

Parent Carers Together Feedback Form

Name:	Tess Tyler
Meeting description:	ASPIRE Operational Management Board Meeting
Where was meeting held:	Via TEAMS
Date of meeting:	Monday 9th August 2021
Start & finish time:	1400 hours until 1540 hours
Any future meeting dates, if known:	Will be approximately twice a year, next date to be arranged.

Feedback can be in any format; it should contain important points that came out of the meeting, your opinions, any related work that you think overlaps, action points that you might be involved with, any areas of concern. This will be shared with all PCT reps and committee.

Please email to info@parentcarerstogether.org.uk within 2 weeks of meeting

FEEDBACK & COMMENTS *(please use further pages if necessary)*

Dear all,

I attended the ASPIRE Operational Management Board meeting, on Monday 9th August. Michelle Whiting – ASPIRE's Interim Manager, felt there needed to be more inclusivity of all relevant professional bodies alongside parent representatives involved. Michelle is hopeful for a participant from Health to be included and I have asked whether any Adoption Parent on the ASPIRE Forum page would be able to join me, (as I am a Special Guardian) at future Board meetings, which are anticipated to be held twice a year.

Owing to several Council staff being unable to attend due to holiday leave, it was agreed that these members would be afforded a further four weeks, to comment on the new Support Services Proposal from ASPIRE, that is currently in draft form.

The role of the Operational Board is; to develop a collaborative partnership- whilst working as a critical friend, evaluate ASPIRE's performance and effectiveness and stays true to its' vision and to advise and make recommendations to the Strategic Mangement Board.

It was felt that ASPIRE offers good value for money and delivers well in their performance data.

Looking at The Adoption Strategy: *The recruitment of adopters continues to be going well and there has been no tail off of prospective adopters, despite the Pandemic and placements of children moving in was seen to be also continuing well, within acceptable timeframes.*

The Early Permanence placement emphasis, from the government's agenda, was seen from last year's data, to be have been met across both council areas. There is evidence also, that both areas have met both ethnic and LGBT community targets for prospective Adopters coming through the service.

The Ambition for Children Plan: ASPIRE exists to support BCP and Dorset children achieve permanence through Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders, with ASPIRE building on strong partnerships with Health, Education, Voluntary Sector, Local and National RAAS. Progress to date includes, improved and transparent relationships with the LAS, there is an escalation process in place, plus collaborative working on SGO and Educational and Psychology pathways. Education- the Virtual School pathways have been set up. Links have commenced with ASPIRE and the Forum with some collaborative work. Michelle has connected with the Regional and National RAAS.

Work to do: Pathways to be developed for Early Years, holiday activities and youth service.

I had already raised the need for ASPIRE to have service user feedback and so I met with Peter Moring - ASPIRE Team Manger today (16/08/2021), to develop and collate a collaborative survey, to hear the voice of Adopters and SGs, to give constructive feedback post service involvement and course attendance and importantly to identify what impact this support had moving forwards.

X3 a year newsletter to be sent.

There is an ongoing review of the organisation structure, capacity and costs, inline for Inspection readiness, anticipated to take place September if not sooner.

Recruitment is hopeful that 4.5 SW vacancies will start September/October 2021.

Finance report: This was reported to be a balanced and positive looking working budget, plus a healthy remuneration from a small RAA. The Adoption Support Fund may deliver some income for ASPIRE, but this has not yet been estimated. There is not expected to be any additional funding via the COVID Support Fund. Budget setting for 2022/2023- the Partnership board will be using a business case model mapped out for 3 years, including the impact of new staffing.

Re-organisation of post Adoption and Special Guardian Service: "ASPIRE will have a tiered approach to support services, offering support proportionate to the needs of the child and family and delivered in partnership with adopters and special guardians."

ASPIRE use DDP to support families. The support can be provided via:

*Website- currently under development, but will have accessible, high quality information, techniques and tools and online training, available day and night.

*A Duty worker 09.30-16.30 Monday to Friday, to discuss concerns /issues. Via the duty worker:

-access to Universal Services, eg schools, CAMHS, Early Help etc,

-access to Virtual School for consultations.

*Core services: Can be dipped in and out of as required by families as often as necessary,

-newsletters/letter box and contact support/ social events/FB page/Adopter and SG and Adopted adult support groups/Adopter and SG Forum – with representation on both Operational and Strategic Management Boards/ Specialist information/Programme of workshops/Finance- help in accessing appropriate support from relevant LA.

If more intensive support is required: a planned consultation within 6 weeks, to complete an Assessment of Need and arrange a clear plan of support with targets.

Access to ASF.

In the event that a child is assessed as a Child In Need, then ASPIRE will refer to the MASH and continue to support with core services and therapeutic interventions where the child remains in the family home.

Overall, this was a positive meeting. It is evident that historically some of our Adoption and Special Guardian families, have struggled to access support in a timely manner. However, with a through-put of over 150 new children cumulatively each year and with only limited staff on the ASPIRE support team, there has to be a different model of working, hence the move from allocated work to the tiered approach. ASPIRE are not a Safeguarding service. For our families to all have parity and access, to the appropriate level of support, allocated families will be reviewed at ASPIRE's monthly supervision meetings and if support is still required after 3 months- these families' support plans will be reviewed at the ASF Multi Agency Review Panel, to consider effective support packages.

Personally, I feel there needs to be more collaboration and feedback from Adopter and SG families, to ensure that the services offered via ASPIRE are fit for purpose and that the therapeutic solutions and programmes of care are both up to date and user friendly. Without service users- us- giving regular feedback and joining in with both LAS, as 'critical friends' of ASPIRE, there cannot be true collaboration taking place. I am hopeful that the website, once it has been developed, is as comprehensive as is suggested it will be. I advised the Board, that as Parents/Guardians, we are often subjected to much assessment and Professional interventions and meetings, that can be intrusive and intimidating. To have tools/techniques and advice that we can access independently, that may support us with our own Therapeuting parenting and resilience would be useful. It also enables us to use the Core services and Duty Team, once we have already tried and tested the suggested guidance. I also advised, that setting up the often alluded to, Buddy/Mentor system, for not just prospective Adopters and SGs but current ones, would give us as a parenting community, some positive structure and further enhance our own Support Groups/ FB page and WhatsApp support groups. This was all met with positive feedback.

Attending the meeting were:

Michelle Whiting - ASPIRE Interim Service Manager

Tanya Hayball - ASPIRE Adoption Business Support and minute taker at the meeting

Brian Relph - Interim Service Director- BCP Council, who chaired the meeting

Ali Matthews - Service First Teams- BCP Council

Victoria Stone - Children In Care Team-BCP Council

Stephen Macdonald -Accountant- BCP Council

Matt Jenkinson – Service Manager- Dorset Council

Louise Drury -Head of Service for Care Leavers- Dorset Council

John Heron – Fostering Transformation Consultant – Dorset Council

Tess Tyler – SG mum, PCT and ASPIRE Forum representative