

## CORPORATE PARENTING FORUM

Tuesday 13 December 2022

Present: Councillors Stuart Carroll (Chairman) (virtually), Amy Tisi (Vice-Chairman) (virtually), Gerry Clark, John Story and Carole Da Costa

Also in attendance: Kickback member, Lynette Jones-Jardine

Officers: Louise Freeth, Elaine Keating, Sarah Moran (virtually), Marie Bell (virtually), Matthew Edwards (virtually), Rebecca Hatch (virtually), Lin Ferguson (virtually), Suzanne Parrott (virtually) and Laurence Ellis

### Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Apologies received from Nikki Craig who was substituted by Louise Freeth.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest received.

### Minutes

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2022 be approved as a correct record.**

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the motion to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting be approved.**

### Kickback Activity

Elaine Keating, Youth Engagement Officer, informed the Forum that the two Kickback agenda items would roll into one.

As it was the last meeting of 2022, the Kickback member gave an overview of the activities which Kickback members had done throughout the year, from basic cooking to visiting Oxford to summer camping. Two Total Respect Training sessions had to be cancelled due to low turnout, but two other sessions had been successful. The Kickback member said that the dates for 4 new Total Respect Training sessions for 2023 would be provided.

The Kickback member was appreciative with the inclusion of Kickback's letter in the new Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The Kickback member then stated that she attended the Corporate Parenting Responsibility training session in November 2022. She reported that Kickback was pleased with the turnout of Councillors despite a disruptive attendee.

The Kickback member concluded by asking the Forum if there was anything they would like to do in 2023.

Councillor Story asked what the Kickback member enjoyed most, who responded that she enjoyed the summer camping trip. She hoped to continue the annual Kickback activities.

Lin Ferguson, Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help (AfC), suggested to Elaine Keating about doing a 'Come Dine With Me' activity with Kickback. Elaine Keating replied that she would bring all suggestions to Kickback's next planning meeting.

Councillor Tisi suggested a sports day-like activity, like playing rounders, to bring together Kickback members and Councillors. The Chairman agreed with the suggestion.

Suzanne Parrott, Executive Headteacher, Virtual School (AfC), informed that the Virtual School did a summer school in the first week of the summer holidays and then asked the Kickback member if she could ask her on what content would be considered appropriate. She also informed that the Virtual School had the means to make radio programs as well as links to a local radio station. She then asked Elaine Keating and the Kickback member if they were interested in doing a radio broadcast-themed week for Kickback. Councillor Clark added that he had some experience with radio broadcasting. The Chairman agreed with the idea.

Councillor Da Costa offered to teach some skills on independent living to Kickback members, like budgeting, paying bills and sexual health.

Lynette Jones-Jardine, Safeguarding Lead for Children and Young People in Care (NHS Frimley), asked if Kickback would like to share their thoughts on the NHS Children and Young People's Board on how they could improve services to young people. She then asked if Kickback could deliver a program, similar to the Total Respect Training, to NHS Frimley and John Lewis. The Kickback member agreed and added that they could speak to someone. Suzanne Parrott raised that John Lewis attended the Virtual School's Executive Board, and then offered to share resources and learning.

### Kickback/Care Leavers' Forum update

Elaine Keating and the Kickback member shared a YouTube video slideshow illustrating the Kickback activities which had taken place throughout 2022, which was well received.

### Sufficiency Strategy Update

Matthew Edwards, Associate Director for Provider Services (AfC), presented a PowerPoint presentation on the sufficiency update. He explained that every local authority had a sufficiency duty: providing high quality local placements for every child in care and care leaver. Therefore, it was a duty to publish the Sufficiency Strategy and demonstrate to Ofsted on how sufficiency needs would be met.

Mathew Edwards listed and explained the work which had been undertaken. These included comparing RBWM's Sufficiency Strategy with other local authorities, engaging with children in care councils, cost analysis of placements, a dashboard illustrating a five-year data overview and workshops to analyse key issues.

Mathew Edwards then discussed the streams and themes. He explained that the long-term streams of work were:

- Increasing house fostering.
- Developing house residential and supported accommodation.
- Developing a wider range of 'moving on' options for care leavers.
- Creating innovative delivery models and therapeutic support.

