

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 17 January 2014 at County Hall, Lewes

PRESENT: Councillors Clark, O’Keeffe, Sheppard and Tidy

ALSO PRESENT: Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children’s Services
Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Safeguarding, LAC and SEN
Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Joint Head of LAC Services
Tania Riedel, Youth Offending Team Manager
Douglas Sinclair, Head of Children’s Safeguards & Quality Assurance
Amanda Watson, Planning and Performance Manager

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

20. CHAIR

20.1 Councillor Tidy was appointed as the Chair for the meeting.

21. MINUTES

21.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2013 as a correct record.

22. APOLOGIES

22.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Charlton, Galley and St Pierre.

23. URGENT ITEMS

23.1 Cllr Tidy agreed to accept as an urgent item a presentation on the revised Ofsted framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, brought into effect since the last Panel meeting. A copy of the presentation is contained in the minute book.

24. REPORTS

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

25. OFSTED FRAMEWORK FOR INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

25.1 The Panel considered a presentation by Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children’s Services, Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Joint Head of LAC Services, and Amanda Watson, Planning and Performance Manager, which provided an outline of the new Ofsted Framework which came into

effect in November 2013, details of the preparations made by Children's Services to meet the requirements of the Framework and the role of the Panel.

25.2 The Interim Director set out the progress made to date by the Ofsted team currently inspecting the Safeguarding element of Children's Services, and the work still to be done during the four week inspection period. The Panel discussed: their role in supporting and challenging the Department; the importance of recognising the voice of the child throughout the process; the learning from the Serious Case Reviews; and the key strengths and challenges of services for the Council's Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

25.3 RESOLVED to note the presentation.

26. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

26.1 The Panel considered a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services which presented the Annual Report for 2012/13 and the business plan for 2012-15 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

26.2 Douglas Sinclair, Head of Children's Safeguards & Quality Assurance, outlined the composition and responsibilities of the Board in challenging and monitoring the work of the partner agencies. He highlighted the achievements of the Board in establishing an effective Continuum of Need, in overseeing a greater number of families being helped earlier in the process and the investment in data collection and analysis. He also set out the co-operative work being done on children missing from care and e-safety, and the work on four Serious Case Reviews (SCRs).

26.3 The Panel discussed: the figures around child sexual exploitation, joint working with the Police in this area and the links to emotional abuse and neglect care plans; the unusualness of having four SCR's and the continuing challenge of learning lessons and identifying potential amendments to provision; and the necessity for all agencies to engage with the Safeguarding agenda, and the activities of the Diocese of Chichester in response to recent concerns.

26.4 RESOLVED to (1) note the report; and
(2) thank the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance team for their work.

27. REDUCING THE RATE OF PROSECUTION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

27.1 The Panel considered a report by the Interim Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the Pan Sussex Joint Protocol to reduce the rate of prosecution of Looked after Children, and the wider South East regional protocol to reduce offending and criminalising of LAC.

27.2 Tania Riedel, Head of the Youth Offending Team, highlighted the variety of agencies involved, and the efforts to encourage an approach focussed on Restorative Justice, which provides an alternative to prosecution for the Police and ensures the needs of the victim are met. She further highlighted the downward trend of the figures and the ambition to extend the protocols nationally, to assist with dealing consistently with children from out-of-area.

27.3 The Panel discussed the practical implications of the protocols and the importance of the relationships between the Council's children's homes and the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

27.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

28. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

28.1 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, Assistant Director Safeguarding, LAC and SEN explained that the statistics represented a snapshot of the activity of the Service and that additional children also come in and out of care during the month.

28.2 Members' attention was drawn in particular to: the reversal of the recent upward trend, the increase in Special Guardianship and Residence Orders partly as a result of children staying in their existing foster care placements with an order.; the rigorous monitoring by Heads of Service before and after approval of placing a child who is subject to a Care Order at home..

28.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

29. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

29.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the remaining 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.

30. OFSTED REPORTS

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

- (i) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (ii) Hazel Lodge
- (iii) Rose Cottage

30.2 RESOLVED to (1) note the reports; and
(2) congratulate the staff at Acorns on the inspection outcome and thank them for their hard work.

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

31.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 Reports for September, October and November 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

31.2 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.

31.3 RESOLVED (1) to note the written and oral reports; and
(2) to ask the Chair to write to Tideway School to thank them for the good work the School does with the County's Looked After Children.