

Board Evaluation – Activities Report - Impact & Outcomes. 2014.

Ensured greater, multi agency, clarity re: roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents

1. Full Council briefings have been introduced and are held bi annually. All elected members receive a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of Corporate Parents and are updated on the work of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board. Briefings are held immediately prior to a full Council meeting to ensure as many members as possible can attend.

2. Following a full review updated Regulation 33 training for elected members was launched in January 2014. The first session took place in January 2014 for elected members and includes a brief on their roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents. A second session was delivered in July 2014. The delivery of the session is co-facilitated by a member of the Making A Difference group who supports the elected members in gaining information from children and young people to contribute to reg 33 reports. In addition a 'discussion guide' was produced to further support elected members in engaging with children and young people.

3. Further briefing sessions on Corporate Parenting roles and responsibilities continue to be held for all LA departments and partnership agencies. During 2014 a variety of agencies and organisations have received briefing sessions including: Hugh Baird College / Southport Soroptimists and Sefton Governors Association.

The aim of the briefing sessions are to:

- Ensure colleagues and partners understand their role as Corporate Parents.
- Offer clarity re: responsibilities as Corporate Parents
- Encourage greater ownership of the Corporate Parenting Initiative
- Support colleagues and partners to incorporate Corporate Parenting policies and practice.

4. A dedicated session on Corporate Parenting roles and responsibilities is delivered on each foster carer preparation course. The session outlines the Sefton Corporate Parenting Initiative and gives potential foster carers an opportunity to consider how they will contribute to the role of Corporate Parent. Each session is co facilitated with 4 members of the M.A.D (Making A Difference) group.

5. Following recruitment onto L.A Independent Visitor and Advocacy Scheme volunteers participate in a comprehensive training programme. Each programme contains a session of the roles and responsibilities of Corporate Parents. The session is co facilitated with a member of the M.A.D (Making A Difference) group.

6. All workplace mentors supporting the delivery of the L.A Pathway to Employment Scheme receive a comprehensive briefing on the Sefton Corporate Parenting Initiative and the roles and responsibilities of Corporate Parents. The session also highlights the issues faced by care leavers and the absolute necessity that we endeavour to 'go the extra mile' in supporting their progress and learning.

7. Sefton Governors Association have received 2 presentations this year on the work of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board and the roles and responsibilities of Corporate Parents. As a result of this

input Sefton Governors Association agreed to continue sponsorship of 2 education awards at the No Limits Awards Ceremony held in July 2014

Strengthening multi agency partnerships.

1. Merseyside Connexions

Merseyside Connexions secondment of personal advisor within Corporate Parenting Service continues. The secondment further strengthens the pathway planning process for all looked after young people in Sefton and supports their progression into further education, employment or training.

2. Local Authority Pathway to Employment Scheme.

The LA **Pathway to Employment Scheme** was implemented on the 13th June 2011. The scheme was designed and developed by a multi agency working group (which included Sefton care leavers) and chaired by Mark Dale, Head of Personnel at Sefton Council. Establishment of the group brought together, for the first time, representatives from a number of departments and partners, who, individually over recent years, had offered opportunities to care leavers in Sefton. As one member stated at the first meeting “It’s the first time that all the individual efforts have been brought together – it now has a focus and sense of ownership.”

The Corporate Parenting Board continue to monitor and evaluate the scheme and, in partnership with the Local Authority, have secured continued funding for the scheme to run on an annual basis.

Following completion of each cohort comprehensive evaluation sessions are held with the young people involved. As one of the care leavers recently stated “**The apprenticeship scheme has changed my life. If I never got this chance I wouldn’t be the person I am today and I am so grateful for that opportunity.**”

2014 Programme:

Four care leavers are currently engaged in the pathway to employment scheme at stages 1&2.

A further 3 care leavers, who are more ‘work ready’, have been given 6 month traineeships in the following departments: Cleansing / Youth Service and One Stop Shop. All are progressing well.

3. Sefton Care Leavers Centre - Sefton CVS and Venus Project.

Following recommendations made by members of the M.A.D. (Making A Difference) group in 2009, requesting that a dedicated Care Leavers Centre be established in Sefton, the Corporate Parenting Board and L.A sought assistance from Sefton CVS to find a voluntary sector partner to support development of this initiative. The Venus Project agreed to the partnership and became the management agency for the initiative. An initial lottery fund bid was unsuccessful, however, a following bid in 2012 was awarded in May 2013 and development of the centre commenced. Members of M.A.D. have been continuously involved throughout this time and two group members were given work experience within the project, one of whom is now fully employed as a project worker. With the assistance of the L.A suitable premises were found and the centre opened fully in September 2014. Members of M.A.D. update the Corporate Parenting Board at each meeting with the Centre Co-ordinator providing quarterly reports. Three care leavers have been elected to sit on the steering group for the project and all Corporate Parenting partners continue to offer their full support with the project.