The short-term themes were acquiring good quality data to inform decision making and priorities as well as clarity on how the sufficiency board would link in with other business priorities.

Mathew Edwards then listed Ofsted's key findings on LA's (local authority) sufficiency, adding that when Ofsted would measure RBWM's Sufficiency Strategy against some of the key findings when they came to inspect. The key findings were:

- A lack of sufficient provision on implementing Sufficiency Strategies that local authorities were unable to implement their strategies.
- The complex and unpredictable nature of children's needs meant that the demand for places for children with complex was very difficult to forecast.
- The ageing population of foster carers meant there was some instability for some children in care.
- Providers had more power in the market and were able to choose which children they could take in.
- Unregistered provision was used too often because of a lack of suitable registered alternatives.

The Chairman asked if Ofsted provided any recommendations or potential solutions to these issues. Mathew Edwards replied that Ofsted's review was more of a diagnosis rather than suggesting solutions. But he added that the main advice which Ofsted conveyed was that local authorities needed to be more realistic and concrete with their strategies.

Suzanne Parrott commented that service delivery from the Virtual School was interrelated with Mathew Edwards, elaborating that if there were issues at the schools, then this could impact at home and potentially cause placement breakdowns. She stated that if there was a lack of foster carers in a certain area, then the child in care may have to move school which could affect their education. She also added that while the government were not providing solutions, they were playing a part by encouraging school attendance, which was better for foster carers, and providing funding to all virtual schools.

Councillor Story asked what the negative outcomes were to unregistered provisions compared to registered provisions. Mathew Edwards replied that the main outcome was quality in which registered provisions went through Ofsted regulations. Councillor Story asked who ensured the unregistered provision was up to standard. Lin Ferguson replied that it was down to the relevant Children's Services to ensure that unregistered provisions were up to standard by assessing the suitability for the child to be in that provision. This was by way of a robust risk assessment in RBWM. In addition, she explained that it was rare for RBWM to place under 16-year-olds in unregistered provisions. Marie Bell, Associate Director for Corporate Parenting, added that robust processes were in place to make the checks on unregistered provisions meeting the standards. The issue is a lack of unregulated provision in England – demand is greater than the supply.

Councillor Tisi asked why it was difficult to recruit foster carers. Matthew Edwards answered that some foster carers had to experience increasingly challenging children and young people and then becoming exhausted by this. This was exacerbated by the Covid lockdown. He added that it was difficult to recruit mainstream foster carers during a period of high employment, in which fostering was not a highly demanded job. Despite this, Matthew Edwards added that there was a window of opportunity with Friends and Family Care.

Rebecca Hatch, Head of Strategy, asked if housing was a barrier for foster caring, such as rise in housing prices and not having a spare room. Matthew Edwards answered that while the option was open on supporting families who were already fostering with a house move or a home extension, it could not be done for potential foster carers. He confirmed that regulations required foster carer homes to have a spare room.

Councillor Da Costa asked if Edge of Care included children in the Early Help stages or did it only include children with social workers. Sarah Moran, Deputy Director Children's Services,

replied that the children in Edge of Care were usually under 'child in need' and 'child under protection'. Councillor Da Costa then asked when the statutory obligation started and ended. Sarah Moran replied that the statutory obligation started the moment when a family which required care support was identified. She added that Early Help was not statutory intervention.

The Forum noted the update.

### Draft Action Plans from each Workstream

*(The Chairman had to leave the meeting early at 6:40pm. As Vice-Chairman, Councillor Tisi chaired for the remainder of the meeting)*

Sarah Moran gave an introduction to the item by explaining that each officer would present the draft action plans of the 5 workstreams in which they chaired. She added that the chairs of the workstreams had one meeting each, and chair meetings had been established in between the meetings to work out consistency, the membership and how to meet the actions.

Sarah Moran presented the draft action plan for the workstream she chaired: 'Your Journey to Independence'. The aims of the workstream were:

- Continue to ensure that young people in care would only leave care when they were ready to do so, providing support if necessary.
- Provide support for care leavers who were becoming parents.
- Ensure the care leavers had all the relevant documentation required for independence, such as national insurance numbers, passports and savings accounts.
- Ensure a PA was allocated to Care Leavers when they turned 16-years-of-age.
- Ensure financial support for driving lessons.
- Provide support for disabled care leavers with their transition to adulthood.
- Provide support for life skills to live independently, such managing to shop, cook and write CVs.
- Update the Care Leavers Local Offer.

