

Corporate Parenting Board

MEETING DATES: 18.04.17 (Corporate Parenting Board)
17.05.17 (Annual Council)

REPORT TITLE: Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report

CONTACT OFFICER: Karen Dolton

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Bury Council corporate parenting vision is "To do our best as parents for children and young people in our care and care leavers".

The Corporate Parenting Board has responsibility to ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parents to children and young people in care (CYPIC) and care leavers and fulfils its duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies. The Board requires knowledge and understanding of the needs of CYPIC and care leavers and takes a lead for the Council in monitoring how well services are meeting those needs.

The annual report provides an update from the Corporate Parenting Board on progress over the past 12 months and assesses how well the Council is carrying out its corporate parenting responsibility, drawing on the Ofsted Report, performance outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers and the voice of children and young people.

2.0 WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

- The Corporate Parenting Board meets 6 times a year. At the start of the year it set a delivery plan and forward plan for the year, setting out areas of focus for the year.
- In response to the Ofsted Inspection report, the Corporate Parenting Board has brought an increased focus to the wellbeing of young people leaving care over the past 12 months. Care Leavers have attended Corporate Parenting Board and the Board met at the New Kershaw Centre in October and before the meeting Corporate Parents met informally with care leavers.
- Corporate Parenting Board meeting now include a focus on young people leaving care. The Board has considered the Care Leavers Charter, Care Leavers data and the OFSTED Action Plan receives regular updates so that they can be assured that the necessary actions to improve outcomes are in place.
- Councillors on the Corporate Parenting Board have championed the needs of CYPIC and care leavers, and this has been particularly of note in the support to increase the number of Council apprenticeships and traineeships for care leavers.

- During the past year the Board regularly received reports, including Fostering, Adoption, Health, Education, Independent Reviewing and Children's Rights. Officers were questioned about what is working well and what is being done to improve outcomes for CYPIC and Care Leavers and required to report back to future meetings on progress.
- Young people from the Children in Care Council regularly attend and update on activities and work that they have carried out. The determination of these young people to improve their own lives and those of other young people, and their willingness to work with the Council to strengthen services and support is valued by the Board and they welcome the opportunity to hear directly from young people, who are well supported by Children's Rights officers.
- There are 4 Corporate Parenting Board sub groups, ie, Health; Education, Employment & Lifelong Learning; Placements; and Participation. The sub groups bring together partner agencies to deliver improvements set out in the Corporate Parenting Delivery Plan. The Board has received regular minutes and updates on progress.
- A 6-monthly corporate parenting newsletter is sent out on behalf of the Board and sent out to all Councillors. This aims to raise awareness and understanding of corporate parenting and the lives of CYPIC and care leavers, and also to support the promotion of fostering in Bury.

3.0 WHAT NEEDS TO WORK BETTER AND WHAT ACTION IS IN PLACE TO ADDRESS THIS

- The Ofsted Inspection found that the Corporate Parenting Board needed to effectively challenge weaker outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers and set ambitious targets to ensure outcomes for children and young people improve.
- In response to the Ofsted findings the Corporate Parenting Board has been reviewing how it can bring stronger challenge and ensure improved outcomes. This includes increasing engagement with CYPIC and care leavers and changing the balance of the meetings so that more time is given to understanding needs and requiring services to show how these are being met. The Board will increase its use of case studies to understand barriers and look at how these can be addressed in future.
- The Board is looking at how they can all champion children and young people in care and care leavers to strengthen corporate parenting by the Council and partner agencies. This also includes looking at training needs for all Councillors and encouraging take up of the excellent Total Respect training delivered by CYPIC and Care Leavers.
- The Board is reviewing its Corporate Parenting Strategy, aligned to the review of the Promise(s) to children in young people in care and care leavers. A key strand of the reviewed Strategy will be ensuring that corporate parenting and meeting the needs of CYPIC and care leavers is "everyone's business".
- Training and induction for Corporate Parents needs to be more robust and further embedded in order for the corporate parenting role to be more effective in

ensuring that appropriate challenge relating to the outcomes of children and young people in care and care leavers is achieved.

