

Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel

What is Corporate Parenting?

- 1 Everybody working with or representing the interests of children and young people in care is a corporate parent and should be aware of their responsibilities. All local authority staff, elected members and relevant partner agencies share this duty. In practical terms, being a corporate parent means advocating on behalf of these children and young people to ensure they get the support they need to achieve the best outcomes. Asking the straightforward question, "Would this be good enough for my child?" and challenging any poor practice are central to this role.

The work of the Corporate Parenting Panel

- 2 The Corporate Parenting Panel oversees the services provided to children and young people in care. It is a multi-party group which provides advice and challenge to the Cabinet Members for Children and Young People and Education and Skills. Membership of the Panel is:

Andrew Baldwin
Joy Dennis
Dawn Hall
Gary Markwell
Morwen Millson (Chairman)
Chris Oxlade
Jacky Pendleton

What has the Panel been doing?

- 3 The Panel last reported to County Council in December 2016 and since that time has continued to focus on priority areas as outlined in its work programme.
- 4 **Induction** – The Panel received an induction session at its first meeting in July 2017. Panel members also attended safeguarding training as part of the wider member induction.
- 5 **CLA Strategy and Action Plan** – The Panel has worked with officers in order to help development of the Children Looked After (CLA) Strategy and Action Plan, to which the Children in Care Council have also contributed. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People will make a decision to adopt the Strategy and Action Plan in December 2017.
- 6 **Member Visits** – A proposal was agreed by the Panel to ensure the role of elected members in scrutinising arrangements for children accommodated in County Council residential homes was fitting. It was agreed that individual elected members will be identified and linked with each of the children's homes, but also for this offer to be opened up to wider members of the Council. Members will be expected to complete reports on their visits, and the Panel will review these arrangements and reports. It was suggested that

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members undertake scrutiny on one quality standard and that these findings be fed into the overall quality assurance framework. A briefing was held on 29 November for all interested members.

- 7 Virtual School Report** – The Panel considered the Annual Report from the Virtual School. West Sussex Virtual School saw a number of significant changes over the last academic year, especially in relation to its leadership. A substantive Head was appointed in May 2017, following a period of interim leadership. Members considered the data, and requested that a further report is presented to the meeting in March 2018, to consider the full key Stage 4 results, and that the annual reporting for this continues from March 2019 in order to present a full set of results.
- 8** Members noted that work is on-going to embed the use of the ePEP system and to use the data gathered to provide timely and appropriate interventions. Members supported the developing communication between all stakeholders as a priority focus in order to ensure this is embedded, so that CLA can take advantage of funding opportunities from the Virtual School.
- 9 Fostering and Adoption** – The Panel considered the annual reports of the Adoption and Fostering service. The service is developing a targeted campaign to try to increase the number of people coming forward to apply to become foster carers or to adopt.
- 10 Independent Visitor Scheme (IVS) Annual Report** – The Panel considered the annual report of the Independent Visitor Scheme. The Annual report provided an overview of the Independent Visitor Scheme 2016/17 and the number of IVs recruited and matched with children.
- 11 Independent Reviewing Officer Service** – The Panel considered the annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service. The report provided a reflective commentary for the period June 2016 to August 2017 on the activities and performance of the IRO Service. The role of the IROs is two-fold: chairing the child's review and monitoring the child's case on an ongoing basis including whether any safeguarding issues arise. It was advised that the IRO service has seen a number of service-level improvements implemented over the last 12 months and that these need to become embedded into routine practice.
- 12 Children in Care Council** – The Panel met the Children in Care Council (CICC) in October 2017. The meeting was used as a general introduction for the CPP and CICC, in order to learn more about each other's roles and responsibilities. Both groups also worked on the member pledge to all children in care. It was a productive and positive meeting, with future plans made for the two groups to work together.
- 13 Therapeutic Interventions Group** – The Panel received an update on the service, focusing on data and work with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and how the Council was supporting CLA.

Future Plans

14 The Panel will be considering the following in the coming months:

- Further meeting with the Children in Care Council
- Meeting with the new Care Leavers Forum
- Care Leavers and Transition to Adulthood
- Youth Justice
- Health and CLA
- Children Looked After not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Recommended

That the report be noted.

Morwen Millson

Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel

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Background Papers

None