved to the recommendation that Members noted and commented on the report.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report.

23. Children's Social Care Performance

The Vice Chair welcomed Janet Simon the new Strategic Lead for Looked After Children to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services, briefed Members on the summary of children's social care performances set out in the report and that the data produced to meet internal and external requirements was a good indication of issues.

Members were updated on the following from the report:

- The reduction in the number of contacts and referrals.
- The number of care leavers in suitable accommodation had reduced.
- That Thurrock we compared themselves with a benchmark group which included Medway and Luton. That in comparison Thurrock's figures were lower.
- The number of Looked After Children had been reduced to 311.
- That Thurrock continued to be part of the Transfer Protocol for Asylum Seeking Children entering into Thurrock.
- That 4 Looked After Children had gone missing at the time of reporting.
- That a review on the whole Adoption service would be undertaken because of the low number of Looked After Children adopted from care.
- That the first round of inspections under the new Inspection Framework were being undertaken. It was possible that Thurrock could receive a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) later this year or we could have a short notice inspection.

- The planned Joint Targeted Inspection would be themed around Child Sexual Exploitation.

The Vice Chair thanked Rory Patterson for the report and asked when the Ofsted inspection was due to take place for the Single Inspection Framework. Rory Patterson stated that this would not be a full inspection and would take place probably around the autumn time. Thurrock would probably not receive a full inspection under the new framework for at least another year.

Councillor Redsell thanked Rory Patterson for the report but stated that more information should be available to all Corporate Parent Members on those Looked After Children that had gone missing. Rory Patterson stated that a weekly report on incidents was sent to the Portfolio Holder for her information and that these 4 incidents were very short term. That more in-depth work on the understanding the risk of different groups would need to be undertaken.

The Vice Chair asked how the return home interviews were progressing. Rory Patterson stated that this was an opportunity to look at this process more and that a report on missing children would be prepared for Corporate Parenting Committee.

Councillor Gamester asked if there would likely be any changes in data with regard to cross gender identity. Rory Patterson stated he saw no particular issues with the service meeting all needs and continued to develop new ways of working with all vulnerable children.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted the areas of improvement in Children's Social Care, work undertaken to manage demand for statutory social care services and highlight areas of further investigation for deep dive studies.**
- 2. That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted a new inspection framework has been introduced by Ofsted for children's social care.**

24. Care Leavers into Employment, Education or Training (EET)

Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills, introduced the report that summarised the approach taken to improve the number of care leavers into education employment and training to enable them to access the regeneration opportunities in Thurrock and to respond positively to the Council's corporate parenting role. That Thurrock Council was enabling and supporting education employment and training and addressing accommodation and life skills.

Michele Lucas briefly updated Members on target rates that were monitored monthly and looking at early intervention of engaging young people into activities such as the Princes Trust.

Michele Lucas stated that it was a whole Thurrock Council approach with the support of finance and housing.

The Vice Chair thanked Michele Lucas for the report.

Councillor Redsell thanked Michele Lucas for the very passionate report but stated life skills training such as money management should be given to children much younger than at 18 years of age.

Councillor Redsell stated that training clubs such as football or cricket clubs should be made more available to allow more children, parents and coaches to be involved.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted and supported the Care Leaders into Employment Education or Training.

25. Children in Care Council Update

Joseph Kaley, Children in Care Council, presented to Members the new Health Passport designed for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The Health Passport being an easy to reference record of medical and health care history of an individual. Joseph Kaley showed Members an example of how the Health Passport would look that also included a plastic wallet on the reverse so that prescriptions and notes could be stored. That three years funding had been secured and that initially 1000 copies would be printed. It would be the intention to present the Health Passport at the Looked After Children Event and then they would be distributed to Looked After Children and Care Leavers at medicals or through social workers.

Joseph Kaley updated Members on the Pledge. That the consultation period had finished and that findings made by Looked After Children would be included in the Pledge:

Money Management

The Local Authority would help Looked After Children set up bank accounts and provide information on bank rates and accounts.

Language and Culture Needs

To ensure that all culture backgrounds and languages spoken by Looked After Children are taken into consideration and included within the Pledge.

Religion

The Local Authority will support and supply provisions as required.

Security in Placements

Information on the stability and security of a placement with details of long term plans.

Quality in Placements

Information on the quality of a placement.

Foster Care Breakdown

Information on when children return back into care, arrive into care, changing placements and to look at all alternative scenarios.

Missing Persons

Information on when a child goes missing and how this would be approached. Information on the return home process and interview and what repercussions would there be for that child.

Advocate Services

Information on tutors and the advocate services be made available.

The Vice Chair thanked Joseph for his presentation and that it was great news that funding had been secured.

Paula Gregory stated that it was the great presentation given by the Children in Care Council that had secured the funding.

Natalie Carter stated that these findings were open to discussion and would arrange to meet Officers.

Councillor Redsell stated that the Children in Care Council should not forget to speak with Members who would be able to offer assistance. Joseph Kaley thanked Members and stated that dates of their meetings were advertised, open to all and encouraged Members to attend.

26. Corporate Parenting Work Programme 2017-2018

The Vice Chair stated that this was the last Corporate Parenting Committee for this municipal year and that the work programme was now complete.

The Vice Chair asked Members if there were any items to be added or discussed for the work programme for the next municipal year.

The Vice Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contribution and their continued support to the Corporate Parenting Committees.

The meeting finished at 8.29 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**