



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

FRIDAY, 22 APRIL 2016

10.00 AM CC2, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe (Chair)
Councillors Peter Charlton, Charles Clark, Roy Galley, Jim Sheppard,
Roselyn St. Pierre and Sylvia Tidy

A G E N D A

- 1 Election of Chair
- 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2016 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
- 3 Apologies for absence
Councillor O'Keeffe
- 4 Disclosure by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- 5 Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the end of the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgently.
- 6 Update on Preparations for SEND Inspection (*Pages 7 - 10*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services
- 7 Safeguarding concerns for young people in Secure Training Centres (*Pages 11 - 14*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services
- 8 To consider excluding the public and press from the meeting for the next three agenda 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 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual.
- 9 Ofsted Inspection reports for the following: (*Pages 15 - 54*)
 - Acorns at Dorset Road
 - Brodrick House
 - Hazel Lodge
 - Homefield Cottage
 - The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

- 10 Children's Home Regulations 2015, Regulation 44: Inspection reports for December 2015, January 2016
- 10a Acorns at Dorset Road (*Pages 55 - 76*)
- 10b Brodrick House (*Pages 77 - 106*)
- 10c Hazel Lodge (*Pages 107 - 138*)
- 10d Homefield Cottage (*Pages 139 - 168*)
- 10e Lansdowne Secure Unit (*Pages 169 - 206*)
- 10f The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive (*Pages 207 - 228*)
- 11 Any other exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.
- 12 Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics (*To Follow*)
Report by Director of Children's Services
- 13 Any other non-exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.

PHILIP BAKER
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14 April 2016

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at County Hall, Lewes on 29 January 2016.

PRESENT Councillors Ruth O’Keeffe (Chair), Roy Galley, Jim Sheppard, Rosalyn St. Pierre and Sylvia Tidy

ALSO PRESENT Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Safeguarding, LAC and Youth Justice
Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Joint Head of Looked After Children Service
Nigel Hewitt, RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit
Nicky Scott, Operations Manager - Residential LAC Services
Ian Williams, Registered Homes Manager - Homefield Cottage
Antony Julyan, Operations Manager
Dawn Emsley, Deputy Manager Brodrick house
Helen Simmons, RHM Sorrel Drive and Acorns
Tina Henderson, Sheeleagh Steward, and Nigel Hodgson (Adopted Families Group) – for Item 9 (minute 29)
Harvey Winder, Democratic Services Officer

23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2015

23.1 The Panel agreed the minutes to be a correct record of the meeting held on 16 October 2015.

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

24.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Charles Clark.

25 URGENT ITEMS

25.1 The Chair agreed to raise as an urgent item a verbal update to the panel about an upcoming multi agency inspection in East Sussex that is expected to take place at the end of February.

26 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Panel agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the next three agenda 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 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual.

27 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

27.1 The Panel was informed of the Children's Services Department's progress in discussions with Ofsted regarding recent reports.

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

- (a) Brodrick House
- (b) Hazel Lodge
- (c) Homefield Cottage
- (d) Lansdowne Secure Unit

27.3 The Panel discussed the sleeping conditions for staff at Brodrick House.

27.4 The Panel RESOLVED to note the reports.

28 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 1991, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER.

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

28.2 Each Registered Home Manager gave a brief oral update on activity at the home covering the period since the last Panel meeting and bringing the Panel up to date.

28.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the reports.

29 ADOPTED FAMILIES GROUP (AFG) (EAST SUSSEX)

29.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services providing an insight into the work of the Adopted Families Group (AFG). The report involved a presentation from three members of the AFG.

29.2 In addition to the content of the report, the AFG provided the following information – in response to questions from the Panel – relating to the work of the AFG and the importance of post adoption support to adoptive families in East Sussex:

- Adopted children often require post adoption support and in this regard the AFG recognises the value of the Virtual School and Adopted Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (AdCAMHS) in helping adopted children and their families.
- AFG has successfully lobbied to get the Pupil Premium for adopted children and is now lobbying to have it ring-fenced to be spent specifically on the adopted child and not on the school as a whole.
- It is vital that parents of adopted children ask for professional help if they are struggling to cope. Parents can be given vital assistance, and it can often lead to the diagnosis of

previously unknown health problems – especially because adopted parents do not have access to the child’s medical records.

- AFG has observed that children entering the Looked After Children (LAC) service in recent years are displaying more challenging behaviour, particularly in the age range of 18 months to two years old. This means that foster parents and adoptive parents require more help than before.
- AFG is concerned about budget cuts to post adoption services, especially considering that East Sussex currently has an excellent service. According to Freedom of Information requests to other local authorities in the south east, no other local authority is planning to reduce funding to post adoption services.

29.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report and thank the AFG members.

