

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 19 October 2012 at 10.00am at County Hall, Lewes

PRESENT: Councillors O’Keeffe, Pragnell, St Pierre and Stroude

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Belsey, Lead Member for Children and Families

Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Children and Families
Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Head of Looked After Children (LAC) Services
Adrian Money, Headteacher for The Virtual School
Charlotte Papworth, Public Engagement Officer

Janet Fairless, RHM Brodrick House and Homefield Cottage
Nigel Hewitt, RHM Hazel Lodge and Rose Cottage
Anthony Julyan, Operations Manager, Children’s Disability Services
Nicola Scott, Operations Manager Residential LAC Services
Helen Simmons, RHM Sorrel Drive and Acorns
Martin Sutcliffe Unit Manager Lansdowne Secure Unit

12. MINUTES

12.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2012 as a correct record.

13. APOLOGIES

13.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hughes, Ost and Waite.

14. REPORTS

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

15. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICE

15.1 The Panel considered a report which presented the annual progress report of the Looked After Children’s Services from April 2011 to March 2012. Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Head of Service, highlighted the key points from the report.

15.2 The Panel discussed the provision of work experience and apprenticeships for care leavers and vulnerable groups, and were informed of the work under way in the Children’s Services Department (CSD) regarding work pairing and inserting appropriate clauses into external contracts..

15.3 The Panel discussed the use of Section 17 preventative funding to place children with family and friends carers. The Panel were assured that such placements, although not conferring LAC status on children, are carefully monitored by CSD. LAC Services also work with a number of partner agencies, such as the Safeguarding Board, Barnardos, the YMCA and Catch 22 to

address issues such as persistent absconding by LAC and their increased risk of sexual exploitation.

15.4 The Panel discussed care leavers and were informed that the County Council had an ongoing statutory duty towards them until the age of 21 or 24 if in education. . A needs assessment is carried out at 16 and a pathway plan produced which is monitored by either a social worker or by a personal advisor.

15.5 The Panel requested clarification of the number of terminations of approval of fostering households.. Teresa Lavelle-Hill explained that a resignation by a foster family eg when carers retire was recorded technically as a termination and so reported. An update on potential contact venues was also requested and the Panel was told that the Contact Service would share use of the Children's Centre at Dunbar Drive, Hailsham following a reconfiguration.

15.6 The Panel discussed the work of Catch 22 and were informed that County Council staff sat on the management committee. Liz Rugg set out that CSD and LSCB will be writing to the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner with regard to the Police's current financial contribution to Catch 22 and asking for an ongoing commitment to it.

15.7 RESOLVED to (1) note the report; and
(2) request that the report be considered by Cabinet.

16. EDUCATION OUTCOMES OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2011/12

16.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which set out an outline of the performance of the Virtual School in relation to the educational outcomes for Looked After Children for the academic year 2011/12. Adrian Money, Headteacher of the Virtual School, provided a table and graphs to present the figures for this and the comparison with the three previous academic years, and these are included in the Minute Book.

16.2 Adrian Money clarified that the cohort definitions had changed, and that the results had consequently been provided using both methods of calculation for ease of comparison. He also drew attention to two recent reports: that of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, "Education matters in care", and that of Ofsted on "The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children".

16.3 Adrian Money presented the results at each Key Stage in terms of attainment and progress made, and explained how this had been achieved, with the use of the pooled Pupil Premium resources thus allowing the Virtual School to target resources where they are most required. The Panel discussed the impact of amendments to the Schools Funding Formula.

16.4 RESOLVED to note the report

17. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

17.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the changes to the Looked After Children (LAC) statistics in the last quarter.

17.2 Members' attention was drawn in particular to: a slight reduction in the total number of placements; the work of the Agency Decision Maker in adoption proceedings; the rise in Special Guardianship and Residence Orders; an increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

17.3 The Panel discussed the financial implications of the rise in Special Guardianship and Residence Orders. Liz Rugg confirmed that she was the Agency Decision Maker for the authority and the Panel discussed the procedure for approvals of adoption support allowances.

17.4 RESOLVED (1) to note the information contained in the report; and
(2) to consider a report on the development of accommodation options for care leavers at the January 2013 meeting.

18. ANNUAL PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION REPORT 2012 IN RELATION TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

18.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which presented a summary of the key messages in relation to Looked After Children arising from the annual Participation and Consultation Summary, run nationally by the Children's Rights Director. Charlotte Papworth highlighted the main findings, and that East Sussex had the highest number of respondents to the online survey in the country.

18.2 The work of the Children in Care Council in promoting the survey, and in engaging with the judiciary to present the views of Looked After Children, was highlighted.

18.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

19. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

19.1 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.

20. OFSTED REPORTS

20.1 The Panel considered reports received from Ofsted on the following services:

- (i) Brodrick House
- (ii) Hazel Lodge
- (iii) Homefield Cottage
- (iv) Lansdowne Secure Unit
- (v) Rose Cottage

20.2 RESOLVED to note the reports.

21. CHILDREN'S HOMES REGULATIONS 1991, REGULATION 33: INSPECTION REPORTS

21.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 Reports for June, July and August 2012 for the following Children's Homes:

- (i) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (ii) Brodrick House
- (iii) Hazel Lodge
- (iv) Homefield Cottage

- (v) Lansdowne Secure Unit
- (vi) Rose Cottage
- (vii) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

21.2 RESOLVED to note the reports.