

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 10 October 2014 at County Hall, Lewes

PRESENT: Councillors Clark, Galley, O’Keeffe (from 10.12), St Pierre (Chair), Sheppard and Tidy

ALSO PRESENT: Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Safeguarding, LAC and Youth Justice
Anna Brookes, Head of School and Education, Employment and Training coordinator
Teresa Lavelle Hill, Joint Head of LAC Services
Adrian Money, Virtual Headteacher

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

12. MINUTES

12.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2014 as a correct record.

13. REPORTS

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

14. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

14.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following two 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.

15. OFSTED REPORTS

15.1 The Panel was informed of the change in inspection regime, and the Children’s Services Department’s efforts to engage with Ofsted to ensure a consistent approach and to secure the best outcomes for the homes’ residents.

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

- (a) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (b) Brodrick House
- (c) Homefield Cottage
- (d) Lansdowne Secure Unit
- (e) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

15.3 RESOLVED to note the reports.

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

16.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 Reports for May, June, July and August 2014 for the following Children's Homes:

- (a) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (b) Brodrick House
- (c) Hazel Lodge
- (d) Homefield Cottage
- (e) Lansdowne Secure Unit
- (f) Rose Cottage
- (g) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

16.2 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.

16.3 RESOLVED to note the written and oral reports.

17. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

17.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which presented the annual report of the Looked After Children Service. It was explained that certain national indicators had not been available until September hence the report coming to the meeting slightly later than planned. . Teresa Lavelle Hill, Joint Head of LAC Services, highlighted the trend in decreasing numbers of Looked After Children, and the increase in Child Protection Plans. She focussed on care leavers and the action plan put in place following the Ofsted inspection to assist with improving employability and housing options. She highlighted the improved performance in timeliness of key health assessments.

17.2 The Panel discussed: ensuring the quality of information provided from the assessments by the LAC nurse and designated doctor; accommodation for care leavers in the Lewes area; retention of foster carers and the reasons for people leaving the service; the provision of funding for health needs at Lansdowne Secure Unit by NHS England, including the potential for increasing nursing hours, and the work of the WISE project in the Unit.

17.3 RESOLVED to (1) note the report; and
(2) endorse the report to be submitted to Cabinet.

18. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2014

18.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which set out the educational outcomes for Looked After Children in 2014. The Virtual Headteacher explained that the report had certain caveats regarding the validation of data, and he set out the challenging profile in educational terms of the Key Stage 4 cohort. He highlighted the improvement in Writing scores at KS2 within the English grades, which had been the subject of focus by the School's tutors, and the number of young people attending university. Anna Brookes, Head of School and Education, Employment and Training coordinator mentioned care leavers who had taken on apprenticeships rather than choosing to go to University as an example of the choices and options available to young people, and the broadened expectations that the Virtual School has been able to develop in those young people.

18.2 The Panel discussed: the importance of ensuring children are emotionally ready to access education, and the need to ensure that children attend a school appropriate to them; the work of

the service in providing training for schools to respond to children's needs; and the priority given to Looked After Children in the Admissions Code.

18.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

19. THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT INCLUDING REPORT ON THE USE OF THE PUPIL PREMIUM

19.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which set out the work of the Virtual School in 2014, and the use of the Pupil Premium. It was set out that national policy regarding use of the Pupil Premium had been amended to reflect established practice in East Sussex.

19.2 The Panel discussed the Virtual School's boarding school project, guidance to replicate this nationally is imminent; the recruitment of in house tutors, rather than having to rely on agency tutors to improve cost-effectiveness and strengthen the Service's ability to train others; the work of a new co-ordinator of education for adopted children; support for apprenticeships from the County Council, both directly and as a commissioner of services, and from the wider business community; the close links with the residential care homes which help ensure the staff at each establishment can focus on securing the best outcomes for each child.

19.3 RESOLVED to (1) note the report; and
(2) thank the staff of the Virtual School for all their work.

20. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

20.1 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. Liz Rugg, Assistant Director Safeguarding, LAC and Youth Justice 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.

20.2 Members' attention was drawn to: the overall downward trend in the number of looked after children; the reduction of in-house foster care placements over the summer being attributable to holidays; that all agency placements were under review to ensure they are appropriate for that individual; the decision making process for placements in B&Bs and supported lodgings.

20.3 RESOLVED to note the report.