30 UPDATE ON UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC) AND REFUGEES, SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2015

30.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services providing an update on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and refugees during quarter 2 of the 2015/16 financial year.

30.2 The Panel was informed by officers that any response to the large number of asylum seekers in Kent would require a coordinated national response and could not be resolved at a local level. The Looked After Children (LAC) service is running at full capacity already, so if a national dispersal system is instituted it will have an impact on services in East Sussex – most likely requiring the use of agency foster carers.

30.3 The Panel RESOLVED to 1) note the report; and

2) request that it be made a standing item on the agenda.

31 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

31.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children’s Services providing an update on changes over Quarter 2 of the 2015/16 financial year to Looked After Children (LAC) statistics.

31.2 The Panel was informed by officers that a policy was in place to reduce the use of agency foster carers in favour of placing children in in-house placements. This process involves reviewing placements when they come to an end and does not involve disrupting children in stable placements. This process is expected to deliver significant savings. There were now 22 fewer placements in agency foster care compared to at the start of the calendar year 2015.

31.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting ended at 12.17 pm.

Councillor Ruth O'Keeffe
Chair

Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 22 April 2016

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Update on Preparations for SEND Inspection

Purpose: To provide an overview of the proposals for a Local Area SEND inspection and the implications for Looked After Children in this.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended:

1) to note the details of the upcoming inspection programme for SEND; and

2) to note the preparation work that is underway to ensure that the County Council is best prepared for inspection and that the outcomes for children and young people are realised.

1 Background

1.1 The implementation of the Children and Families Act from September 2014 was intended to deliver what has been described as "a generational change" in the way that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are supported and provided for across health, education and social care. The ambitions of the reforms include:

- A person-centred approach to assessment and planning, putting children at the centre of decision-making and involving them and their families at every stage of the process.
- Responsibility for children and young people within the statutory framework to go from 0 to 25 years old, including educational provision where appropriate.
- Streamlining of statutory assessment processes, reducing the time taking from 26 to 20 weeks and the development of holistic Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which replace Statements for Special Educational Needs.
- All children with a statement would be moved onto an EHCP by 1st April 2018
- That effective joint commissioning arrangements are in place across education, health and social care to ensure that a good range of provision is in place for all children and that this is set out within a comprehensive Local Offer.

1.2 In 2015, the DfE announced that they would be monitoring the steps that Local Authorities and partners have been taking in implementing the reforms and the impact of these on improving the outcomes for children and young people with SEND, both those with an EHCP and those without. This monitoring will be undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, jointly, across all Local Authorities.

1.3 In total 22% of Looked After Children across East Sussex have a Statement/EHCP which is much higher than the East Sussex population as a whole, which currently stands at 3.8%. Over one-third of East Sussex LAC aged between 11 and 15 and almost a quarter of 16 to 18 year-olds have a statement/EHCP. Due to this over-representation, the implications for the Children and Families Act are, therefore, even more pertinent for LAC. Furthermore, as LAC have, nationally, not achieved consistently good outcomes where they have identified additional or special educational needs and disabilities, it is especially important that the reforms achieve accelerated improvements for this group of children and young people.

2 Supporting information

2.1 In the autumn, the DfE published a consultation on proposals for a Local Area Inspection of SEND that will begin from May 2016; the consultation closed on 4 January 2016. This followed pilot inspections in 4 Local Authorities and, although a comprehensive inspection framework has yet to be published, the inference from the consultation documents is that there will be five broad areas of focus:

- 1) How effective local areas are in securing engagement and participation of children, young people and families so that they have greater choice, feel they are in control and are listened to and their concerns are resolved swiftly
- 2) How effective local areas are in having a person-centred and joined up approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people and their families
- 3) How clear local areas are in understanding of what support, services and provision are available and how to raise concerns or seek redress where there are concerns
- 4) How good local areas use of effective practice, data and wider intelligence and independent assessment are to drive improvement
- 5) How well local areas have clearly defined and understood roles, responsibilities and accountability

2.2 Learning from our experiences in the School Improvement inspection, ESCC has established an Inspection Working Group to prepare for the review, and we have started the process of drawing up a comprehensive self-assessment of council responsibilities in advance of final guidance being published by the DfE. Through this process we have identified where our key risks are in relation to our services and are drafting an action plan to address these. The priority areas for East Sussex are:

