

Corporate Parenting Board

Thursday 25 January 2024

Sandwell Council House

Room First 3 and on teams

5pm – 7pm

Present:

Councillor Hackett (Chair)

Councillors R Piper, Hinchliff, Daya-Singh

Young People Present:

VOS: *Maddie*

FIYA: *Lukas (Co-Chair), Ellie Hatton and Amy Wright*

Officers Present:

Michael Jarrett (Director of Children and Education Services, SMBC)

Emma Taylor (Chief Executive, SCT)

Sally Giles (Assistant Director for Children’s Commissioning, Partnerships and Improvement, SMBC)

Teo Bott (Director of Practice Quality and Partnerships, SCT)

Mandip Chahal (Senior Joint Commissioning Manager, SMBC)

Kate Mullinder (Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Fostering, SCT)

Claire Tate (Senior Lead for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, SMBC)

Dr Mahabeer (Designated Doctor for children in care, ICB-NHS)

Nigel Collumbell (Assistant Director for Housing Service, SMBC)

Rosa DaSilva (Corporate Parenting Project Officer, SMBC)

Tom Davies (Partnership and Engagement Manager, SCT)

Abdul Kahar (Participation Manager, SCT)

Kelly Thomas (Employment & Skills Manager, SMBC)

Suzanne Allen (Employment and Skills Officer, SMBC)

Jayne O’Reilly (Designated Nurse for Children in Care, ICB NHS)

Claire Hickman (Designated Nurse for Children in Care ICB-NHS)

Balwant Bains (Executive Head of LACE and Virtual School, SMBC)

Amanda Carby (PA to Director of Children and Education Services, SMBC) (Minute taker)

Apologies:

Julie Andrews, Cllr Gill, Cllr John Giles, Cllr Kerrie Carmichael, Rashpal Bishop Natalie Barnes, Pete Dankert, Tanya Evans, Gerry Lyng (DWP)

1	Introduction and Apologies Introductions were completed	
2	Confirm minutes taken during board meeting held on Thursday	

	<p>16 November 2023 Minutes were agreed and signed off</p>	
3	<p>Action Log for Thursday 16 November 2023 by Corporate Parenting Project Officer:</p> <p>Action tracker updates and comments were shared with the board:</p> <p>Cllr Hackett will present the Corporate Parenting Board minutes at the Annual Council meeting in March. The process has started with Democratic Services officers, specifically Trisha Newton. ACTION: Cllr Hackett to present 12 months of CPB minutes at Annual Council March 2024.</p> <p>ACTION: Cllr Hackett to highlight CPB Annual Report 2023/2024 at Annual Council March 2024. The annual report will be presented to full Council in July 2024.</p> <p>Planning for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee members and young people's engagement session is in place. SCT Participation Team, Connor Robinson and Corporate Parenting Project Officer are liaising to prepare for the session.</p> <p>Update: A planning meeting is in place Friday 26 January in readiness for the engagement session on Wednesday 21 February 2024 - METSEC building.</p> <p>ACTION: SCT to include SEND data figures in the data dashboard including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Numbers of children with an EHCP - What disabilities children have? - A breakdown of children in a care accommodation/home/setting <p>Update: Action to be reviewed by the SCPG.</p> <p>SCPG to review the first draft of the new Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027. It is to be co-produced with children, young people and multi-agency partners and presented to the Board in January 2024.</p> <p>Update: SCPG to begin the co-production of the strategy between December 2023 – January 2024. Further update on the collective vision and partners pledges to the young people to be presented to the board in March 2024.</p> <p>Cllr Hackett and Michael Jarrett to lead on corporate sponsorship deals as part of our social value work with partners/companies in Sandwell. This is to be shared with the Leadership Team, Leaders and Cabinet – this is a co-production project for all directorates across the whole Council.</p> <p>Update: An update was presented to the SMBC Leadership Team on 23 January 2024. Michael Jarrett shared he had set meetings schedules with Infosys and DPD, working with social value</p>	

