

*Corporate Parenting Board
Thursday 7 September 2023
Sandwell Council House
5 – 7 pm*

Present: *Councillor Hackett (Chair), Councillor Fisher, Councillor Piper, Councillor Rahman*

Young People: *Lukas, Rosie Edwards, Maddie and Beth Kettle*

Officers:

*Michael Jarrett (Director of Children and Education Service - SMBC),
Sally Giles (Assistant Director – Children’s Commissioning, Partnerships and Improvement - SMBC),
Steven Gauntley (Operations Director - SCT)
Mandip Chahal (Senior Joint Commissioning Manager –SMBC),
Claire Tate (Senior Transformation Lead for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health - SMBC),
Rosa DaSilva (Corporate Parenting Project Officer - SMBC),
Abdul Kahar (Participation Team Manager - SCT),
Tom Davis (Partnership and Engagement Manager - SCT),
Jayne O’Reilly (Designated children in Care Nurse - NHS),
Claire Hickman, (Designated children in care Nurse - NHS),
Suzanne Allen (Senior Training & Employment Liaison officer - SMBC),
Kelly Harris (Skills and Employability Service Manager - SMBC)
Tanya Evans (Foster Carer - SCT)
Natalie Barnes (Team Manager, Mainstream Fostering, Recruitment and Assessment - SCT)
Balwant Bains (Executive Head of the Virtual School for LAC - SCT)
Michelle O’Farrell Baines (Service Manager - SCT)
Lesley Reynolds (Minute taker - SMBC)*

1.	<p><u>Introduction and apologies</u> Members of the board introduced themselves.</p> <p><u>Apologies from:</u> Cllr Hinchliff Cllr Singh Gill Emma Taylor (Chief executive - SCT) Jacquie Smith (Chair of the Children’s Trust – SCT) Teodora Bot (Director of Practice Quality and Partnerships SCT) Rashpal Bishop (Director of Adult services) Sarah Grant (Head of Service Children in Care, Care Leavers & Fostering) Gerry Lyng (Department for work and Pension officer)</p>
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	Dr Mahabeer (Designated Doctor for Children in care)
2.	The minutes were agreed for the meeting held on Thursday 30 March 2023.
3.	<p><u>Action log – 30/03/2023</u></p> <p>1. ACTION: Cllr Hackett would like a face to face goodbye and thank you for leasha Khan and Helen Kimber. Corporate Parenting Project Officer to invite leasha and Helen to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.</p> <p>In March, the board meeting was held virtually, as a result a face-to-face send-off did not take place for leasha Khan and Helen Kimber. The CP Board Chair therefore invited the Former Chair of F.I.Y.A, the Co-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, and the former Co-Chair of F.I.Y.A to attend the Board for a formal goodbye on 22 June 2023. However, due to the SEND Ofsted inspection between 19 June to 7 July, both chairs received a send-off at the METSEC hub by Cllr Hackett.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the need to have a cancellation policy due to Corporate Parenting Board meeting being moved to teams at late notice March and June due to the SEND Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>Where there is a need to cancel Corporate Parenting Board Meeting (Ofsted inspection or industrial action), both the Chair and the Strategic Corporate Parenting Group agree young people, Cllrs, SMBC and SCT officer’s representative will hold a meeting to discuss concerns the young people may have to further improve the needs of children in care and young people.</p> <p>The young people shared their frustrations and disappointment due to the cancellation of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting in June. They hoped to share feedback from Corporate Parenting Week and take comments forward.</p> <p>The Employment, Skills and Training team reported the board’s previous co-chair, leasha Khan, secured a permanent employment contract as a personal advisor with the Sandwell Children’s Trust.</p> <p>2. Placement breakdown data to be provided at next Corporate Parenting board to understand concerns.</p> <p>In July, it was identified that 64 children had a placement breakdown within the last 12 months, further work needs to be done to reduce these numbers. SCT leads highlighted that whilst moves take place some of these can be positive, and they are not always due to a breakdown. There is a need to review each case to provide clarity regarding the reason for the move to ensure that the reporting data is correct.</p>

There is a national crisis regarding placement availability. Depending on placement availability, therefore identifying placements can be a prolonged process. Sandwell Children's Trust are in the process of recruiting new foster carers.