The project team have met with the Foster Carers Development Group and many carers have been to visit the centre and discuss ways in which they can contribute to activities aimed to prepare young people for independence.

4. Sefton Council Leisure and Recreation Department.

The department are supporting the development of a 5 a side LAC and Care Leavers football team by offering free use of a practice pitch for one hour per week at the Netherton Activity Centre. The idea for the team came from one of our care leavers who has recently qualified as a football coach and referee. The care leaver will be organising and running the team.

5. Health and Wellbeing Services

Following ratification of the Sefton Pledge, Sefton Health and Wellbeing Services extended the distribution of leisure passes to all care leavers up age 21years. This had been identified as an issue, by care leavers, during work on the Pledge. In addition leisure passes have also been distributed to foster carers, birth children and siblings of LAC.

6. Housing Support

The 'Housing Support for Care Leavers' working group was, originally, established to consider the many accommodation issues faced by care leavers through their transition to adulthood and independent living. Members include: Supporting People / Neighbourhood and Investment Programmes / Contracts & Commissioning / M.A.D Group / Adult Services Housing Support and YOS. The aim of the group is to improve multi departmental and agency responses to the housing and support needs of care leavers. As a result of the recent Welfare Reforms an extraordinary meeting of the group was convened to assess the potential impact on Sefton care leavers. Representatives were invited from ARVATO (responsibility for implementing housing benefit reforms / discretionary housing payments) and as a result several meetings were held with senior officers from ARVATO to plan and implement joint working practices in respect of support for care leavers.

Outcomes to date include:

- Improvements made to Direct Access for care leavers following review by Supporting People Lead Officer. Since completion of review staff report no issues with accessing emergency accommodation for care leavers.
- L.A invites to tender to provide low level supported accommodation for young people required responses to specific questions re: provision of service for Sefton Care Leavers.
- Escalation policy established and introduced re: standards of accommodation.
- One Vision Housing senior officer is a member on the Corporate Parenting Board.
- Private providers list has been expanded from 3 to 8.

7. No Limits Awards 2014 - Celebration of Achievements.

The Corporate Parenting Board have established a multi agency working group to support and ensure continued deliver of the annual No Limits Annual Award Ceremony for LAC and Care Leavers. This year sponsorship support was received from a wide variety of agencies and organisation including: Liverpool Community Health / Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company / Family Care Associates / Parenting 2000 / Sefton Governors Association / One Vision Housing / Homescope / Sefton CVS / Crosby Soroptimists and Southport Soroptimists. In 2014 the event celebrated its 13th year and was a huge success with 262 nominations received from social workers, foster carers, teachers and support staff. Every nominee received a £20 voucher, certificate and goodie bag with 29 main awards presented on the night.

Feedback from the event included:

- It is a bit of an emotional evening for me and one that I really enjoyed – again!.
- It was a fabulous evening and I really enjoyed the ceremony
- Once again an enjoyable night.
- It was an honour attending the event and a very humbling experience.
- The Tyler family would like to thank you and all the team involved in the No Limits Awards. We were blown away with winning an award.

8. Department for Work and Pensions Protocol.

Due to the recent welfare reforms the Corporate Parenting Board instigated a full review of the existing protocol agreement between the LA and the DWP. The multi agency working group, which continue to meet bi monthly, reviewed the existing agreement and agreed that the protocol would need to undergo a complete re-write in order to reflect the full extent of the reforms introduced. In addition Sefton borough introduced Universal Credit in July 2014 which further impacted on the document. The protocol is currently in draft form and the group continue to monitor central government activities and amend accordingly.

Membership of the working group continues to include a range of partners: DWP / Connexions / Sefton@Work / Ingues / A4e / Leaving Care Personal Advisors and Sefton EBP. The group report quarterly to the Corporate Parenting Board.

In addition, following concerns raised by the working group at the August meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board re: the impact on care leavers of the 5 week delay in receiving first UC payment, members requested that these concerns are raised at national government level. This was done by the Deputy Chief Executive of Sefton Council.

The Corporate Parenting Officer attends monthly UC roll out meetings hosted by the LA and attended by all of the key partners. The meeting monitors the impact and plans responses following the introduction of Universal Credit. The Corporate Parenting Officer represents the issues and concerns in relation to Sefton Care Leavers.