Lynette Jones-Jardine presented the draft action plan for the 'Physical and Emotional Health and Wellbeing'. The aims of the workstream were:

- Ensure Kickback members knew who was part of the workstream.
- Provide health support earlier to Children and their support networks.
- To establish strengthened Care Leavers Health offer.
- Promote independent skills in managing health needs through educational programmes.
- Ensure equitable access to health opportunities.
- Ensure Children in Care and Care Leavers were accessing specialist, timely and proportionate mental health and emotional wellbeing services.
- Organise an event to raise awareness of the health needs for Children in care and care leavers.

Councillor Da Costa asked if CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and prescription charges could be expanded for care leavers to the age of 25. Lynette Jones-Jardine replied that NHS Frimley were looking into how much of care leavers required ongoing prescription charges and informed that there was a CAHMS pathway plan for up to 18 years of age which could be used to test on extending CAHMS services.

Vice-Chairman Councillor Tisi asked if children in care and care leavers were given any priority in CAHMS. Lynette Jones-Jardine replied this was taken into account, such as having a child in care status would add to the child or young person's priority needs.

Rebecca Hatch informed that a Household Support Fund, which provided £145 to residents in needs, was also being offered to care leavers.

Suzanne Parrott presented the draft action plan for the 'Education, Training and Employment' workstream. The aims of the workstream were:

- Continue to provide high quality education for all children in care wherever they were placed.
- Provide improved opportunities in work and further/higher education for care leavers.
- Encourage more young people to attend university.
- Provide a Welcome Programme to offer UASC ESOL lessons and Cultural Capital visits throughout the year across AfC Virtual School and College authorities.

*(Matthew Edwards had left the meeting at 6:55pm)*

The Vice-Chairman asked about the Youth Offending Team, namely that a social worker was being shared. Suzanne Parrott replied that this provided shared expertise across the Virtual College. She added that the Virtual School was planning to acquire more partners, explaining that the Virtual School was successful because it had connections with schools, social workers, foster carers and the Edge of Care.

Lynette Jones-Jardine asked about her organisational links. Suzanne Parrott replied that the plan for the business event was to teach businesses how to manage young people emotionally and psychologically and that any businesses who attended the event would sign up to the Care Leavers' Covenant, in which resources could be provided from external partners. The hope, Suzanne Parrott explained, was that the Virtual School could focus on children while the Care Leavers' Covenant and other partners like John Lewis could work with businesses.

Lynette Jones-Jardine suggested that she could connect her Suzanne Parrott and her Virtual School with NHS Frimley's organisational links which provide employment skills and opportunities for Care Leavers. Suzanne Parrott agreed to get in touch with Lynette Jones-Jardine regarding the list of her connections and then invite them to the business event.

Councillor Story commented about apprenticeships, stating that many young people would prefer apprenticeships and that university was not always the final route. Suzanne Parrott replied that she sought to ensure that there was a level-playing field between young people in care and those who were not. She acknowledged that young people having high aspirations did not mean going to university.

Marie Bell presented the draft action plan for the 'Your Safety, Security and Permanence' workstream. The aims of the workstream were:

- Acquiring overall feedback from Kickback, which included requests of CPF members creating mini biographies of themselves and establishing Care Leavers Champions.
- Upholding safety, security and permanency in plans for children in care and care leavers.
- Ensuring safety by ensuring young people in care knew who contact if they were in trouble.
- Provide help for living at home, such as home repairs and independent living.
- Safeguarding against vulnerability and exploitation.
- Home and personal safety and security, such protections against online scams and providing doorbells and security checks.
- Promoting young people's identity and culture.
- Security and permanence in young people's housing, ensuring care leavers were being housed.
- Uphold RBWM's Sufficiency Strategy to ensure care leavers were provided with the adequate support.

Councillor Da Costa suggested that Marie Bell could acquire handymen to do jobs around the house for young people through RBWM's Leon database of volunteers. She also suggested a social housing provider. Marie Bell appreciated the suggestions.