	<p>officers, using a whole council approach which will include corporate parenting.</p> <p>ACTION: Cllr Hackett will present the need for corporate sponsorship deals to support the local offer to Cabinet & Directors meetings to review and find a way to progress.</p> <p>A mid-progress report to be presented to the board in June or July 2024 on children in care and care leavers emotional wellbeing pilot programme.</p> <p>Update: A request for Barnardo's as the provider to attend and update the board.</p> <p>Other updates to be reviewed by SCPG: Housing First: Nigel Collumbell and Kate Mullinder will meet to discuss and follow up the need for access to larger housing for foster families.</p> <p>Foster Friendly Sandwell: All 4 Fostering actions to be amalgamated in to one action, to ensure it is joined and focused as a whole project, this will enable a full comprehensive feedback.</p>	
4	<p>The Childs Voice Update from VOS & FIYA – Presentation shared in CPB pack.</p> <p>Headlines: Positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LACE & FIYA Awards • Local offer • Aspire 2 University Programme • NEETS Panel • Drop in Youth Club for NEETS at Metsec delivered by Think Sandwell • Support by Citizens Advice-Budgeting, Cooking, Life skills • Holiday Activities & Food Programme • Virtual School support, Residential, Tutoring, 120 Club, Careers support, SIPS Music <p>Issues/Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem and social anxiety • Living outside of Sandwell • Mental Health, learning needs, disability • Abusive relationships, right to remain • Young parents, loving relationships, life-long links • Independent living, not happy where they live • Struggling financially, cost of living • Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) • <p>Next steps/Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship wage/adequate Maths & English grades 	

- Individualised/bespoke programme of support/1-2-1 support
- Work experience in the family business/ring fence job opportunities in the family business
- Graduate Scheme for care leavers
- Enhance University offer
- Mentors at work and in life/Lifelong links
- Emotional health & wellbeing support (dealing with trauma)
- Strengthen Local offer for care leavers

It was shared that children need more support around moving home and more support around mental health. There is a need for more help for children's and young people's emotional wellbeing to enhance and strengthen the current offer.

Board response to forum recommendations:

It was confirmed that work is taking place on several of the recommendations including the new emotional wellbeing hub set to be launched on 5 February to support for young people. SCT are working actively with our young people to address the recommendations and confirmed feedback needs to be shared with young people.

It was highlighted that obstacles encountered for children regarding school and school moves needs to be raised wider amongst education networks. The board emphasised that recommendation made at the CPB meeting should not be confined to just to CPB. There is a need to share these with various other meetings, including the Headteacher Partnership, JEG, and both Primary and Secondary Partnership meetings.

ACTION: SCPG Lead Officers to attend education networks to raise concerns to ensure concerns are shared.

It was highlighted the Skills, Employment and Training Team do provide the following support:

- Offer work experience
- Ring fenced apprenticeships
- Speak to local companies for opportunities
- Carry out bespoke 1-1s for young people who are engaged
- Speak to young people to ensure support is bespoke to the individual.

Emotional wellbeing is identified as a barrier when accessing education, training or employment and young people need extra support throughout their journey as it can stop them moving on to positive destinations.

Bespoke Maths and English courses are available to ensure young people have the right qualifications when seeking employment as this can be a barrier into employment. There are a small number of young people who have received this support; the NEET panel is working to implement early support by identifying young people who may want to

access it.

The importance of the NEET action plan and strategy now having concrete solutions and progressing this work was highlighted. This could include barriers to moving forward, accessing support and entering employment based on our young people's past experiences.

The requested £80k to fund the outstanding items as part of the local offer would really be beneficial to support the needs the young people have identified.

There is a need to review the accommodation moves. This should be planned where possible to ensure young people are supported throughout the process.

ACTION: SCT to review how children are supported when they must move home by ensuring this is done in a timely manner by being prepared and ensuring the right support is in place.

It was requested for information on what support is available for children living out of borough and what barriers young people may face by not having access their social worker (SW) and personal advisor (PA) be shared with the board. It was confirmed that Local Authorities are responsible for young people, irrespective of their location. If young people wish to remain in area in which they are currently living, their SW and PA will assist where possible. However, there are varying agreements among Local Authorities which can pose challenges. SWs and PAs work with other Local Authorities to explore housing options and it was noted that there is a need for further improvements in these areas.

