

AT A MEETING of the Corporate Parenting Board of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL held as a remote meeting on Thursday, 28th January, 2021:

Chairman:

* Councillor Ann Briggs

* Councillor Fran Carpenter	Councillor Robert Taylor
* Councillor Roz Chadd	* Councillor Malcolm Wade
* Councillor Stephen Philpott	* Councillor Pal Hayre
* Councillor Jackie Porter	
* Councillor Patricia Stallard	
* Councillor Elaine Still	

* Present

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

13. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

14. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that she had been contacted by Middlesbrough Council to seek advice and to develop partnership working to develop the Corporate Parenting approach in Middlesbrough. The Chairman noted that partnership working in this way with other local authorities would ultimately help ensure the best outcomes for children.

The Chairman also informed the Board that she had recently attended a virtual Supported Lodges meeting and a virtual Hampshire Fostering Network meeting.

15. BOARD MEMBERS FEEDBACK - ENGAGEMENT AND RECENT ACTIVITIES

Councillor Carpenter noted that she had undertaken a virtual tour of the Swanwick Lodge facility. She had also attended a children in care managers' meeting to receive information about activities in the different areas of Hampshire.

Councillor Wade updated the Board on his Sportfit accommodation virtual visit where he had viewed a facility designed for an individual with specialist requirements. Councillor Wade noted the positive work being undertaken despite some of the impacts of the pandemic.

Councillor Philpott noted that he had attended a Hampshire Fostering Network meeting and has been grateful for the opportunity to meet foster carers and learn about the different roles involved.

Councillor Porter had also attended the children in care managers' county meeting.

The Chairman encouraged all Board members to undertake as many engagement activities outside of the formal Board meetings as much as possible.

16. MODERNISING PLACEMENT PROGRAMME

The Board received the report of the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of the Modernising Placements Programme.

In response to Members' questions, it was confirmed that:

- In reference to section 17 of the report, recruitment for the Urgent and Extended Care Service was expected to be challenging, reflecting national recruitment challenges in the sector, and that officers had been working with HR and with CAMHS to promote the new and attractive role offer.
- Payment benchmarking had been undertaken for foster carer roles alongside other local authorities and private providers to ensure that allowances were competitive.
- One of the main aims of the programme was to build resilience within the workforce and that recruiting staff was one step towards this.
- There were currently approximately 120 children in 'out of county' placements and that this could be for a number of reasons such as for the young person's own safety or to access particularly specialist facilities. This number had reduced during lockdown.
- With reference to section 17 of the report and the repurposing of a Children's Home to support young people with complex needs, the

occupancy levels in Children's Homes were not overly high and no adverse impact was generally anticipated.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Notes the work being undertaken in the Modernising Placements Programme.
- ii) Requests a further update to the June 2021 meeting.

17. HCC ANNUAL REPORT CARE LEAVERS

The Board received the report of the Director of Children's Services presenting the annual activity of the Care Leavers Service.

In response to Members' questions it was confirmed that:

- In regard to Homelessness Prevention Personal Adviser roles and the funding due to end in March 2021, officers were already employed by the County Council and therefore the knowledge and aspects of the valuable work would be retained (also referred to in recommendation iv below).
- That the examples of educational successes and achievements by care leavers were significant. Furthermore, there were currently 70% of 17-18 year old care leavers, and 68% of 19-21 year old care leavers, in either education, employment or training.
- That briefings and training opportunities had been offered to District and Borough Authorities to inform and offer guidance to local councillors regarding their responsibilities as corporate parents.
- That from the age of 16, young people in care receive a personal allowance and can access a bank account to develop financial independence. Virtual events and training sessions to discuss financial management were also offered to complement the advice and guidance given by carers and Personal Advisors.

There was discussion involving the Council Tax exemptions for care leavers by District and Borough Authorities and it was noted that three Authorities, namely Rushmoor Borough Council, Hart District Council and Gosport Borough Council, were not offering this exemption. In relation to this, Councillor Carpenter, seconded by Councillor Wade, proposed the following additional recommendation:

"That the report be sent to the Leaders of all District and Borough Councils to draw their attention to the excellent report and show what is being done but also that the three remaining Councils are specifically requested to waive Council Tax for their care leavers."

Councillor Philpott declared an interest as a Member of Gosport Borough Council and did not participate in the vote on this proposal. The remaining Board

Members voted in agreement to add this as a further recommendation to those already contained within the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Board:

- i) Notes the good outcomes that are being achieved by Hampshire's Care Leavers and the plans to continue to improve those outcomes further in 2021.
- ii) Endorses the ambition to have more Care Leavers accessing University, as a result of the enhanced Higher Education (HE) offer.
- iii) Notes the desire to increase the number of young people in Education, Employment and Training (EET) as a result of joint working between children's social care services with the virtual college, Hampshire Futures and the Department of Work and Pensions.
- iv) Notes the aim of retaining specialist housing knowledge within the Care Leavers service after the funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the Homelessness Prevention Personal Advisor roles finishes in March 2021.
- v) Endorses the aim of the Care Leavers service to achieve the 'journey to independence' workstream in 2021 aiding the successful transition to adulthood for our care leavers.
- vi) Requests that this report be sent to the Leaders of all District and Borough Councils to draw their attention to the excellent report and show what is being done but also that the three remaining Councils are specifically requested to waive Council Tax for their care leavers.

18. **ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE HAMPSHIRE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE, SUSSEX PARTNERSHIP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

The Board received the report of the Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) with an annual update and statistics.

In response to Members questions it was confirmed that:

- Children in care were prioritised by CAMHS but that there were rising levels of demand across the service for all groups and that balancing these pressures was an ongoing challenge.
- The current average waiting time for an initial assessment was 20 weeks and for those who had not yet started treatment the current average waiting time was 40 weeks. To address the waiting times, a significant 12-18 month project was ongoing, looking initially at recruitment into the service, to make the necessary improvements.

- That there were national targets for CAMHS to record outcomes specifically for children in care.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Corporate Parenting Board notes the priorities for the Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in relation to Children in Care.

19. **FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board received the report of the Director of Children's Services with the fostering annual update providing an overview of fostering activity, detailing statistical performance data and highlighting some focus areas for 2020/2021.

In response to Members' questions it was confirmed that:

- The conversion rate for potential foster carers from enquiry to becoming an approved foster carer was 6% for 2019/20 and that this matched the national rate. The national shortage of foster carers was noted by the Board as was the fact that the County Council were in continuous competition with private providers. Targeted County Council advertising campaigns were regularly run and that innovative recruitment strategies were being explored as part of the Modernising Placements Programme.
- That the use of unregistered placements was an illegal practice. At times when emergency accommodation was required, the County Council analysed every available option to ensure the safest and most suitable solution for all involved.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Board notes the annual report.