

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 18 October 2013 at County Hall, Lewes

PRESENT: Councillors Charlton, Clark, Galley, O'Keeffe, St Pierre (Chair) and Sheppard

ALSO PRESENT: Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Children and Families
Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Joint Head of LAC Services
Anna Brooke, Head of School and Education, Employment and Training
Co-Ordinator for the Virtual School
Adrian Money, Head Teacher of Virtual School
Alison Smith, Strategic Lead for Health for Children and Maternity

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

10. MINUTES

10.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2013 as a correct record.

11. APOLOGIES

11.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tidy.

12. REPORTS

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

13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

13.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following three items on the agenda 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 was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

14. OFSTED REPORTS

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

- (i) Lansdowne Secure Unit
- (ii) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

14.2 RESOLVED to note the reports.

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

15.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 Reports for July and August 2013 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

15.2 Each Registered Home Manager gave a brief oral update on activity at the home covering the inspection period and bringing the Panel up to date.

15.3 RESOLVED to note the written and oral reports.

16. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN 2013

16.1 The Panel considered a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services which provided information on the educational attainment of Looked After Children in 2013. Adrian Money, Virtual Headteacher for Children in Care, set out the highlights of the report. He explained that the figures were subject to final verification but that overall these are the best examination outcomes for LAC in East Sussex and mark the continuation of a clear upward trend that the Service is confident will continue into 2014. He also set out that most of the results were as the Service predicted, a mark of how well the Service knows the children.

16.2 The attainment achieved and progress made were set out by Mr Money, together with the pattern of writing skills being lower than reading skills. He drew attention to the case studies provided in the appendix. The work of the schools and tutors was praised, as becoming better attuned to the needs of Looked After Children and in their cooperation with the Virtual School. In particular Mr Money remarked on the weekly monitoring of all the Virtual School's students and the ability to intervene rapidly, including the provision of one-to-one tuition, should the need arise.

16.3 Anna Brookes, Care Leaver Co-Ordinator, set out the good relationships between Further Education colleges, other local authorities, training providers and care leavers, and that all pupils who study post-16 have a Personal Education Plan. She explained that funding was available for those who wish to return to education at 17-19. She mentioned the Care 2 Work scheme and the Youth Employment Service.

16.4 The issue of the Pupil Premium was discussed, and the extension of the scheme to Pupil Premium Plus with an additional £1000 per year for each eligible student. Mr Money explained that all East Sussex schools had agreed to pool the Pupil Premium to be administered by the Virtual School for the benefit of all Looked After Children.

16.5 The Panel discussed the gap in outcomes between Looked After Children and the rest of the school population. The Panel also discussed LAC attending university and who pays the tuition fees. It was explained that the students paid their own tuition fees, but that a package of other financial support focussed on accommodation and living expenses, together with approaches to the universities for bursaries, was provided by the County Council. Employability

workshops and work experience and the role of Members in promoting these opportunities to Looked After Children and partners in the public and private sectors were discussed.

16.6 RESOLVED to (1) note the significant educational achievements of Children Looked After by East Sussex County Council; and
(2) to thank the Virtual School staff for their support to enable children to succeed in this way.

17. FUTURE COMMISSIONING AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LANSDOWNE SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME

17.1 The Panel considered a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services which provided an overview of the Review of future commissioning and needs assessment undertaken by the Public Health Action Support Team CIC (PHAST) at the Lansdowne Secure Unit last year. Martin Sutcliffe, RHM of the Unit, set out the background of the review, explaining the two types of secure children's homes and the differences in funding streams.

17.2 Alison Smith, Strategic Lead for Health for Children and Maternity, set out the findings of the report which was undertaken as the Unit was undergoing its transformation programme. Additional funds from the Department of Health, to bring the Unit to the same position as homes run by the Youth Justice Board, were applied for and secured for mental health and substance misuse services. An increase in the dedicated nurse capacity will be funded from December. The challenges with commissioning independent contractors for GP, dentistry and optician services were set out, together with the training programme to ensure health assessments are as robust as possible. It was confirmed that an audit of the needs of all secure units will be carried out in the near future in the light of new guidance from the College of Paediatricians on the health of secured children.

17.3 The Panel discussed: the need to provide for psychiatric assessments when necessary; the roles of the dedicated LAC GP and nurse; provision of dental services in the Unit and management of follow-up treatments outside of the Unit; sharing of medical records, particularly of those children from out of the County, to ensure health assessments are completed in a timely manner; and the progress with securing services from a community optician who attends the Unit.

17.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

18. THE CHILDREN'S DISABILITY SERVICE

18.1 The Panel considered a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services which provided an introduction to the range of services provided by the Children's Disability Service, including those to Looked After Children. Anthony Julyan, Operations Manager, played a short video produced by the Service.

18.2 The changes in the types of disability that the Service provides assistance with were set out, with a levelling-off of numbers of ASD diagnoses and a reduction in those children with physical disabilities who access the Service's homes, partly as a result of adaptations to facilitate independence at the child's own home.

18.3 The Panel discussed: siblings of disabled children; the improvements in the transition to adult social care; mitigating risk of exploitation through sex education in schools; supported lodgings and the flexibility of provision of support.

18.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

19. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

19.1 The Panel considered a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services which outlined the changes to the Looked After Children (LAC) statistics in the last quarter. Liz Rugg explained that the statistics represented a snap-shot of the activity of the Service and that additional children also come in and out of care during the month.

19.2 Members' attention was drawn in particular to: the steady rise in the figures since May; the remand of two young people resulting in a need for support until they are 18 and placement issues post-18; the stabilizing of agency placements; an uplift in placement costs; and the continued use of Special Guardianship and Residence Orders.

19.3 The Panel discussed the recruitment and retention of former agency foster carers by the County Council; continued support for those families that adopt children formerly subject to SGO/ROs; and LAC placed outside of the county, and the best interests of the children that may necessitate such a placement, such as being with a kinship carer or being made safe from harm.

19.4 RESOLVED to note the report.