

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at County Hall, Lewes on 10 July 2015.

PRESENT Councillors Peter Charlton, Charles Clark, Roy Galley, Ruth O'Keeffe (Chair), Jim Sheppard and Rosalyn St. Pierre

ALSO PRESENT Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Safeguarding, LAC and Youth Justice
Teresa Levell-Hill, Joint Head of LAC Services
Alex Sutton, Operations Manager Safeguarding Unit
Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager, Fostering
Janet Fairless, RHM Brodrick House and acting RHM Hazel Lodge
Nicky Scott, Operations Manager, LAC Services
Anthony Julyan, Operations Manager, Children's Disability Services
Helen Simmons, RHM Sorrel Drive and Acorns
Nigel Hewitt, RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit
Ian Williams, RHM Homefield Cottage

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

1.1 Councillor O'Keeffe was elected as Chair.

1.2 The Panel asked that their gratitude to Councillor St Pierre for her role as the previous Chair of the Panel be noted.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 APRIL 2015

2.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2015.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Tidy.

4 REPORTS

4.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are recorded in the minute book.

5 THRIVE END OF PROGRAMME REVIEW

5.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on the outcomes and the review of the THRIVE programme at the end of the third and final year. Liz Rugg, Assistant Director Safeguarding, LAC and Youth Justice, highlighted the three key goals which the THRIVE programme has focussed on between October 2014 and March 2015. These being: skilled, confident and proactive workforce; effective, targeted interventions with children and families across the continuum of need; and reduced demand for high cost services.

5.2 The Panel were further informed of the work that is now being carried out to sustain what has been developed through the THRIVE programme.

5.3 The Panel discussed the rise in the number of people requesting advice in contrast to the reduction in the number of referrals made. The Panel were informed that further work is being done to introduce an early help screening process which will help to reduce the number of initial contacts to social work teams made. The Panel also discussed the positive outcomes of Goal 1 (skilled, confident and proactive workforce), and noted the improvement in staff confidence, knowledge and professionalism.

5.4 The Panel gave thanks to the Children's Services Department.

5.5 RESOLVED to note the report.

6 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

6.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which presented a Report of the Independent Reviewing Service. Alex Sutton, Operations Manager Safeguarding Unit, highlighted the purpose and legal context of the Service, together with the commitment to ensuring that children can participate in their care planning.

6.2 The Panel were informed on; the progress being made to ensure that Looked After Children are aware of their entitlement to advocates; the process used for raising concerns regarding issues with a child's plan through the Dispute Resolution Process; and permanence planning and outcomes.

6.3 The Panel discussed: the importance of engaging with a Looked After Child (LAC) prior to their LAC review to ensure their maximum input and participation; the different methods used to communicate with a young person and how these are adapted to suit the needs of each individual child; and the management of family contact for LACs.

7 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

7.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the changes to the numbers of Look After Children (LAC) 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 at the end of the quarter and that there is considerable activity which goes on throughout the months.

7.2 Members attention was drawn to the overall downward trend towards the end of the quarter; the reduction in the number of agency placements being made and the focus for placements, where appropriate, of children in-house.

7.3 The Panel discussed: Special Guardianship Orders; Kinship Carers; and the reduction in the number of LAC in B&B accommodation.

7.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

8 VIDEO PRESENTATION OF THE EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL FOSTERING RECRUITMENT ADVERT

8.1 The Panel received a video presentation from Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager – Fostering, of the TV adverts developed by East Sussex County Council’s Fostering Service. The adverts are being aired in the BN and TN postcode areas on Sky channels from 4 May 2015 to 2 September 2016.

8.2 The Panel were informed that the adverts were successful as they had raised the profile of the service and had generated a lot of interest from the public.

8.3 The Panel praised the adverts and the hard work of the fostering service.

9 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

9.1 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.

10 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 1991, REGULATION 33: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR MARCH AND APRIL 2015 FOR THE FOLLOWING CHILDREN'S HOMES:

10.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 Reports for March and April 2015 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) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

10.2 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.

10.3 RESOLVED to note the reports.