ACTION: Sandwell Children's Trust to present placement data to the board in November. The data will cover the following areas.

- **How many children are in foster care?**
- **How many are out of borough (up to 20 miles and over 20 miles)?**
- **How many have remained in borough placements?**

ACTION – Sandwell Children Trust to undertake a deep dive on placements.

ACTION: Sandwell Childrens Trust to provide assurance report on developments taking place to support the reduction of out of borough placements. Sandwell Children's Trust are to report back to the board in six months.

3. Update on the Emotional Wellbeing Pilot Programme

£400,000 of Covid funds has been identified ,this is non recurrent funding. The funding will be used to deliver emotional wellbeing support. Market engagement has been completed with providers to deliver all 3 elements until March 2025.

The service specification is due to be completed in November 2023.

There are 3 strands to the programme:

- Provision of a 'getting help' service when children first come into care
- Support for children who have experienced two placement breakdowns
- Provision of a 'getting help' service for Care leavers

4. A request for an agenda item for the Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair at each CPB meeting.

An agenda item has now been added for the scrutiny board. The is item 9 on the agenda.

5. Rosa Da Silva to meet with Emma/Teo to review highlight areas and feedback to Chair. Cllr Hackett to make amendments to Terms of Reference ready for annual council on the 23 May 2023.

A meeting was held with Emma Taylor and Teo Bot to review the Terms of Reference on 19 April 2023. The amendments were shared with the Chair, who approved the redrafted terms of reference. They were

	<p>approved by the annual council on the 23 May 2023.</p> <p>6. Strategic Group to look at how we all sign up to these Pledges and Promises and fulfil them.</p> <p>Following the LGA Corporate Parenting workshop on 13 June 2023, the Strategic Corporate Parenting Group will be reviewing actions from CP week, developing a vision and drafting a new Corporate Parenting strategy. The first meeting to start this work will take place in September.</p> <p>7. Communications for CP Week, to be sent to all partners and communication team at SMBC to be fully involved.</p> <p>CPB Annual Report to be ready for Full Council in June 2023. leasha and Lukas to be invited to Full Council and present the annual report on 13 June 2023.</p> <p>Further details item 7</p>
4.	<p><u>Foster Carer Representative</u></p> <p>The Chair presented the foster carer representative, Tanya Evans, who will sit on the Board. It was highlighted a 2nd representative will be attending from November's board meeting.</p> <p>Housing and Sandwell Children's Trust colleagues met in June and July to review the housing options of 15 foster families who would foster more children if there was increased space in their current or alternative accommodation. Sandwell Fostering Team have shared a list with the Director of Housing which includes foster carers with their own properties, and in council and privately rented properties.</p> <p>Cllr Fisher highlighted that Sandwell Council housing stock has decreased throughout the years and there is in particular a shortage of large properties. This is a barrier for foster carers wanting to accommodate more children and young people and willing to move to a bigger property.</p> <p>Housing services are to review this issue and identify a way to facilitate these needs. All partners need to be proactive in ensuring we become "Foster Friendly Sandwell".</p> <p>Sandwell Children's Trust highlighted that until recently foster carers had limited opportunities to meet and share their views. This is now being addressed through various activities and sessions.</p> <p>Sandwell Children's Trust have formed a strategic group to begin work on becoming "Foster Friendly Sandwell" this is on the Strategic Corporate Parenting Group forward plan to be addressed at the October meeting.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing services to provide an update on how they can provide access to larger housing options for foster families to