9. CAMHS.

The restructure of CAMHS was completed in March 2013 by Alder Hey NHS Foundation Trust. A single point of access has now been introduced and the Clinical Lead for CAMHS continues to report progress at each Corporate Parenting Board meeting on a quarterly basis. Members are closely scrutinising the new structure to ensure that looked after children in Sefton receive timely and appropriate assessment and intervention as required.

In addition the Clinical Lead for Sefton CAMHS has met with the Making A Difference group to gain their views of the current service provision and get their ideas on how to make the service more accessible to children and young people in Sefton. The group have agreed to work with the CAMHS providers via their Health Focus Group.

10. Sefton and Merseyside Clinical Commissioning Groups.

A representative of the CCG's in Sefton has become a member of the Corporate Parenting Board advising members on CCG activities and supporting a partnership approach to the commissioning of services. In addition, the lead nurse for safeguarding representing Merseyside CCG's, has also become a board member. Following the August 2014 meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board discussions have taken place, with senior officers, on how learning can be, better, shared between the L.A and the CCG's.

11. Sefton Schools Forum. Targeted Funding of £1,000 per LAC per year – Local Initiative.

The Sefton Schools Forum have agreed to continue the targeted funding of £1,000 per looked after child per year. This is a local Sefton initiative and is in addition to the national Pupil Premium grant of £1,900 per looked after child.

A governing body for the Virtual School has been established and is chaired by the Strategic Director for Children's Services. A member of the M.A.D. (Making A Difference) Group sits on the governing body. The governing body report quarterly to the Corporate Parenting Board. The M.A.D. group members held a competition to name the Virtual School and the winner was Karla with 'L.A.C.E.S.' (Looked After Children's Education in Sefton).

In conjunction with the M.A.D. group the Virtual Head Teacher has redesigned the Personal Education Plans and introduced a new process for the completion and quality assurance of them.

Corporate Parenting board members receive quarterly reports on the education and attainment of looked after children and young people in Sefton.

12. Families First (Early Learning and Childcare Services)

Following a presentation on Corporate Parenting roles and responsibilities to members of the Families First executive committee members agreed to prioritise Sefton care leavers, who were parents, in relation to service provision and support and waiver the residential criteria, re: allocation of services, for this group. Leaving Care support staff report that the joint working Families First colleagues has ensured greater access to information, services and support for care leavers who are parents.

13. Southport Football Club. Community Programme.

Southport FC deliver a comprehensive community programme during all school holidays. The programme is aimed at children and young people aged 5-14yrs. Since August of 2012 the club, in partnership with the Corporate Parenting Board, provide free places on the scheme for looked after children and young people in Sefton. During the Summer break in 2014 a total of 30 free places were offered over the 3 community programmes held.

14. Sefton Governors' Association (SGA)

The SGA provides a direct link between governors and the Local Authority (LA) on matters of mutual concern and interest, to improve communications generally and to ensure the views of Sefton Governors are recognised.

A member of the SGA (CPB member) provides feedback to the SGA at their termly meetings. Corporate Parenting is a standing item on the agenda of all SGA meetings. The minutes of these meetings are distributed to all governors in Sefton. This has led to increased awareness by the membership. Following agreement at the AGM (Annual General Meeting) in October 2012 the SGA sponsored two awards at the 2013 No Limits Awards Ceremony and continued this funding in 2014. The chair of the SGA attended the event and presented the awards to the two winners.

15. Sefton Fostering Panel

Corporate Parenting Board members worked alongside Sefton Fostering Panel to develop a questionnaire aimed at improving input from schools to contribute to foster carers annual reviews. This has now been introduced and is used to routinely gather feedback.

16. Foster Family Friendly Agreement

Following representation to the board, in relation to the support of foster carers who are in employment, members developed and introduced a 'Foster Family Friendly' agreement. The aim of the agreement is to commit signatories to providing employees with additional support if they are registered foster carers. To date the following partners have signed up to the agreement: Liverpool Community Health / Sefton Council / Sefton CVS / Merseyside Connexions / Kings Meadow Primary School and Holy Rosary Catholic Primary School. A presentation was delivered to the Annual General Meeting of Sefton Governors Association in October 2014 aimed at encouraging more Sefton schools to become involved in the initiative

Increased accountability and scrutiny.

