

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 23 July 2010 at 10.00am at County Hall, Lewes

PRESENT: Councillors Waite, Belsey, Hughes, Livings, O'Keeffe, Ost and St Pierre

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Stroude, Lead Member for Children and Families
Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Head of Looked After Children (LAC) Services
Sheena Cameron, Practice Manager, Family Plus
Adrian Money, Virtual Headteacher for LAC
Douglas Sinclair, Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance

Graham Beal, Unit Manager, Broderick House and Homefield Cottage
Rose Cooper, Acting Unit Manager, Sorrel Drive
Anthony Julyan, Operations Manager, Sorrel Drive
Janet Osborne, Unit Manager, Acorns
Helen Simmons, Unit Manager, Sorrel Drive
Simon Treen, Deputy Manager, Rose Cottage

1. CHAIRMAN

1.1 Councillor Waite was elected Chairman.

2. MINUTES

2.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2010 as a correct record.

3. REPORTS

3.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

4. CHANGING ROLE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS AND 2009-10 PERFORMANCE

4.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which informed the Panel of the work and function of the Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Advisors and provided statistical information on National Performance Indicators for the year ending 31 March 2010.

4.2 The Head of Children's Safeguards and Quality Assurance set out the statutory requirements for the management of reviews and highlighted that there had been a 17% increase in the number of Looked After Children since 2009. He also highlighted as worthy of note the fact that 99.8% of Child Protection Reviews were held within timescales, against a target of 97%.

4.3 The Head of Children's Safeguards and Quality Assurance addressed the Panel on the subject of designated Child Protection Teachers and the change in emphasis towards training the trainers, and trained teachers cascading the training to school staff. In response to questions from the Panel he informed the Panel that his team were not responsible for training

school governors, and the Head of Looked After Children confirmed that none of the new Canadian staff would be joining the Safeguarding Unit as they had been allocated to duty and assessment, family support teams.

4.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

5. PROGRESS REPORT OF THE FAMILY PLUS SERVICE

5.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which updated the Panel on the progress of the Family Plus Service. The Practice Manager of the Service set out the background to the Service which was established in 2008 and the effectiveness of using Family Group Conferences to identify potential family and friends and kinship foster placements. She also highlighted the work the Service does in assessing potential carers and supporting established placements.

5.2 In response to questions from the Panel the Practice Manager explained the Family Group Conference procedure, highlighting that it often involved family members not resident in East Sussex, and the lack of a national approach to this matter. She also pointed out that the previous government had issued new draft statutory guidance, but it is uncertain whether this will be taken forward.

5.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

6. EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

6.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services updating the Panel on the latest statistics for attendance and exclusions of Looked After Children. The Virtual Headteacher informed the Panel of recent (uncompleted) Key Stage 2 results, stating progress in English and Maths had significantly increased in that 64% of LAC had made 2 levels of progress in English and 59% had made 2 levels of progress in Maths.

6.2 With regard to attendance the Virtual Headteacher highlighted the efforts made by the Virtual School to provide packages involving alternative education providers to address those LAC who are persistently absent.

6.3 With regard to exclusions the Virtual Headteacher indicated that to date there had been no permanent exclusions of LAC and praised the efforts Headteachers in seeking alternatives to exclusion. He reported that figures for fixed-term exclusions were possibly higher than they should be, but these were being addressed in a number of ways including targeting at risk children and training staff in strategies to avoid exclusions.

6.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

7. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICS

7.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined changes to the statistics in the last quarter.

7.2 The Head of Looked After Children Services informed the Panel that the fostering service was at full capacity as numbers of looked after children continue to increase and that the process for approval of new foster carers was being looked at to see if it could be streamlined, while maintaining the balance between safeguarding and a timely approval process.

7.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

8.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the remaining items on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in category 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual. It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

9. CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 1991, REGULATION 33: INSPECTION REPORTS

9.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 reports for March, April and May 2010 for the following children's homes:

- (i) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (ii) Broderick House
- (iii) Hazel Lodge
- (iv) Homefield Cottage
- (v) Lansdowne Secure Unit
- (vi) Rose Cottage
- (vii) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

9.2 RESOLVED to note the reports.