Lynette Jones-Jardine asked if she was meeting with the Community Safety Partnership. Marie Bell confirmed this.

*(Rebecca Hatch left the meeting at 7:28pm)*

Elaine Keating presented the draft action plan for the 'Your Voice' workstream. The objectives of the workstream were:

- Request CPF members to do a short biography which would include a profile photo and short description.
- Organise Kickback sessions to allow young people to interact with professionals and Councillors.
- Promote the Gripe Corner to ensure care leavers and children in care were aware of it.
- Eliminate the use of jargon used by professionals speaking to young people.
- Update children in care and care leavers after every CPF meeting about what had been discussed, what decisions were made and how they impact them.
- Work with the Fostering Team to ensure foster carers knew about having their voices heard.
- Ask Supervising Social Workers about what does participation look like for foster carers and for the young person in their home at their supervision meetings and ensure this information was fed back to the Youth Engagement Officer.
- Develop a 'Rainbow of Participation' which would help to understand the different personalities and levels of engagement that young people wish to have with Children's Services.
- Work with all other workstreams to ensure the "Local Offer" was available and easily accessible for all young people in care to understand.
- Develop mechanisms to better communicate with young people and for them to communicate with Children's Services, using social media platforms and the website as tools to help us do this.
- Celebrate young people's achievements at an annual event, just like the successful event in November 2022.
- Establish an Advisory Group with a mix of children in care and care leavers to consult with the Director of Children's Services on a quarterly basis.
- Establish links with RBWM and its partners to build better relationships so that we can ensure that young people's voice is present in consultations/policies that might affect you in RBWM.
- Establish links with all workstreams to ensure that young people's voices were represented in all workstreams.

The Vice-Chairman asked if Elaine was able to directly contact the foster carers to send information rather than acquiring it through the IFA. Elaine Keating replied that generally she could not as this breached GDPR regulations, but that solutions were being identified.

Marie Bell suggested that, as part of a placement planning meeting, she and Elaine Keating could consider formulating a request to AfC's Commissioning Services on whether they would be willing to share their email address with AfC's participation officer. Elaine Keating agreed to the suggestion.

The Forum noted the update.

### Members Training

Lin Ferguson explained that the Elected Members' (Councillors') Corporate Parenting Training took place a couple of weeks prior to the meeting in November. She explained that the Forum

needed to consider what sort of training it would like to put forward to Elected Members going forward. She requested for Councillor members to discuss with other Councillors on any suggestions. She also suggested about adding the suggestions on the next Members' Corporate Parenting training session as an agenda item for the next meeting.

The Vice-Chairman suggested that there needed to be consideration on the structure of meetings like CPF and whether they should be more driven by young people. Lin Ferguson agreed with the suggestion.

Councillor Da Costa agreed that meetings like the training session should be driven by young people. She added that, following from the recently held training session, ground rules should be established at the beginning. The Vice-Chairman suggested a clerk could manage future training sessions.

Elaine Keating stated that she was concerned about bringing young people to meetings based on an incident during the recently held Corporate Parenting training session. She agreed that rules and meeting management needed to be established.

Suzanne Parrott requested for a description of what happened during the Corporate Parenting training session outside of the meeting so that she could establish some training to ensure it did not happen again. Lin Ferguson agreed.

The Forum noted update.

### Diary Dates

Elaine Keating explained that she did not have diary dates at the moment, but she did ask who would do the birthday cards to young people in care for any particular month. The Councillor Forum members stated that they were flexible.

Councillor Clark requested some personal information on young people in care, such as interests, to help with the writing of the birthday and Christmas cards. The Vice-Chairman agreed with the suggestion.

Elaine Keating stated that she would provide dates for Kickback events and activities by sending out Outlook calendar invites to Forum members.

### Forward Plan

Elaine Keating asked Sarah Moran about the Terms of Reference. Sarah Moran stated that she could take comments from Forum members regarding the Terms of Reference outside the meeting and with a deadline of early-January 2023.

The Forum noted the Forward Plan.

### Dates of Future Meetings

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The meeting, which began at 5.32 pm, finished at 8.02 pm

Chair.....

Date.....