

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 29 April 2022.

PRESENT Councillors Sam Adeniji, Johnny Denis, Kathryn Field (Chair), Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Matthew Milligan and Colin Swansborough.

ALSO PRESENT Alison Jeffery – Director of Children’s Services
Kathy Marriott – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care
Teresa Lavelle-Hill – Head of Looked After Children Services
Bev Moores - Strategic Lead Children's Disability Social Care
ISEND
Meshelle Carmody - Children in Care Council Co Ordinator and Placement Support Worker
Sally Hodson – Operations Manager
Shirin White - Registered Homes Manager, Acorns
Scott Lipa – Registered Homes Manager, Lansdowne
Georgia Carty – Residential Homes Manager, Hazel Lodge
Steven Crowe – Registered Homes Manager, Brodrick House
Janet Fairless – Registered Manager - Homefield Cottage
Charlotte De Retureto - Registered Manager

37. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2022

37.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 of January 2022.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

38.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Bob Bowdler.

39. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

39.1 Councillor Matthew Milligan declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest that a close family member is an East Sussex County Council Foster parent.

40. URGENT ITEMS

40.1 There were no urgent items.

41. CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL (CiCC) ANNUAL REPORT - 2021 - 2022

41.1 The Panel considered the Annual Report of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) which was presented by Meshelle Carmody, Children in Care Council Co Ordinator and Placement Support Worker.

41.2 The Panel were informed of the following areas of the CiCC work:

- CiCC recruitment: During the past year further recruitment has taken place to ensure that the membership of the CiCC remains inclusive and there is proportionate representation from black and minority ethnic groups, and those young people with disabilities.
- Partnership working: The CiCC have been working to build relationships with teams across East Sussex, Pan Sussex and nationally. This includes the Youth Cabinet, Silver Birches Residential Home and the Independent Reviewing Officer team.
- Buddy system: four members of the CiCC have undertaken training to become buddies for the new buddy scheme which has been piloted this year. The scheme provides support to children entering care from those who are already care experienced.

41.3 The Panel inquired about the buddy scheme and whether this would be held virtually and whether there were any age restrictions. Meshelle Carmody, Children in Care Council Co Ordinator and Placement Support Worker fed back that the scheme started virtually due to the pandemic but was moving to a face-to-face approach as well as utilising social media. Recruitment is targeted at young people 18 years or below, but once a part of the scheme, members are not required to leave. The Panel were informed of a CiCC member who is now at university and the benefit of this, as it gives care leavers an opportunity to speak to an older person who has shared experiences of leaving care.

41.3 The Panel queried the delays in young people receiving National Insurance Numbers and were assured by the Director of Children's Services that this is not a systematic issue and only one child has experienced a delay with obtaining their number. Social Workers are encouraged to apply for a National Insurance Number 12 weeks ahead of a looked after child's 16th birthday.

41.4 The Panel RESLOVED to note the report.

42. DEVELOPING THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL (DISCUSSION ITEM) - VERBAL REPORT

42.1 The Panel considered opportunities for increased discourse and the inclusion of the CPP from partner organisations such as the National Health Service (NHS) and the Police. Partners have previously attended the CPP meetings, which has been a useful addition to the discussions, and it was agreed that these outside agencies should be invited to future meetings. In addition to this, the Panel were informed that an annual Looked After Children Health report will be coming to the Panel in the autumn.

42.2 Alison Jeffrey advised the Panel that an offer has been made for the CPP to receive a free session with Mark Riddell MBE, a former adviser to the Department of Education on care leavers. Mr Riddell who has been working with different authorities to strengthen and support their care leaver offer has provided availability on the 30 June, to speak to the East Sussex CPP remotely.

42.3 The Panel agreed to set up a meeting with Mark Riddell MBE on the 30 June, to be held remotely via Teams. It was noted that some Panel Members would be unable to attend due to a clash with the Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee.

43. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

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

43.2 Kathy Marriott, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care updated the Panel on the latest position for Looked After Children in East Sussex County Council (ESCC). There are significant pressures within the system and high demand both nationally and locally.

43.3 The service has seen a slight increase in the number of Looked After Children, with 358 children in foster care, a rise of 14 over the quarter. The service remains extremely busy with managing new placements as well as maintaining relationships with those already in care. Despite this pressure the service has placed 78% of LAC with in-house carers, which is a strong statistic and a credit to the team. The service was commended for the fantastic job it is doing in managing the demand and pressure.

43.4 ESCC continues to fully participate in the national transfer scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, as well as the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The number of young people seeking asylum rose to 62 at the end of March, up two over the quarter.

43.5 Challenges remain in the recruitment of high-quality staff. Despite recent pressures, no complaints had been received from LAC in the last quarter.

43.6 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

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

44.1 There were none.

45. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

45.1 RESOLVED - to exclude the public and press from the meeting for items 10 and 11 on the agenda (see minutes 46 and 47) 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 exception outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

46. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR BRODRICK HOUSE

46.1 The Panel considered an Inspection report for Brodrick House following a visit from Ofsted in January 2022. The Panel were advised that following the visit in January there were several actions that the Register Homes Manager and staff had to complete to improve standards in the home. A further visit was made by Ofsted in March 2022 and it was agreed that all conditions in the January report had been fully met.

46.2 Steven Crowe, Registered Homes Manager advised the Panel that the team had worked hard to work through the solutions for both now and in the future, and as a result the home has seen marked progress despite the challenges it has faced.

46.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

47. CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS

47.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Acorns
- Brodrick House
- Hazel Lodge
- Homefield Cottage
- Lansdowne Secure Unit
- The Bungalow

47.2 The Panel received a verbal update from each of the Registered Homes' Managers (RHMs).

47.3 The Panel discussed a range of issues including access to education and opportunities for joint working, including the development of the Integrated Care Partnership and the establishment of a pan Sussex Children's Board.

47.4. The Panel discussed the presentation of the reg 44 reports, and it was agreed that a further discussion would be held during the session with Mark Riddell MBE to review the local care leaver offer. Following this session, officers would bring proposed changes for the Panel's consideration at a future CPP meeting.

47.5 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

48. ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

48.1 There were none.

Chair