

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cared For Children and Care Leaver Committee

held on Tuesday, 5th September, 2023 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillors L Anderson, M Beanland, C Bulman, D Clark, E Gilman, G Hayes, S Holland, B Puddicombe and S Adams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director Children's Services
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Laura Rogerson, Head of Service: Inclusion
Samantha Walker, Head of Service: Children's Provision
Annie Britton, Participation Lead – Youth Support Service
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT

Dr Naomi Jayatilake, Designated Doctor for Cared for Children – NHS Cheshire and Merseyside

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Bennett-Wake, Cllr Bulman, Cllr Critchley, Cllr Posnett and Cllr Saunders. Cllr Adams attended as a substitute.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the committee appointed Cllr Anderson to chair the meeting.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

11 UPDATE FROM THE SHADOW COMMITTEE (VERBAL UPDATE)

The committee received a presentation on the shadow committee, My Voice, which included an overview of the committee and highlighted some of its achievements and areas of campaigning, such as:

- Renaming the committee and the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy
- Encouraging Full Council to adopt the strategy
- Co-producing the strategy and Children and Young People's Plan
- Co-Chairing and presenting at the Children's Trust Board.

The presentation included audio recordings from some of its members as a way of providing feedback from some of the young people involved.

A query was raised regarding the term 'Shadow Committee' and whether this aligns with young people's expectations, particularly following the work undertaken around re-naming the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee. Officers would discuss this with the young people to seek their views.

A further query was raised regarding the Shadow Committee's interactions with senior executives of Cheshire East and partners and it was suggested that it would be valuable for them to have an informal meeting with the agenda set by the young people as an opportunity to share their experiences and concerns without it being adult-led.

The committee welcomed the presentation and the use of voice recordings and suggested that it would be helpful to continue this at future meetings.

12 CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

The committee received the report which set out the work of the committee and progress against the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy over the past year.

A query was raised regarding fixed term exclusions, which were lower in Cheshire East than those of statistical neighbours, and how that compared with figures for pupils who were not care experienced. It was noted that this information would be brought to a future committee meeting. There had been no permanent exclusions for cared for children in Cheshire East for four years.

RESOLVED:

The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee:

1. Endorse the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report 2022-23 as set out at Appendix 1.

13 CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS SCORECARD Q1 2023-24

The committee received the report which set out the performance for quarter 1 of 2023-24.

A concern was raised about the number of social worker vacancies which had been an ongoing issue. The committee were advised that there were continued conversations about frontline capacity. Vacancies were being filled with agency staff and there had been good conversion from agency to becoming permanent. By increasing capacity, caseloads were able to be reduced for frontline social workers which was leading to an improved and stabilised service.

A further query was raised regarding the number of dental and health checks and whether this was an issue with capacity or data recording. The committee were advised that there had been an issue with the availability of NHS dentists but there were now a number of dentists able to accept cared for children. There had also been a recording issue but this was being closely monitored.

RESOLVED:

That the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee:

1. Note the performance of children's services for quarter 1
2. provide scrutiny in relation to performance in relation to cared for children and care leavers

14 NHS UNIVERSAL FAMILY (CARE LEAVER COVENANT) PROGRAMME

The committee received a report on the Integrated Care Board commitment to the Care Leaver Covenant.

RESOLVED:

That the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee note the content of the paper and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside's commitment and progress in relation to the NHS Universal Family (Care Leavers Covenant) Programme.

Cllr Bulman arrived during this item.

The meeting commenced at 14.00 and concluded at 15.18

Councillor L Anderson