- “Madhouse” participation days continue to be provided in the main school holidays and offer children a collective opportunity to have their voices heard. There is also an annual residential event which takes place in the Summer holidays with support from the Integrated Youth Support Service.
- Bury Children’s Rights offers a visit to every child over the age of 8 who becomes newly Looked after. This visit is arranged within four weeks of admission; BCR will explain what they do, what forms of additional support are available and how the child or young person can access advocacy services. Take up of visits and subsequent support and advocacy is high; generally, between two thirds and three quarters of interviewees take up the offer.
- Children’s Rights Service continues to visit children when they first come into care to ensure that they know who to contact if they need advocacy guidance and support.
- Celebration events unfortunately had to be abandoned following the accident at Alton Towers, the awards were made at the Children and Young People’s Christmas parties. A further celebration event at Alton Towers which is in line with the views and wishes of the Children in Care Council will be held in 2017. Planning for this event is underway and includes looked after children and care leavers.
- Care Leavers have contributed to a review of their Service and the Care Leavers Forum has continued and clearer links have been made relating to a wider participation framework with the Children in Care Council.
- The Local Authority successfully achieved the LILAC charter which indicated the participation of young people across the service.
- The BOOM volunteering service continues to work well with Bury looked after children and this has established links to the Greater Manchester Youth Network which assists young people to get involved in volunteering and wider community projects. This is supported by Children in Need and a further bid has been submitted in March 2017 for funding for the project to continue.
- The duration of Care Proceedings continue to improve throughout the year, with the majority of proceedings being completed within the 26 weeks timescale. In order to minimise delay and drift for children in care the work to improve the preparation of cases prior to proceedings and to ensure the timeliness of care planning continues. The average length of care proceedings per child is 23 weeks and 6 days. 2016/2017 concluded with 37 Care Orders, 8 Child Arrangement Orders, 16 Placement Orders, 12 Special Guardianship Orders, 4 Supervision Orders and 5 cases concluded with no orders.
- Placing children near to home is a continued strength and enables children to be better supported and maintain family and local contacts. The overwhelming majority of children Looked after by Bury are placed within twenty miles of home; current data shows 350 children in care at the end of 31 March. Of the 350

Looked After Children: 313 are placed 20 miles or less from home, 37 placed more than 20 miles from home

- A Teenage Foster Carer has been recruited to work specifically with young people with challenging behaviours such as CSE and missing, wrap around support will be offered in this placement.
- The new Payment for Skills framework recognises the valuable work of family and friends carers and they are offered the same financial incentives linked to training and development opportunities as mainstream carers. There are a total of 84 Family and Friends foster carers, 49 provide long term fostering and 35 short term foster placements.
- A high proportion of our Looked After Children live within either their own extended family or with a Family and Friends foster family. A total of 145 (41.4%) of our children and young people who are Looked After are placed within their family or a connected person/family friend: F&F foster placements): 84 (24.0%) are placed with Family and Friend carers, 61 (17.4%) are placed with their parents subject to a Care Order. Targeted work will be undertaken in the coming year to focus on this group and reducing the number of Looked After Children by discharging the Care Orders in a timely manner and seeking alternate orders with family and friend placements.
- We are successful in preventing the majority of young people from being discharged from care too early and in supporting them to acquire independence skills. Those who leave care at 16 and 17 continue to be low: there were 7 discharges for 16-year-olds, 5 discharges for 17-year-olds and 30 discharges of young people on their 18th birthday. There are currently 12 young people in continuing care, which means they remain with their foster carers post-18 years of age.
- The total number of children and young people in residential care remains relatively low at 42, the residential placements consists of 10 young people are placed in residential accommodation not subject to children's homes regulations, 1 young person is placed in a secure unit: 1, 28 placed in semi-independent provision/homes & hostels, 1 residential care home, 1 YOI or prison: 1 placed in a residential school.
- The Regional Adoption Agency is progressing with a proposed start date of October 2017. The Bury adoption figures for 2016-2017 are as follows: 8 Adoption Orders were granted, 11 children are placed but not yet adopted, 14 Should Be Placed For Adoption (Shobpa) decisions were made, 5 children awaiting placement orders, 2 Shobpa's agreed at panel, 4 matches made, 1 child placed in a concurrent placement and 3 children placed in foster to adopt placements.
- The Virtual School team forms part of the multi-agency CYPiC Service. The Ofsted inspection (Spring 2016) resulted in many positive statements including a comment on how well the team knows the children and young people in Bury's care, and how well the Virtual School is managed. The post Ofsted inspection Action Plan is driving changes and progress: Social Worker training is now mandatory and the first session was delivered (16/11/16) the programme will be embedded within social care CPD arrangements.
- The team's role has expanded the range of training requirements, the need to have education issues at the forefront of Care decisions and the essential advisory

element for all schools and settings ensures the team plays a vital role in the lives of looked after children and young people.

- The virtual team structure has evolved further in order to respond to the ongoing changes in the Education agenda. The new areas of operational responsibility include the 0-5 age range and the 16-19 age range this is an area for continuing development going forward.
- We are 'in touch' with the majority of our care leavers with 103 out of a cohort of 110 are recorded as being in touch.
- The progress of Education, Training and Employment is being targeted and a connexions worker is now based in the Extra Mile team to assist with targeting care leavers who are NEET.
- A Traineeship model of intervention has been developed to target Looked After young people and Care Leavers who are NEET. Looked After Children and Care Leavers undertake an initial 6 week unpaid work experience placement, however are supported with travel lunch and incentive money. If they are successful, the young person will then progress onto a 5 month paid placement, before embarking on a 2 year apprenticeship within the Council. This programme has been developed with Extra Mile, Children and Young People in Care Education team, Adult education, connexions, HR and the 14 – 19 team. The evaluation of this model will be further developed going forward.
- 12 of our Care Leavers are supported to attend university and undertake higher education courses.

List of/Link to Background Papers

Ofsted Action Plan – updated version

Virtual School Report

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