



Corporate Parenting Board Annual Activity Report 2020-2021

Introduction

The Corporate Parenting Board is a key feature of making sure that Coventry's looked after children and care leavers get the best possible outcomes. Coventry is proud of its looked after children and wants to take all possible opportunities to celebrate their achievements. The Corporate Parenting Board is an opportunity for young people to engage with Members and staff in Coventry to promote their voice.

Changes in Corporate Parenting Board

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Board has had to operate completely on-line this year. This has brought significant challenges for everyone involved. The Board depends on close and enduring personal relationships, which is impeded by working virtually. Having said this, all members of the Board have demonstrated commitment to making it work throughout the year. Young people have continued to be involved using a hybrid model of engagement.

The Board will continue to operate virtually, but it is the intention for the chair to move to face to face meetings at the earliest opportunity in line with government and Council guidelines.

The Board has remained consistent in its membership this year which has enriched developing relationships. The chair continues to prioritise young people's voices at the Board and look at ways in which the Board and its members can be accountable to them.

You said: we did

The Board has responded to young people this year in the following ways:

- Young people wanted a bigger voice at the Board in a way that made them feel included. As a result of this an inclusion strategy is being developed to be implemented this year

- Young people wanted reports to be made more accessible for them. There is now an expectation that a summary report is accessible for young people for each report presented to the Board
- Young people have requested agenda items that are of interest to them. These were scheduled into the programme
- Young people asked that they present an 'icebreaker' item at every Board meeting. This sets the scene for the meeting and helps develop relationships. This now happens at every meeting
- Young people ask questions about each agenda item. This is of direct relevance to them and the services they experience. Staff get the answers to these questions and present back to young people
- Young people asked for a question and answer session with Board members. This happened in the last Corporate Parenting Board meeting of the year
- Young people asked for a 'young person friendly' website so they can find out about services they can have. This is currently being developed
- Young people asked for information about how to access health services. Health maps are being developed.

Additional activity

The Board has reviewed a wide range of services that looked after children and care leavers experience. During the year the it received and discussed the following areas of work with young people and colleagues:

- The coronavirus pandemic and the way that all services responded to make sure looked after children and care leavers were cared for and supported
- How the child and adolescent mental health service supports the emotional well-being of looked after children and care leavers
- Adoption work with young children
- Education outcomes and how barriers are overcome
- Health issues for looked after children and care leavers. This was particularly with reference to substance abuse and how young people could get support with these issues if they needed to
- The development of the Coventry fostering service
- The city of culture programme and how this has been influenced by looked after children and care leavers.

The Board has also accepted the following reports for information and discussion:

- The exceptional allowances annual report
- The Pathways to Care annual report
- The annual fostering report
- The annual adoption report, including a report from Adoption Central England and the Adoption Panel Chair's report
- The new Belongings Action Plan
- The annual independent reviewing officer report
- Feedback on the care leaver conference
- The development of the House Project.

Overseeing these reports offers the Board the opportunity to obtain a deep insight into services across the whole city, for the complete age range of children and care leavers.

Voice of looked after children

Through the course of the year there has been a focus on promoting the voice of children and care leavers. The Board has the aspiration to be accountable for services to the children and care leavers that it is responsible for. There has been feedback at every meeting from children. This has been through the Participation team that co-ordinates Voices of Care. Care leavers have also had a presence at the Board, facilitated by staff from the through care service.

Although meetings took place virtually, a hybrid approach meant that young people are encouraged to participate. This has been within the covid guidelines that have impacted on the Board this year.

It is hoped that face to face meetings can start soon as guidance allows. This is the preferred arrangement by young people.

Next steps

The plans for the forthcoming year are to make the board even more accessible to young people. This will mean they have a better influence on the services that affect their lives.

Paul Smith

Strategic lead- looked after children

30 June 2021