It was requested that information is shared on the support Sandwell provide for children from other Local Authorities who are living in Sandwell.

Care leavers from other Local Authorities residing in Sandwell can receive support from their home LA and allocated personal advisors. They are also informed about Sandwell's procedures and housing options. It is recognised that it would be helpful for reciprocal arrangements to be agreed at a regional level which would support all young people and their support network.

The team attend a WM Regional Group where discussions have been held relating to the local offer. Housing was identified as a big issue for reciprocal arrangements, due to the differences in the offer for example our Council Tax exemption not all LAs provide this up to 25 years old. There is a need to raise awareness around the needs of housing, mental health support, employment and education opportunities both internally and externally in Sandwell.

The participation team are working on the House Project which is for young people aged 16+. The team visit children and support independence work. Young people asked if a young person does not

	<p>want access to the Home Programme, could they have continued support at 16 through alternative ways to develop their independent living skills if they require it.</p> <p>It was highlighted that we should prepare our young people for adult life earlier with the aim to ensure this is done when children come into care, not waiting until later teenage years.</p> <p>ACTION: Abdul Kahar to share more information about the work underway with the WM Regional Group with SCPG.</p> <p>The WM Strategic Housing Group has been discussing housing banding. The group is interested in exploring potential reciprocal agreements for out-of-borough (OOB) children from other Local Authorities (LAs). Whilst priority is currently given to Sandwell's children in care, the group is open to extending this as a reciprocal arrangement, although received a muted response from the group.</p> <p>SMBC Council is developing a Corporate Parenting Mandatory E-learning training on corporate parenting for both staff and Councillors, which will be available early 2024.</p> <p>ACTION: SCPG to complete a final review of the Corporate Parenting Mandatory training ahead of its publication.</p> <p>ACTION: Housing to share updates with Cllr Hackett on regional house banding and reciprocal agreements for out-of-borough (OOB) children from other Local Authorities (LAs).</p>	
5	<p>Deep Dive into Education Skills Employment and Training Education: Sandwell Virtual School for Children in Care (Report 1)</p> <p>The Virtual school appointed a new allocated worker to oversee 16+ to identify how to bridge the gap and support the reduction of NEETs long term.</p> <p>A pilot programme for approximately 6 Year 13 students will run around Easter, it will be offering one day per week of work experience for six weeks with Lovell. If this is successful there will be wider roll out to other Year 13 students.</p> <p>Action: Virtual School is to provide the Board with an update and outcomes of the pilot programme for 6 year 13 students in July 2024.</p> <p>In order to support the Virtual School, it was requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we do better? • What are the challenges? • Where do we want to be? <p>The Virtual School is focused on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smarter and refined PEPs – concentrate on PEPs • To plan young people's education better: Refine the process, 	