	<p>accommodate more children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Corporate Parenting Group are to review ways to increase and promote being a foster carer, and to understand from Sandwell residents what the barriers are to becoming a foster carer. • The terms of reference to be amended so that a foster carer representative can sit on the group. • The new Director of housing is to be invited to the meeting. • Look at what other authorities are doing, examples of “Foster Friendly” good practice. Stoke are the benchmark
5	<p><u>Deep Dive into Access to Services Care Leavers Local Offer Review</u></p> <p>The Partnership and Engagement Manager presented to the board.</p> <p>In 2022 the West Midlands ADCS (Association for Directors of Children's Services) commissioned a collaborative piece of work using feedback from officers and young people across the region to develop an aspirational regional 'blueprint' local offer, with the recommendation that each local authority or Trust do their best to align to it.</p> <p>To support this, representatives from the Voices of Children group and the Forum for Independent Young Adults (FIYA) met with Corporate Parenting Board members to explore what was important at a local offer in a Sandwell level.</p> <p>Sandwell's Access to Services: Local offer and what support care leavers need access to. Report and presentation provided.</p> <p>Current progress</p> <p>During the last two quarters, several proposals have been progressed including provision of laptops or tablets, funding to ensure priority access to mental health services, the House Project and increasing the leaving care grant to £3000.</p> <p>A full review of the local offer proposals that are still outstanding has been completed at Strategic Corporate Parenting Group. A number have large costs attached to them, it has been identified to see if there are amendments could be made to reduce the costs but still provide access to the requested support/service, for example reviewing lifelong links with Care Leaver ambassadors completing the training and delivering this inhouse.</p> <p>It is recognised Housing, Employment & Skills, Health are collaborating effectively with Trust and Council officers to enhance the local offer.</p> <p>The Metsec building, has now been developed and is a focal point of contact for young people. Staff and personal advisors who are on duty meet young people coming into the Metsec Building. There has been positive feedback and it has resulted in referrals to the welfare rights, employment and skills team.</p>

	<p>Sandwell Children’s Trust are aiming to achieve Foster Friendly Sandwell.</p> <p>There continues to be a shortage of council accommodation, Children’s Trust are working with private landlords, there are implications which need to be reviewed and costed to support this opportunity (guarantees, rental costs above housing benefit rates)</p> <p>Skills, Employability and Training team highlighted the work being completed with employers to improve opportunities for care leavers, often using the social value priority in procurement processes. An example is DSI (M@il it provider) who hosted an experience day for care leavers which 2 care leavers attended. During the day where care leavers were able to talk to Directors, 1 care leaver shared she had to get 3 buses to work and as a result DSI have offered to support the costs of driving lessons.</p> <p>It was highlighted that there is a need to extend these opportunities to more young people to enable them to take up similar offers. The board noted the work that Suzanne did was excellent in supporting the young person and we need to maximise on the opportunities for carers and young people.</p> <p>Care Leaver ambassadors have been introduced; they are meeting young people who have recently entered care. It has been highlighted that it is important that young people have opportunities to meet with care experienced young people where they can ask questions and access support. Individuals are invited to joint VOA and FIYA forums.</p> <p>Next steps: There are a number of areas identified as part of the regional blueprint that Sandwell young people consider to be priorities. These will be reviewed at Strategic Corporate Parenting Group.</p> <p>ACTION: The Strategic Corporate Parenting Group to map out how to increase engagement and create opportunities with companies. Research and report on the good practice of other authorities. e.g. Travel West Midlands to offer reduced or free travel.</p> <p>ACTION: Meeting to be held to review Foster Friendly Sandwell and life skills sessions.</p> <p>ACTION: Strategic Corporate Parenting Group to review Access to Services: Local Offer and how the recommendations can be funded</p> <p>ACTION: Local offer information to be shared with foster carers and to review for inclusion in foster carers training.</p>
6.	NEET Strategy Action Plan

	<p>Oversight to the current progress of the NEET action plan was shared.</p> <p>In January 2024, Skills, Employment and Training will present a NEET deep dive to the board focussing on identifying the work taking place on key areas such as social value, apprenticeships to understand other elements of work the taking place.</p> <p>The NEET Strategy Action Plan has been reviewed by the Strategic Corporate Parenting Group.</p>
7.	<p>Update from Corporate Parenting Project Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference The terms of reference where been approved by full council in May. • Corporate Parenting Week Councillor Hackett thanked everyone for Corporate Parenting Week. • Annual Report - Feedback As part of Corporate Parenting week, the annual report was approved by key partners and presented to Full Council on the 13 June 2023. The report was presented by Care Leavers, leasha Khan and Lukas, who shared their experiences and highlights of the report. There was positive feedback from members and the Chief Executive. Cllr Hackett thanked Lukas and Rosie for their contribution • Corporate Parenting Week 12-16 June Throughout the month of April and May, a task and finish group was formed to co-ordinate Corporate Parenting Week:12-16 June 2023. SMBC and SCT Comms were a part of this partnership. Both partners ensured that colleagues received news leading up to the week's events. Michael Jarrett reported that the LGA want to use the evaluation that he provided to use nationally as good practice. Worked with partners/young people. • Update from Corporate Parenting Project Officer SCSP - Sally Giles Key feedback was from the LGA was to focus on our strategy. Rosa da Silva and Claire Tate are looking at the pledges ad promises in the action plan. An initial draft is to be produced from the current elements of work completed in partnership, working groups and external working groups. This is to be completed by December.

