

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at County Hall, Lewes on 28 July 2017.

PRESENT Councillors Charles Clark, Chris Dowling, Kathryn Field, Jim Sheppard, Colin Swansborough, Sylvia Tidy (Chair) and Francis Whetstone.

ALSO PRESENT Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care
Nicola Scott - Operations Manager Residential
Antony Julyan - Operations Manager
Ian Williams – RHM Hazel Lodge
Scott Lipa – RHM Brodrick House
Helen Simmons - RHM The Bungalow and Interim RHM Lansdowne
Adrian Sewell – Operations Manager, Fostering Team
Carole Sykes – Operations Manager, Adoption and Permanence
Alex Sutton – Operations Manager, Safeguarding Unit

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

1.1 Councillor Sylvia Tidy was appointed as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 APRIL 2017

2.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2017.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3.1 Apologies were received from Janet Fairless, Registered Homes Manager.

4 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

4.1 The Panel agreed to exclude the press and public for the next two agenda items on the basis that if they were present there would be disclosure to them of information considered to be exempt by virtue of Category 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual.

5 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT FOR HAZEL LODGE - JUNE 2017

5.1 The Panel considered a report from Ofsted on the service at Hazel Lodge. The home received an overall good rating, with some areas of the service being judged as outstanding.

The Registered Homes Manager commented on how pleased the staff were that the strengths of the home had been noticed and recorded.

5.2 The Panel discussed the positive outcome of the Ofsted report and praised the hard work of the staff. It was requested that Members of the Panel were provided with the contact details for each of the homes.

5.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

6 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE PERIOD APRIL - JUNE 2017

6.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the period April to June 2017 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

6.2 Each Registered Home Manager provided an overview of the home, and gave a brief oral update on activity covering the period since the last Panel meeting.

6.3 RESOLVED to note the reports.

7 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

7.1 The Panel considered the Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report for the period 2016/17. Alex Sutton, Operations Manager Safeguarding Unit, highlighted the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). This involves: regular monitoring and follow-ups in relation to the care planning of Looked After Children (LAC); challenging drift and delay between reviews; and building relationships between social workers, families and children and young people to improve effective care planning.

7.2 The Panel were informed about problem resolution and escalation processes in relation to the care planning of LAC. These processes include IROs discussing any issues or concerns with the relevant social worker in the first instance. If this discussion does not resolve the issue, the matter can then be escalated to the Dispute Resolution Process if necessary.

7.3 The Panel discussed the long term professional relationships which have developed amongst IROs, social workers and LAC, and the importance of these. The Panel were advised that a young person leaving care will be introduced to a personal adviser before their 18th birthday to help support them with going onto adult life. In addition to this, the Panel discussed the pressures that IROs are faced with and the increase in caseloads over the year.

7.4 The Panel gave thanks to the work of the IRO service and the support they provide for ESCC LAC.

7.5 RESOLVED to note the report.

8 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX FOSTERING SERVICE

8.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the performance and progress of the East Sussex Fostering Service for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager highlighted aspects of the Service's work such as recruitment and retention; the transfer of carers from other agencies; and the marketing techniques used to promote the Service.

8.2 The Panel were advised that the Service has faced challenges in relation to the increase of Looked After Children which has resulted in more pressure being placed on foster carers. The Service has developed creative ways to deal with these pressures and support foster carers. These include: creating a buddy system between experienced and new foster carers; providing a comprehensive training package; and an out of hour's advice line available to foster carers 365 days a year. The placement support service has also supported children in placements, which included life story work and holiday and weekend group activities for children in placement.

8.3 The work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) was commended by the Department, with its effectiveness in representing and promoting the service, holding informal interviews with applicants and providing feedback for the assessment reports.

8.4 The Panel discussed: the reduction in the recruitment of foster carers; the fees associated with using agencies; and the training and support provided to foster carers. The Panel thanked the East Sussex Fostering Service for its work and the positive impact it was having on the children and young people it has in its care.

8.5 RESOLVED to note the report.

9 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE SERVICE

9.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the performance and progress of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. Carole Sykes, Operations Manager highlighted aspects of the Service's work such as: recruitment activity; permanence planning and the adoption support service.

9.2 The Panel discussed the support provided to families who adopt, particularly to those families who need to use the service later on in their child's life. The Panel were advised that the Local Authority are legally responsible for assessing adoptive families to determine any ongoing support needs. The Panel praised the hard work and effectiveness of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service.

9.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

10 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

10.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on Looked After Children (LAC) statistics.

10.2 The Panel were informed by Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care on the slight rise in the number of East Sussex LAC since the last quarter.

10.3 RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting ended at 12.25pm.