<p>the child's voice becomes the centre of this process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional support • Educational support • Three targets for young people • Post 16 work, 18+ • NEET strategy – moving forward • Working with UASC children – numbers increasing, working with Sandwell Valley schools for ESOL courses. <p>The board acknowledges the strength of Sandwell Virtual School and LACES. It was questioned how could we benchmark against other Local Authorities as we aim to be an outstanding authority and CPB?</p> <p>Action: Virtual school to review and complete a benchmark against Outstanding LAs to identify where and what can we do to improve the current strong offer that exists.</p> <p>SCT Chief Executive highlighted concerns and requested that the detail is provided on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people at risk of NEET at age 14 this may be too late • 6% of PEPS are inadequate • Exclusions • Reduced timetables for our children • Keeping attendance up (no child will move school without approval from Directors at the Trust) • EY Foundation Stage – SCPG to review this area <p>Action: Virtual and SCT are to work in partnership to ensure no child moves schools during term time without approval from SCT Directors.</p> <p>Skills Employability & Training Service (Report 2): The presentation focused on 19–21-year old's and reasons why young people disengage, impact of NEET Strategy and provided feedback and barriers to accessing skills training and barriers training services face:</p> <p>It is identified that the lack of pathways of those furthest away from the labour market require intensive support and emotional health and well-being support. There is a need to address the engagement of young people who have multiple missed appointments, or they are turning down opportunities.</p> <p>To understand the NEET data, sharing detailed breakdown of data and SEND data would enable a more comprehensive oversight of the support offered.</p> <p>Apprenticeship finance can provide difficult, this includes the apprenticeship bursary and the need to support with a living wage.</p> <p>Whilst there is the £3000 apprenticeship bursary, the way young people receive this can cause lots of issues including, timescales, young person to receive this from the provider. Apprenticeship</p>	
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	<p>monthly wages are still £500+ below the living wage.</p> <p>Skills, Employment and Training will be holding an Apprentice Celebration Event at Coneygre Art Centre on 7 March 2024. Corporate parents are welcome to attend.</p> <p>It was confirmed further work is underway with PAs to identify better ways to support young people and reduce the number of missed visits.</p> <p>There was a request for Skills, Employment and Training Team to do home visits to engage young people, build relationships so they feel comfortable and reduce their anxiety? The Team will be able to facilitate this and advised that the Metsec building is also used due to it being young person friendly.</p> <p>Action: SCPG to review the effectiveness of the NEET Group and strategy. Further review of outstanding Local Authorities with low NEET figures and how are they working to improve NEET figures and youth unemployment.</p> <p>Chair advised that there are preparations to hold a Youth Summit with a focus on Youth Unemployment. There will be a new Youth Unemployment Board to look at all issues for all Young People and Care Leavers in Sandwell.</p>	
6	<p>Data Dashboard and Update from Strategic Corporate Parenting Group (Data Dashboard for consideration)</p> <p>Data dashboard was shared with the Board prior to the meeting. Board member to share any comments or question to Corporate Parent Project Officer.</p>	
7	<p>Feedback from Scrutiny Board:</p> <p>It was highlighted that an engagement session between the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board is set to take place Wednesday 21st February. The Scrutiny Board hope to meet our young people to have conversation on whatever topic they want. The session will be led by the young people, there is no agenda, and the Board hopes to hear the young people voices and their experiences.</p>	
8	<p>a. Update from Corporate Parenting Project Officer</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027: Updated Timeline was shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Feb 2024 – SCPG to meet to produce ‘you said, we heard, we did’, Collective vision and partners pledges • 14 Feb 2024 – VOS and FIYA to review the final version of their feedback • 28 March 2024 – sign off Strategy at CPB <p>b. Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027 - Developing the joint vision for children in care and care leavers.</p>	

	<p>All Board member were asked to provide feedback on Corporate Parenting Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should Corporate Parenting look like? • What do we want this to include? <p>Vision comments:</p> <p>The Chair shared that the Strategy should cover the period 2024-2027 and that he hoped Sandwell would be an ‘outstanding authority’ in terms of Corporate Parenting. We have an outstanding Virtual School; we want NEET figures to be reduced</p> <p>Virtual School and LACE wants to make decisions for our young people in care as we would for our own children.</p> <p>Scrutiny Board shared that our vision should always be less ‘corporate’ and more ‘parenting’.</p> <p>Chair hopes all staff understand what it means to be a ‘corporate parent’ this will be the theme for Corporate Parenting week, 10th- 14th June 2024.</p> <p>ACTION: SCPG to ensure the vision is co-produced by Board members, children and young people. All CPB members to share their Corporate Parenting vision statement for the CPB strategy to the Corporate Parenting Officer by 31st January.</p> <p>ACTION: SCPG to arrange a link meeting between Wiltshire (as a Outstanding Corporate Parenting Authority) cabinet member and Cllr Hackett before the next Board meeting.</p>	
9	<p>AOB</p> <p>Michael Jarrett’s last CPB – Cllr Hackett and the Board thanked Michael for all of his work.</p>	

Meeting ended at: 6:50pm