

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the
Cared For Children and Care Leavers Committee
held on Monday, 30th September, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)
Councillor J Saunders (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, D Clark, D Edwardes, G Hayes,
B Posnett and B Puddicombe

Officers in attendance

Theresa Leavy, Interim Executive Director Childrens Services
Lisa Davies, Interim Children's Services Improvement Director
Andrea Stone, Interim Director of Family Help & Children's Social Care
Annemarie Parker, Head of Service: Cared for Children & Care Leavers
Laura Rogers, Head of Service Inclusion and Virtual Cared for Children
Annie Britton, Participation Team Lead
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer
Nicola Booth, Operations Manager Adoption Counts
Alice Taylor, Adoption Counts
Nicola Wycherley, Designated Nurse Cared for Children, Integrated Care Board
Josette Niyokindi, Associate Director of Quality & Safety Improvement, Integrated Care Board

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor E Gilman. Councillor D Edwardes attended as a substitute member.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024 be approved as a correct record.

16 UPDATE FROM THE SHADOW COMMITTEE (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Committee received a presentation outlining the recent activities of the shadow committee, My Voice. This included:

- My “Voice of in Care Experience” held on Tuesday 6 – 8 pm during term time.
- launch of Junior My Voice, held on Tuesday 4 – 5.30 pm.
- activity days and project days during the summer holidays
- launch of the Care Leavers Hub
- Involvement in recruitment for Executive Director Place and Family Hub Worker.

It was reported that Care Leaver week would take place week commencing 28 October 2024 and that the Star Celebration Day would be held on 24 November 2024.

The Committee asked about the Care Leaver Hub and the need to ensure that they were offering the services that care leavers wanted. In response it was explain that were two bases, one in Crewe and one in Macclesfield. Young people were attending the hubs for planned sessions such as cooking and education as well as using them as a base to drop into, knowing that there would always be someone there to offer a hot drink and support. The longer-term plan was to have a bespoke hub at the Crewe Youth Zone. Free bus travel for Care Leavers aged 16 to 21 would be operational from 30 September 2024 and this would assist young people to access the Hubs.

17 ADOPTION SERVICE SIX MONTHLY REPORT

The Committee considered the six-monthly report on the Adoption Service, which covered the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

The Committee as concerned about the timeliness of reporting as the data in the report was a year old. In response it was stated that there was a process which the data had to go through before it could be reported to the Committee. Data from Adoptions Count and from local authority were collected and went to the Leadership Board to be checked before any report could be written. It was usually a period of three- or four-months following collection of data and checking before it could be presented. It was reported that Adoption Counts had now appointed a Data Officer who now coordinating data and processed it and hopefully this would help with the timeliness of reporting the data.

Reference was made to the timeliness of stage 1 assessments and in response it was stated that the statutory checks that were required to be undertaken often took a longer to be completed. To help with this process, there would be dedicated recruitment and assessment social workers who would work with families during stage 1 of the process.

It was asked about the refusal of health assessment by a young person and what happened if this was the case. It was stated that although it was a statutory requirement, the young person's consent was needed. If an assessment were refused another appointment would be offered and the service worked with the young person to understand their reason for refusal and would make adjustments if required to enable them to undertake the health assessment. If they still did not want a health assessment, a health plan would be created from their paper records.

**18 CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS COMMITTEE
QUARTER 1 SCORECARD 2024-25**

The Committee received the Cared for Children and Care Leavers scorecard for quarter 1 of 2024-25.

The Committee welcomed the inclusion of the health details in the scorecard.

There was concern about the number of children being housed in hotels and that these children were usually more vulnerable and needed extra support. It was reported that the number in hotels since the scorecard was published had reduced from eight to two. The main reason for using this type of accommodation was that they had exhausted all other options. The service worked closely with housing to resolve their accommodation needs.

Reference was made to the number of social workers, and it was reported that there were 24 social workers with the additional social workers to be recruited as part of the Children Services Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the Quarter 1 Scorecard 2024-25.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.36 pm

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)