	<p>Draft for Corporate Parenting New Strategy to be produced by December in readiness to launch in January. Strategy to run 2024-2027</p> <p>The challenge for the next few months to achieve Foster Friendly Sandwell.</p>
8.	<p>Data Dashboard and Update from Strategic Corporate Parenting Group - Sally Giles</p> <p>Data Headlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are currently 814 Children in Care, a slight increase of 2 this quarter. • 504 young people are placed out of borough (61.9%) with 89 (10.9%) of those are placed further than 20 miles from their home address. • Young people with 3+ placement moves in the last 12 months has remained the same at 64 young people. (8%) • 589 young people have an updated care plan in the last 6 months (88%). An increase on the previous month. • 86.9% of young people aged 5+ have had review health assessment in the last 12 months. • 62.5% of young people have had a dental check completed by the end of March 2023, this figure does need to be reviewed and updated • 87.1% of Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation (there is a need to account for any young people in custody as this is reported as not suitable) • 79.4% of 18-24-year-old Care Leavers have an updated pathway plan in the last 6 months. It is recognised that there has been a change of template for plans and procedure which has had an impact, but numbers are increasing. <p>ACTION: Sandwell Children’s Trust to present a post 16 Pathway plan assurance report to the board in November.</p> <p>ACTION: Sandwell Children’s Trust to provide up to date on children and young people out of borough 20 miles or more. Can this be embedded into a heat map to show a visual format?</p> <p>There is a need to understand, how do we know that children outside borough have and are accessing the services where they are living? Are those living in Sandwell accessing support and services, are we making carers aware, and how do we do this?</p> <p>Foster carer representative questioned what can be done to ensure foster carers know how to help young people to access services?</p> <p>ACTION: Fostering Team to review how information can be</p>

	<p>incorporated into the fostering training.</p> <p>Co-Chair highlighted the need to access free medical prescriptions for young people is a good start, but there is a need for care leavers to access free optician check-ups and costs to support new glasses.</p> <p>ACTION: Health Leads to complete a request to ICB - Can the board received an update during November's meeting.</p>
9.	<p>Feedback from Scrutiny Board</p> <p>A request is put forward for an agenda item for the Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair at each CPB meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Hackett commented the Scrutiny Board will help us with some of the actions of the group.</p> <p>As the Scrutiny Chair sent apologies but shared comments which were provided by Rosa da Silva</p> <p>Cllr Hackett commented it would be good if Scrutiny could engage directly with young people as well as via the SHAPE forum</p> <p>Action: Scrutiny Board want to review the Corporate Parenting strategy 2024 – 2027 before they engage with young people in February 2024.</p>
10.	<p>AOB</p> <p>1. Tom Davies commented he is saddened by the loss of Dave Salt who was a former foster carer. His contribution to MOTIVA8 programme which provided specific opportunities to care leavers. The Youth Team provided a eulogy at the funeral.</p> <p>2. A request will be sent to partners in October to support care leavers with a Christmas present. It will be raised at Full Council before Christmas, with Councillors encouraged to bring a gift for a care leaver.</p> <p>3. Date of the next CPB meeting is Thursday 16th November 2023 at 5-7pm in Sandwell Children's Trust</p> <p>4. A Scrutiny report on NEET will be presented in November, which will affect the timing of the of the NEET deep dive. It was suggested therefore that we could look at the Scoping exercise before the deep dive.</p> <p>Tom Davies: We are looking at our foster care offer, a new brand, new website.</p> <p>ACTION: Corporate Parenting Project Officer to ensure FIYA and VOS forums to be on the agenda and provide feedback from young</p>

	people – this must be a set agenda item.
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Meeting ended 19:00