

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held in the Committee Room, County Hall, Lewes on 26 July 2019.

PRESENT	Councillors Charles Clark, Kathryn Field, Jim Sheppard, Colin Swansborough, Sylvia Tidy and Francis Whetstone and Michael Ensor
ALSO PRESENT	Liz Rugg – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care Teresa Lavelle-Hill – Head of LAC Services Claire Padgham – Practice Manager, Adoption and Permanence Nicola Scott – Operations Manager, Residential LAC Services Adrian Sewell – Operations Manager, Fostering Service Fiona Lewis – Operations Manager, Safeguarding Unit Beverley Moores – Strategic Lead, Children’s Disability Social Care ISEND Janet Fairless – RHM Homefield Cottage Scott Lipa – RHM Brodrick House Charlotte De Retuerto – RHM The Bungalow Shirin White – RHM Acorns Ian Williams – RHM Hazel Lodge

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 APRIL 2019

1.1 RESOLVED: to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2019.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Helen Simmons, RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit.
2.2 Councillor Michael Ensor was present as a substitute member for Councillor Chris Dowling.

3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

3.1 There were none.

4 URGENT ITEMS

4.1 There were none.

5 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

5.1 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 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to an individual.

6 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE FOLLOWING: LANSDOWNNE, BRODRICK HOUSE AND HAZEL LODGE

6.1 The Panel received Ofsted reports on the following Children's Homes:

- Lansdowne Secure Unit
- Brodrick House; and
- Hazel Lodge

6.2 The Panel welcomed the positive outcomes of the Ofsted reports.

6.3 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

7 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR APRIL 2019 - JUNE 2019

7.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the period April 2019 to June 2019 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

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

7.3 The Panel discussed the progress which is being made on the interior and exterior building improvements at many of the Homes. They were assured that disruption from these works was always kept to a minimum.

7.4 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

8 ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

8.1 There were none.

9 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX FOSTERING 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 Fostering Service for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Adrian Sewell, Operations Manager – Fostering Service informed the Panel of the successes and challenges in the areas of recruitment & retention; publicity campaigns; fostering panels, and foster carer training.

9.2 The Panel were informed that 21 households offering 36 placements were approved in 2018/19 compared with 19 households offering 37 placements in the previous year. The Panel were advised to view the figures within the context of the national decline in placements and were informed that East Sussex is in a favourable position in terms of recruitment in comparison to neighbouring authorities.

9.3 The Panel were informed of the 'continual presence' marketing strategy of the Fostering Service. This strategy includes: 'Vinny' the recruitment van which has been able to reach more of the county; roundabout advertising; radio campaigns; promotional merchandise 'giveaways'; and lamppost banners in Eastbourne, amongst others.

9.4 The Panel discussed the success of the recruitment van and the importance of the Fostering Service to be able to reach all parts of the county, particularly those parts where there have been challenges with recruitment.

9.5 RESOLVED: to note the report.

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

10.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outline the performance and progress of the East Sussex Adoption and Permanence Service for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Claire Padgham, Practice Manager – Adoption and Permanence Service introduced the report and highlighted various aspects of the work such as: recruitment of adopters, placements and matching, adoption support and panel activity.

10.2 The Panel were informed that activity levels were high during 2018/19 with 27 children adopted and 33 prospective adopters approved. There were also 88 households in attendance at information events and 37 households subsequently registered their interest to adopt.

10.3 That Panel discussed the declining national trend in recruitment and the lack in sufficiency of adopters. The Panel were advised that despite these national issues East Sussex continues to maintain a favourable position regarding recruitment in comparison to our statistical neighbouring authorities.

10.4 The Panel discussed the importance of the Adoption and Permanence Panel and were informed that training on assessments and serious case reviews, the medical advice from East Sussex Health Care Trust (ESHCT), and the appointments of 3 new members have all contributed to the effectiveness of the Adoption and Permanence Panel over the past year.

10.5 The Panel also discussed the future development of Adoption South East and East Sussex County Council acting as the host of this Regional Adoption Agency.

10.6 RESOLVED: to note the report.

11 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

11.1 The Panel considered the Independent Review Officer (IRO) Annual report for the period 2018/19. Fiona Lewis, Operations Manager – Safeguarding Unit, introduced the report and informed the Panel and highlighted aspects of the IRO's work including: managing high caseloads, the statutory obligations of IRO's and the processes of LAC reviews.

11.2 The Panel were informed that caseloads for the IRO's remain high with an average of 101 cases per IRO. This is well in excess of the 50 – 70 recommended from the Department for Education. In response to a query regarding the caseload capacity IRO's the Panel were informed that the recruitment of two further IRO's will be taking place to mitigate this issue.

11.3 The Panel discussed the importance of social activities and inclusion for LAC and sought clarification that a record of a young persons social interests was kept. The Panel were advised that recording and discussing these areas was a statutory requirement for IRO's when carrying out reviews.

11.4 RESOLVED: to note the report.

12 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

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

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

12. RESOLVED: to note the report.

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

13.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 12:15pm.