- **Participation and engagement activity with parents/carers and children and young people** – we need to ensure that children and young people are fully engaged in the development of their own plans and that we can evidence how we involve young people in the strategic development of our service offers. We also need to ensure that we have feedback from parents/carers of children with a full range of SEND, not just those with the most severe and complex needs. Our engagement with children with disabilities, including those who are looked after, is a particular strength of our practice in this area and we need to see how we can broaden our practice in this area to others.
- **The Local Offer** – This is how all we articulate the full range of support that is available for all children and young people who have SEND across all partners (the LA, schools, Health, Social Care etc.) we need to ensure that this is more than just a directory of services, but provides a meaningful resource for families so they can understand both what is available to support them and what their entitlements are. We also need to ensure that there is clarity within the Local Offer of how children from vulnerable groups, like LAC, access services and how we are actively minimising barriers for them to do this.
- **Meeting Statutory Timelines** – we need to ensure that we are consistently meeting the 20-week deadline for issuing EHCPs. For LAC, this means ensuring that statutory SEN processes are well-aligned with social care responsibilities and that there is good synergy between EHCPs and Personal Education Plans (PEPs). Additionally, it means that staff working within the SEN Assessment and Planning team have good links with social care teams around shared priorities. This is an area where additional training and staff development is being undertaken.
- **Securing good educational outcomes** - we need to ensure that children with additional and SEND make accelerated progress in school and that they are not consistently over-represented within the population of children who are excluded. Good partnerships between the Virtual School and Support Services to drive improved educational outcomes for LAC are already in place; we need to ensure that these are well-evidenced.
- **Engagement with Health** – we need to ensure that our health partners are consistently well engaged in the process and that we can evidence partnership working to achieve best outcomes. The fact that LAC have input from a number of agencies, for this group of children it is especially important that we are able to evidence how services are joined up.

2.3 Whereas other inspections from Ofsted have focused on Local Authority performance, in recognition of the breadth of the Children and Families Act the new inspections will be badged as Local Area Inspections. This means that they will form a judgement on the performance of not just ESCC services, but those of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS England, early years' providers, schools and Further Education providers. This does pose some risks for us as a Local Authority as our relationship with Health providers and commissioners is not as seamless as it could be.

2.4 The narrative within the inspection consultation, and indeed feedback from pilot authorities, infers that the views of parents/carers and children/young people will strongly influence the overall judgement. This means that, whereas performance data is still important, our greatest focus over the next few months does need to be on how we evidence our work with parents/carers within the overall theme of co-production and ensure that this is reflected in responses from parent/carer groups.

2.5 As the landscape for East Sussex is demanding, with 3.8% of the school population having a Statement or EHCP compared to 2.8% nationally, we know that any inspection will pose additional challenges for us. Depending on when our inspection happens, there will be an expectation that we are able to demonstrate the journey that we have come on in implementing reforms, including a good understanding of where our gaps are; these will all be presented in our self-assessment.

2.6 In order to ensure that we have a strong strategic direction that goes beyond Ofsted, the CSD has developed a Joint Commissioning Strategy and, more recently, an Inclusion and SEND Strategy which articulate the aspirations of the Local Authority and set out how we will work with our key partners to realise these. The five key aspirations within the strategy are:

- Provide high quality education, services and wider support to meet the needs of children with SEND
- Build capacity and improve inclusive practice in education settings
- Improve the engagement and influence of young people and the voice of the child
- Support families to be able to make decisions and have greater choice or influence in how services are delivered
- Ensure young people have a successful transition to adulthood

2.7 An associated governance structure involving all strategic partners, which will include education, health and social care, has been set up to monitor performance in delivering our responsibilities with a clear function of providing high level challenge and setting the priorities for East Sussex on an ongoing basis. For Looked After Children, this will mean ensuring that we:

- Ensure that children/young people and carers are involved in the shaping of their education provision and that there is excellent communication between professionals in drawing up and reviewing EHCPs.
- Ensure that schools and education providers have a good understanding of the additional challenges faced by LAC with SEN and that they take appropriate steps to accelerate improvements so that they can achieve good outcomes.
- Ensure that there are robust systems in place to ensure a good transition into adulthood, independence and ongoing training/education opportunities which are aimed at realising the ambitions of all LAC.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Significant strides have been made within East Sussex to embed the national reforms at a local level. We do have ongoing areas of pressure and risk and we are working up robust plans to address these where we have direct control over performance.

3.2 The County Council is on track with preparations for inspection, but it is essential that all partners ensure that there is good compliance across the board with the tenets of the Children and Families Act, especially for children and young people who are looked after. This includes

good engagement with children/young people and their carers in ensuring that plans are co-produced and there is shared ownership of outcomes.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None

Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 22 April 2016

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Safeguarding concerns for young people in Secure Training Centres

Purpose: To update panel members in the context of the concerns which surfaced in the recent Panorama programme about the experience of young people in the Medway Secure Training Centre

RECOMMENDATION

The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the action that has been taken at both a local and national level to safeguard vulnerable Looked After Children who are remanded or sentenced to secure establishments via a criminal court

1. Background Information

1.1 Medway Secure Training Centre (STC) is currently run by G4S and is commissioned by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to provide secure accommodation for young people, either serving custodial sentences or on remand. Medway STC is situated in Chatham and caters for both girls and boys aged 12 – 17 years. It can accommodate up to 76 young people at any one time. The young people placed in STCs have been assessed as being more vulnerable than those placed in Young Offender Institutions (YOIs), either due to their age or other factors such as emotional and mental health concerns.

