

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at County Hall, Lewes on 27 January 2017.

PRESENT: Councillors Roy Galley (Chair), Jim Sheppard, Rosalyn St. Pierre and Sylvia Tidy

ALSO PRESENT: Liz Rugg, Assistant Director Early Help and Social Care; Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Joint Head of Looked After Children Services; Helen Simmons, Registered Homes Manager (RHM), The Bungalow; Ian Williams, RHM Hazel Lodge; Nigel Hewitt, RHM Lansdowne Secure Children's Homes; Scott Lipa, RHM Brodrick House; Shirin White, RHM Acorns at Dorset Road; Meshelle Carmody, Children in Care Council Coordinator and Placement Support Worker; Children in Care Council (CiCC); Tina Henderson, East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA); Lysette Grosvenor, ESFCA; and Gary Shirley, ESFCA.

20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2016

20.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2016.

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

21.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Charles Clark.

22 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

22.1 Councillor St Pierre declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in item 6 (see minute 24) on the agenda. Councillor St Pierre is a member of the Lewes Soroptimists.

23 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

23.1 The Panel received a presentation from two members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) who spoke about the work they have been involved in and highlighted the following projects:

- **All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) meetings** – the CiCC attended an APPG meeting and heard about the new Family and Social Work Bill, and had a say on how East Sussex could improve outcomes for LAC in PHSE lessons and apprenticeships.
- **Takeover day** – one member of the CiCC was given the opportunity to go to the Children’s Commissioners office and worked in the branding department to help rebrand the Help at Hand advice line;
- **Skills for Fostering** – the CiCC informed the Panel its work with potential new foster carers. This includes helping foster carers to both understand what is like for a young person coming into care and to identify more with young people in care; and
- **Contact Cards** – all children in care are now provided with a contact card containing the details of their Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer. This was something which was highlighted by other LAC through the ‘SUSS It’ programme carried out by CiCC members.

23.2 At the request of the CiCC, the Panel agreed to hold an official pledge signing with the group leaders of East Sussex County Council. The pledge outlines the County Councils promises to all children in care and to young people moving on from care to adult life.

23.3 RESOLVED to: commend the work of the CiCC and thank them for their presentation.

24 EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT

24.1 The Panel considered a report by the East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA) which presented an update on the work of the charity. Three members of the association were present to introduce the report and highlight the activities undertaken by ESFCA, and the plans for future development. These included:

- **Project inspire, performing arts** – the ESFCA funded a programme run by two experienced tutors to teach a group of young people voice training, movement, and dance.
- **PGL action and adventure** – the ESFCA funded a three day residential trip organised for 27 foster children and 12 adult helpers. Social workers came along to the event which gave them the opportunity to build on their relationships with the foster children;
- **No more black bags** – the ESFCA have purchased 200 suitcases to be distributed to children and young people most in need of luggage;
- **Christmas party** – the ESFCA held a Christmas party for over 100 East Sussex foster children. The Lewes and Eastbourne Soroptimists set up a Christmas present room next door to the party. In this room children were able to pick out and wrap a present to give to their foster carers on Christmas day;
- **Stable connections** – an equine therapy project has been funded by the ESFCA which helps children to work with ‘intuitive horses’ to regulate their emotions, reflect and be calm, and build their confidence and esteem; and
- **Sibling Sunshine project** – sibling sunshine days help to reconnect LAC who are separated from their siblings whilst in care. These events help to create happy memories and build bonds between siblings.

24.2 RESOLVED to: commend the work of the ESFCA and thank them for the annual report.

25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for items 8 and 9 on the agenda (see minutes 26 and 27) 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.

26 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR ACORNS AT DORSET ROAD, BRODRICK HOUSE AND HAZEL LODGE.

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

- (a) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (b) Brodrick House
- (c) Hazel Lodge

26.2 The Panel discussed the positive outcomes of the Ofsted reports.

26.3 RESOLVED to note the reports.

27 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2016

27.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the period August to November 2016 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

27.2 Each Registered Homes Manager gave an oral update on activity at the home covering the period since the last Panel meeting.

27.3 The Panel discussed the importance of staff training, in particular the training and scrutiny of agency staff. In response to the Panel's comments, Helen Simmons, Registered Homes Manager advised that all newly recruited staff must participate in the East Sussex training package, regardless of any existing qualifications or training experience. This helps to ensure that the East Sussex standards are being met.

27.4 The Panel RESOLVED to note the reports.

28 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

28.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined the changes to the numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) in the last quarter. Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care explained that the statistics represented a snap-shot of the activity of the Service at the end of the quarter and that there is considerable activity which goes on throughout the months.

28.2 The Panel were advised on the slight increase of children coming in to care, this rise includes a number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people entering the system via the dispersal scheme. However, despite this increase there has been a positive reduction in the number of children in agency placements.

28.3 The Assistant Director further advised the Panel that there had been two complaints received from East Sussex LAC during the last quarter which were investigated and dealt with appropriately.

28.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting ended at 12.40 pm.

Councillor Roy Galley
Chair