

minutes



Meeting CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date Monday, 16 January 2011 (commencing at 10.00 am)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLORS

Allen Clarke (Chair)

	Fiona Asbury	A	Keith Girling
	Joyce Bosnjak	A	Philip Owen
A	Ged Clarke	A	Stella Smedley
A	Bob Cross		Lynn Sykes

Officers in attendance

Rachel Coombs - Group Manager, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department

Christine Marson - Governance Support Officer, Policy, Planning & Corporate Services Department

Marion Clay - Team Manager, Education Improvement Service, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department

Sue Denholm - Co-ordinator, Virtual School, Children, Families and Cultural Services Department

Steve Edwards - Service Director, Strategic Services, Children & Young People's Department

Dawn Clements - Foster Carer Representative

MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 October 2011 having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor Bob Cross (absent on medical grounds)
Councillor Keith Girling (other reason)
Councillor Philip Owen (other reason)
Councillor Stella Smedley (other reason)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None

SPRING TERM REPORT FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Sue Denholm, Co-ordinator of the Virtual School gave her Spring term update. She reported that following Ian Stewart's appointment to the Virtual School he was tasked with making contact with the designated teachers of all Year 7 LAC and also had responsibility for ensuring all Looked After Children are linked to an educational psychologist. Handouts were distributed to the Panel with copies of forms which are to be circulated to all LAC relating to the record of discussion between the Virtual School, LAC Achievement Officers, Schools and the EP team. It was noted that the data received from these forms would be used to produce statistics feeding into both local and national data. Sue Denholm stressed that the local data produced would be used on a termly basis to assess LAC's progress and an Achievement Officer could be sent to schools after the results of the data if a young person needed help with their progress. This data would be monitored by the Steering Group.

Sue Denholm reported that the visit to Essex to gain further knowledge of good practice had proved very useful. The terms of reference for the Management Committee for the Virtual School would be delayed until consideration had been given to the results of the Essex visit.

Project Updates

- Multi Modality – this project was reported to be working well dealing with hub meetings which caters for smaller groups of young people and schools and carers to develop wider literacy skills in the home environment.
- Letterbox Club – Sue Denholm explained that the Library Service send books and games to Years 3, 5 and 7 three times a year to LAC's. It was noted that the final arrangements were in place for the parcels to be distributed in Spring 2012.
- Mentoring – Sue Denholm reported that there had been a slow take up of this. She felt that was perhaps this was because schools had their own mentoring projects.

With regard to One to One tuition Sue Denholm stated that the funds were being put in place for this service which would benefit young people in subjects they are less confident in.

Sue Denholm told the Panel of several good news stories and many letters had been received from both carers and young people. iPads had been purchased for some young people to help with revision and it was hoped some more might be able to be purchased before the end of the financial year.

Councillor Bosnjak asked if there were any school attendance problems. It was felt that there was not a problem with children placed in foster homes but as young people in residential homes have more complex issues then these could

lead to non attendance. For young people who are not in school it was noted that the outside providers are accredited. More monitoring is now in place for outside providers to ensure that they are providing appropriate service.

ITEMS FROM FOSTER CARERS

A query was raised by Dawn Clements, Foster Carer regarding foster children with complex health issues. She felt it would be helpful if a keyworker could be assigned to help deal with different health officials. It was agreed that a designated health contact would be useful to co-ordinate all the medical conditions. Sue Denholm stated that there would be a meeting in a few weeks time with health colleagues which would give her an opportunity to discuss this problem and hopefully any solution could be included into the LAC Strategy in March.

ADOPTION OFSTED

Steve Edwards, Service Director reported to the Panel on the Adoption Ofsted which had taken place recently. He had received a positive verbal inspection outcome and would have a written report in February. The Inspection considered the safety of Looked After Children, their achievements, contributions and the Adoption Service. The Inspectors collected evidence from surveys and met with carers, LAC and social workers. The minutes of the Panel were inspected to ensure that the Panel were looking at the right areas. The Inspection also dealt with the quality of support to adopters and how children were placed with prospective adopters. It was noted that the Adoption Service was being criticised nationally for being too slow in placements. The Panel felt if this process was taking time it was better to ensure the right outcome is achieved.

The meeting closed at 10.38 am

CHAIR