- 1.** The Corporate Parenting Board provide the LSCB and the Health and Wellbeing Board with the minutes of each board meeting for information and vice versa. The Corporate Parenting Officer is a member of the LSCB Business Executive Group and is available to advise and update the LSCB on Corporate Parenting business.
- 2.** Annual Board Evaluation Document is sent to Sefton Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.** Senior managers are required to report quarterly to the Board on current status, developments and issues in relation to Fostering and Adoption Services / Corporate Parenting Services / Leaving Care Support / Residential Homes/ and Planning and Performance (QA).
- 4.** A standing item on the Board's agenda is a full briefing on the activities of the M.A.D (Making A Difference) group. Board members are keen to both support, and ensure, the qualitative involvement of looked after children and care leavers.
- 5.** A standing item on the Board's agenda is a briefing from the Strategic Director of Children's Services. This is to ensure that members are kept fully informed of developments in relation to all aspects of support and services for looked after children and care leavers in Sefton.
- 6.** The Youth Offending Service (YOS) provide the Corporate Parenting Board with annual review of all looked after children and care leavers in Sefton who have been engaged with their services.
- 7.** The Independent Reviewing Service provide bi annual reports to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 8.** The Children's Complaints Service provide an annual report to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 9.** The Independent Visiting and Advocacy Service provide a bi annual report to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 10.** The Sefton Care Leavers Centre - 'Our Place' - provide a quarterly report to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 11.** A governing body for the Virtual School has been established and is chaired by the Strategic Director for Children's Services. A member of the M.A.D. (Making A Difference) Group sits on the governing body alongside the Virtual School Head Teacher, Lead Member for Children's Services, Primary and Secondary Head Teacher representatives and 2 Elected Members. The governing body report quarterly to the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board.
- 12.** At the meeting of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board held on the 19th August 2014, members discussed the recent amendments to Children's Homes Regulations 2014. In particular members discussed the amended requirements in respect of Regulation 33 visits and agreed on the necessity to ensure that the current LA framework for Regulation 33 visits is compliant with the amended regulations.

The board established a task focussed working group with the remit to:

- Review current arrangements and identify issues arising.
- Compare current arrangements with DoE Children's Homes Regulations Amendments 2014 to ensure full compliance and identify areas in need of development.

The task group presented three proposals to members of the board on 16th October with the following recommendation made to the Strategic Director of Children's Services.

Short Term - With immediate effect:

- Independent person(s) be tasked, in accordance with guidance on independent and connected persons, to undertake all regulation 33 visits to Sefton Children's Homes to fulfil the regulated Ofsted requirements. The independent person(s) should be independent of Sefton LA Children's Services and have knowledge, experience and skills relevant to the task. They may be engaged from outside the authority or from a different service area within the authority such as: Adult Services and/or Quality Assurance, Commissioning & Compliance.

Mid Term - Within next three months:

- Develop engagement strategy to support and ensure the continued involvement of Sefton Council Elected Members in the monitoring and quality assurance of support and services provided by Sefton Council Children's Homes with a view to Elected Members completing Regulation 33 visits with the independent person as outlined above

Long Term - Within next six months

- Explore options to develop 'reciprocal' arrangements with neighbouring Local Authorities to undertake Regulation 33 visits and assess the practicality of doing so.

Increased involvement of young people and foster carers in the strategic development and scrutiny of services.

1. Four young people (LAC & Care Leavers reps) are members of Corporate Parenting Board. Membership rotates on a two yearly basis. In addition members of the Making A Difference Group who have 3 years, or more, membership of the group can become full members of the Corporate Parenting Board. The aim of this 'progression' route is to offer further opportunity and challenge to M.A.D (Making A Difference) members and seek to increase further their knowledge of, and contribution to, the strategic work of the Local Authority. There are, currently, two care leavers who are full members of the board.

2. The members of the M.A.D. group held a full review of their activities in January 2014 and following discussion devised a new framework for meetings. The full forum now meet together quarterly with members now participating in 3 separate focus groups that meet on a monthly basis. The focus group are: Education and Pathway Planning / CSE and Training. In addition members agreed that they would establish task focussed groups as required. To date they have held health task group meetings and independent visiting and advocacy task group meetings.

