

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at County Hall, Lewes on 25 January 2019.

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

ALSO PRESENT Liz Rugg – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care
Teresa Lavelle-Hill – Head of LAC Services
Janet Fairless – RHM Homefield Cottage
Scott Lipa – RHM Brodrick House
Helen Simmons – RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit
Charlotte De Retuerto – RHM The Bungalow
Ian Williams – RHM Hazel Lodge
Dr Susan Leather – Designated Doctor for LAC
L & K – Children in Care Council
Meshelle Dale – Children in Care Council Coordinator
Susanne Beasley - Chair of ESFCA
Tina Henderson – Trustee of ESFCA

63 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2018

63.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2018.

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

64.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Jim Sheppard and Shirin White, RHM Acorns at Dorset Road.

65 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

65.1 There were none.

66 URGENT ITEMS

66.1 There were none.

67 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

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

67.2 The Panel were informed by Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care, that at the end of December 2018 ESCC had 615 children in care, which is a reduction of 2 over the quarter. The Panel were informed that the Christmas period can limit activity both within the teams and in the Courts.

67.3 The Panel were informed that the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) has increased from 26 to 38 over the quarter. This rise was due to a combination of transfers under the dispersal scheme and a rise in spontaneous arrivals.

67.4 RESOLVED: to note the report.

68 EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT

68.1 The Panel considered a report by the East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) which presented an update on the work of the charity. The Chair of the Association, Susanne Beesley, was present to introduce the report and highlight the activities undertaken by ESFCA, and the plans for future development. These included:

- **Luggage:** ESFCA have distributed over 200 luggage bags to young people in need. This prevents young people from moving their belongings in black bags and also creates a stock of luggage which can be used by the Duty and Assessment Teams in emergencies.
- **PGL, action and adventure:** ESFCA provided 3 PGL residential trips for 57 LAC (Looked After Children). The Panel were informed of the importance of these trips in building lasting memories and relationships both between young people and with their social workers. In October 2017 ESFCA also provided PGL trips for 25 children and young people from families who foster, the Panel were informed of the importance of saying thank you to these children and young people.
- **Legoland trip:** The children's charity Merlin's Magic Wand funded a trip for 52 children and their carers to Legoland in Windsor.
- **Sibling Sunshine project:** This project brings together siblings that have been separated in the care system for day trips and residential stays at Butlin's. These trips help bring children together to create family bonds and lasting memories.

68.2 The Panel praised the important work of ESFCA and thanked the Association for the help and support it provides.

68.3 RESOLVED: to note the report.

69 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE

69.1 The Panel received an updated from two members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) who spoke about the work they have been involved with and highlighted the following projects.

- **Backpacks:** the CiCC have received funding from ESFCA to provide backpacks to all children entering into care. These backpacks contain items such as shower gel, toothbrushes, hair brushes, socks and soft toys for the younger children. The items have been specifically picked by the CiCC as they help towards making the children in care feel at home.
- **Mental Health:** the CiCC have been delivering assemblies at local schools to highlight the importance of mental health issues. The importance of having an open dialogue and awareness of mental health issues are going to be key focus for the CiCC in 2019.
- **Online Safety:** the CiCC informed Members of their ongoing focus on online safety. They highlighted the negative impact that social media and cyber bullying has on young people and informed Members that these areas would be focussed on with their mental health campaigns.

69.2 The Panel discussed the rise of mental health problems in young people and how social media should be considered a key factor in this growing issue.

69.3 RESOLVED: to receive an update from the CiCC and to thank the young people for their hard work and important contributions.

70 ANY OTHER NON-EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

70.1 There were none.

71 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

71.1 The Panel agreed to exclude the press and public for the next 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.

72 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE FOLLOWING: LANSDOWNNE AND THE BUNGALOW

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

- a) Lansdownne Secure Unit
- b) The Bungalow

72.2 The Panel discussed the importance of strong record keeping and ensuring that all staff are familiar with the policies regarding keeping records.

72.3 The Panel welcomed the positive outcomes of the Ofsted reports and praised the hard work of the staff.

72.4 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

73 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR PERIOD OCTOBER 2018 - DECEMBER 2018

73.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the period October 2018 – December 2018 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, Sorrell Drive

73.2 Each Registered Home Manager (RHM) gave a verbal update on activity at the home covering the period since the last Panel meeting.

73.3 The Panel discussed the challenges of the Christmas period. The RHM’s informed the Panel that this period can be busy for staff and difficult for children, and that their goal during this period is to maintain a positive atmosphere within the homes.

73.4 The Panel commended the hard work of all staff at the homes.

73.5 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

74 ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR

74.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 12.25 pm.