1.2 Medway is the local STC for East Sussex and therefore young people that meet the needs for a STC are most likely to be placed there. This equates to very small numbers. Last year there was 12 young people sentenced to custody and nine remanded in East Sussex. Four of these were placed in STCs, three of these in Medway. When children and young people are remanded to custody they become Looked After by the local authority and subject to oversight via that legislative framework in addition to Youth Offending Team (YOT) staff input.

2. Supporting Information

Safeguarding concerns

2.1 A number of concerns regarding the treatment of young people placed in Medway STC were exposed in a BBC Panorama programme, aired on 11 January 2016. The programme involved coverage filmed by an undercover investigator, which showed evidence of children and young people being bullied and abused by staff in Medway STC.

2.2 Since the programme was broadcast, five G4S staff members have been dismissed, and three more are suspended (as well as one person employed by the local healthcare provider) whilst a police investigation into the allegations is carried out. Police have arrested and bailed five men. Four of the men were arrested on suspicion of child neglect. A fifth person was held on suspicion of assault. The police investigation is ongoing.

2.3 There was only one young person from East Sussex placed in Medway STC during the period in which the filming for the programme took place. This young person was not involved in any of the incidents and has been asked explicitly but has not reported any concerns. Another young person from East Sussex has made allegations since the programme has been aired. These allegations are being investigated through the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in Medway and via the Police. East Sussex Children's Services and YOT have supported this investigation.

National response

2.4 The YJB took immediate action to ensure that all children at Medway and in the other STCs are safe and supported. YJB monitoring of the establishment has been increased. There have been several visits from Ofsted, HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and the Office of the Children's Commissioner since the concerns were raised. Barnardo's have provided independent advocates for six days a week, working with children to voice any concerns or worries they might have. None of these agencies have identified any immediate safeguarding concerns. This view is supported by the findings of our enhanced monitoring activity, which has not uncovered any new evidence of staff misconduct or inappropriate practice.

2.5 The YJB stopped placing young people in Medway immediately after the concerns were raised. They have recently begun to place some individuals again. This will be done with the consultation of the local YOT and with the family of the young person and where it is in the best interests of the young person. There have been no young people from East Sussex placed in a STC since these issues were raised.

2.6 Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Justice, has appointed an Independent Improvement Board comprising four members with substantial expertise in education, running secure establishments and looking after children with behavioural difficulties. This Board will fulfil the same function, with the same remit, as HMIP and Ofsted's recommendation for a commissioner. They have tasked G4S with putting an improvement plan in place, which this Board will oversee. We are currently waiting on the report from this Board.

Local response

2.7 There is a South of the Thames Resettlement Group which consists of Heads of Service/YOT Managers, Managers from the secure estate and from the YJB. The main remit of this group is to identify how we can best support and develop, through care and resettlement arrangements, young people across the region.

2.8 The major concern is that the current systems for children to alert the appropriate authorities to issues such as abuse or mistreatment were not used by the young people themselves and that the allegations, which have resulted in an ongoing criminal investigation, were identified by the TV programme. We are working to identify what could be done differently in future. The main aim is to ensure that young people placed in any custodial institution are made aware that this treatment and behaviour is not acceptable; that they are aware of and have confidence in the processes to report any concerns and that they are confident that we will continue to ensure that they are kept safe and feel safe

following any allegations made. It is important that this is a more general discussion than just being related to Medway STC.

2.9 To ensure that this discussion takes place with our local young people in the STCs, East Sussex will continue to support young people in custody throughout their sentences. The YOT Case managers will insist on having the opportunity to meet with young people without the secure estate staff present where possible. YOT workers will chair the placement meetings and continue to ensure that the young person's wellbeing is covered. Support will also be given to the parents/carers of those young people receiving custodial sentences.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The experience of some young people at Medway STC was not acceptable. It is concerning that it did not come to light via any 'normal' process. Local use of Medway STC is not great and numbers of young people placed there are small.

3.2 One local young person has disclosed information about his time in Medway which is now being investigated and he is being supported with this by local staff.

3.3 The national response to these concerns has been swift and robust.

3.4 Locally the focus on the experience of young people in any secure establishment has been strengthened and this will continue going forward.

3.5 The Panel is recommended to note the action that has been taken at both a local and national level to safeguard vulnerable LAC who are remanded or sentenced to secure establishments via a criminal court.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None

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