

## CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held in the Committee Room - County Hall, Lewes on 24 January 2020.

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### PRESENT

Councillors Charles Clark, Chris Dowling, Kathryn Field, Colin Swansborough, Sylvia Tidy and Francis Whetstone

### ALSO PRESENT

Liz Rugg – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care

Teresa Lavelle Hill - Head of Service LAC

Sally Williams – Operations Manager, Residential and Directly Provided Services, Children’s Disability Service

Beverley Moores – Strategic Lead, Children’s Disability Social Care ISEND

Nicola Scott – Operations Manager, Residential and LAC Services

Dr Katayoon Afsharpad – Designated Doctor LAC in East Sussex

Linda Burgess- Designated Nurse LAC

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

Helen Simmons – RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit

Tina Henderson – Trustee of East Sussex Foster Care Association

Lysette Grosvenor – Trustee of East Sussex Foster Care Association

27 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2019

27.1 RESOLVED: to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2019.

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

28.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Jim Sheppard and Susanne Beesley, Chair of the East Sussex Foster Carers Association.

29 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

29.1 There were none.

30 URGENT ITEMS

30.1 There were none.

31 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

31.1 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.

32 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE FOLLOWING CHILDREN'S HOMES: ACORNS AND LANSDOWNE

32.1 The Panel received Ofsted reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Acorns
- Lansdowne Secure Unit

32.2 The Panel welcomed the positive outcomes of the Ofsted Reports

32.3 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

33 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR OCTOBER 2019 - DECEMBER 2019

33.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for the period October 2019 to December 2019 for the following Children's Homes:

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

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

33.3 The Panel discussed the issue of young people absconding from Children's Homes. In particular, Members wanted to understand more about the procedures RHMs follow when a young person absconds and they asked for clarification about this. In response, Members were assured that the Department have well-established procedures which aim to resolve these issues as quickly as possible. For example, Sussex Police are aware of the sensitivities relating to young people in care and are used to assisting with the process of locating an individual who has absconded. Members were also informed that whilst the issue of a young person absconding is serious, it was important to keep in mind that the majority of cases relate to, for example, a young person wanting to stay out with their friends later than had been agreed with their social worker. In other words, the majority of these incidents are examples of normal behaviour for an adolescent and not a situation where a young person has made a concerted effort to leave their Home and not return. Councillor Whetstone requested that a sheet be included in the CPP papers that relates the reference numbers of the reports to the names of the homes.

33.4 RESOLVED: to note the reports.

#### 34 ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR

34.1 There were none.

#### 35 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

35.1 The Panel considered the annual report of the East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA). The report provided an update on the work of the Charity and its plans for future development. These plans include:

- **Room to rant:** the ESFCA financially supported members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) to hold two workshops at Audio Active studios in Brighton. This gave the young people the opportunity to write and perform a rap song. This activity was well-received and helped the young people express their feelings.
- **PGL trips:** the ESFCA received funding from Children in Need which enabled the provision of 3 residential experiences for 57 LAC at a PGL centre. This gave the children an opportunity to experience a number of different activities and build deeper relationships with other foster children and their social workers.
- **Make it Reel project:** the ESFCA received a donation from the Reel Poster Company to create the 'Make it Reel Project' which enabled social workers to purchase items/activities that would help support the children and young people they are working with. These items include: weighted blankets to aid with anxiety, football coaching, and a necklace for a young person to wear at a prom.

35.2 The Panel were also informed that the ESFCA have been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2019. This award recognised the achievements and work that the organisation has undertaken over the past twenty-five years. The Panel congratulated the ESFCA on receiving this award.

35.3 RESOLVED: to note the report.

## 36 ANNUAL HEALTH OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN REPORT

36.1 The Panel considered a report from Dr Katyoon Asfarpad Designated Doctor for LAC and Linda Burgess, Designated Nurse for LAC. The report detailed the health needs of children and young people who are already in care or who are coming into care and the way in which these needs are managed. The Panel were informed that all Designated LAC professionals within the Sussex CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) have contributed towards the report.

36.2 The Panel were updated on developments regarding the health of LAC and the health services provided for them for the 2018/19 period. This update included details on:

- **Ofsted Inspections:** the quality of Health assessments for LAC were positively highlighted by Ofsted in the East Sussex inspection and received an outstanding rating.
- **Safeguarding standards:** since April 2019 all CCG contracts for providing services for LAC must meet the requirements of the Sussex Safeguarding Standards which include having a named lead for the child or young person.
- **Initial Health Assessments:** there is a multi-agency focus on improving meeting statutory timescales for Initial Health Assessments (IHA) for LAC.
- **Reporting requirements:** there are plans moving forward to standardise and align reporting requirements for service providers across Sussex, this will allow for more accurate data comparisons and will aim to reduce variation in data collection methods.
- **Continuity of care:** the Designated Doctor and Designated Nurses are working with health care providers across Sussex to ensure that key principles regarding medical records of children who are adopted are being applied. This includes, for example, ensuring that health records held by an organisation are managed appropriately to ensure continuity of care as the child moves from one health provider to another.

36.3 The Panel asked whether mental health support for LAC was being treated as a key priority and whether joint working across services was ensuring that support was in place. In response, the Panel were informed that Designated Professionals are working closely with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) to improve the waiting times for support for LAC.. One aspect of this work includes, for example, Designated Professionals holding regular meetings with the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust to ensure that mental health services are being treated as a priority. The Panel were also informed of a key development which means that all health professionals can now make a referral for LAC support from CAMHS, whereas previously this could only be done by a child's social worker.

36.4 The Panel discussed waiting times for mental health support for children and young people. In particular members were concerned about the impact of delays in support being provided for LAC. The Panel therefore agreed that a letter should be sent by Councillor Tidy to the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust highlighting the concern and asking what steps could be taken to reduce waiting times for this especially vulnerable group.

36.5 RESOLVED:

1) to note the report; and

2) Councillor Tidy to write on behalf of the Panel to the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust regarding waiting times for mental health support for LAC.

37 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICS

37.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on Looked After Children Statistics.

37.2 The Panel were informed by Liz Rugg, Assistant Director for Early Help and Social Care on the current figures for LAC in East Sussex.

37.3 RESOLVED: to note the report.

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

38.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 12.11 pm.