3. Three Sefton Care Leavers are members of the All Party Parliamentary Group that meets in Westminster.

4. One Sefton Care Leaver is a member of the National Youth Justice Advisory Board.

5. M.A.D. group members participated in the redesign of Personal Education Plans with the Virtual School Head Teacher. All of their advice and feedback was been taken on board and the new process and form has been developed directly as a result of this. As requested by the group children and young people can now choose who they would like to speak to about their education and how it is going for them and this will then be fed into the PEP review.
6. Members of M.A.D. met with the Head of Service for Vulnerable Children and Young People and participated in the development of a funding bid to support the introduction of an Adolescent Service in Sefton. Members also wrote a letter of to the funding body to express their support of the initiative.
7. The Clinical Lead for Sefton CAMHS has met with M.A.D. group members as part of the redesign of the service. Members provided their thoughts and views of how to ensure the service is as accessible as possible for children and young people. Members are also thinking up a name for Sefton CAMHS to reduce any stigma attached to the 'technical' name for the service.
8. LAC and Care Leavers are members of Employability Working Group, Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group, Housing Support Group and Virtual School Governing Body.
9. M.A.D. group members are part of the organising committee for the Sefton No Limits Annual Awards.
10. M.A.D group members have attended two conferences in 2014 to represent the Corporate Parenting Initiative in Sefton. The Who Cares Trust regional event in Liverpool and a Corporate Parenting Conference in Chorley.
11. LAC and Care Leavers meet quarterly with CEO, Deputy CEO and the Strategic Director and have been actively involved in LA Strategic Planning initiatives.
12. LAC and Care Leavers meet monthly with the Head of Vulnerable Children Services and the Service Manager for Corporate Parenting Services.
13. A Sefton Care Leaver is a full time member of the Sefton Fostering Panel.
14. Members of M.A.D have been actively involved in the recent redesign of children's social care services working closely with the Head of Vulnerable Children's Services.
15. Foster Carers Planning Groups have been established to encourage and support greater involvement of foster carers in the planning and delivery of fostering services.
16. Two foster carer reps are members of Corporate Parenting Board. Membership rotates on two yearly basis. One rep is a L.A carer and the other is a kinship carer.
17. M.A.D. group members were actively involved in the development of the Sefton Council Corporate DVD with two group members appearing in the final piece. The DVD will be used during the induction of new employees and as a information piece about the borough.
18. Members of M.A.D. are working closely with Sefton LSCB on Child Sexual Exploitation. Two group members co-facilitate the Multi Agency CSE training with the LSCB Training Officer and one group member sits on the CSE working group

19. Training:

Elected Members / Councillors

A representative of M.A.D co-facilitates regulation 33 training for elected members. Members of M.A.D developed input for the session which now includes advice for elected members on how best to engage with children and young people in residential settings.

20. Foster Carers

Foster carer preparation courses are routinely held with one session devoted to the roles and responsibilities of Corporate Parents. This session is co-facilitated by 4 members of M.A.D. Feedback from sessions has been overwhelmingly positive and helps potential foster carers to dispel some of the initial 'myths' they have about children and young people in care. Ultimately this will support their understanding of children and young people who live in care and the issues that affect them.

21. Independent Visitors and Advocates

Independent Visitor and Advocacy training courses are held for community volunteers recruited onto the L.A scheme. Members of M.A.D deliver a session on Corporate Parenting and the needs of looked after children giving the volunteers an insight into the lives of children in care. Feedback from sessions held has been extremely welcoming of the valuable contribution this session makes to participants overall understanding.

22. Multi Agency LSCB CSE Training.

Two members of M.A.D. co- facilitate delivery of the LSCB CSE Multi Agency Training. Their input provides an insight into young people's thoughts about the issue and highlights some of the dangers when accessing social media sites. The feedback from the sessions has been extremely positive about the young people's input.

23. Designated Teacher Training.

One member of M.A.D. routinely co-facilitates Designated Teacher training sessions with the Virtual School Head Teacher. The input focuses on children and young people's views of education and their thoughts on how they can be best supported. The information uses local and national perspectives.

24. Sefton Governors Association.

A member of the M.A.D. group provides an input at training events for Sefton Governors. The first session took place during the spring term of 2014 with subsequent sessions provided throughout the academic year.

Sefton Pledge to Children in Care.

1. The 'Pledge' was ratified at the inaugural meeting of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board on the 6th of October, 2009 and is included within the Sefton Corporate Parenting Strategy.
2. Annual survey on Sefton Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers introduced in 2010. Survey outcomes reported to Board. Board members agree areas for improvement and an action plan is developed. The action plan is then circulated to senior managers who report, directly to the Board, on progress made. The 2014 survey was sent to 312 children and young people aged 5yrs plus with a total of 72 (24%) completed forms returned.
3. Every report to the Corporate Parenting Board requires the author to state how they incorporate the Sefton Pledge into their work and how they engage with and involve looked after children and care leavers in Sefton.

Sefton Care Leaver and M.A.D. group member – Joanne Lee – winner of the Inspirational Young Woman of the Year 2014 awarded by the Inspiring Women Foundation. Sefton Care Leaver and M.A.D. group member – Shana Boyd – winner of the Young Mum of the Year 2014 awarded by the Caron Keating Foundation.