

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 25 April 2023.

PRESENT Councillor Sam Adeniji, Councillor Bob Bowdler, Councillor Kathryn Field (Chair), Councillor Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Councillor Matthew Milligan and Councillor Colin Swansborough

ALSO PRESENT Kathy Marriott – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care
Alison Jeffery – Director of Children’s Services
Fiona Lewis – Head of Service Looked After Children
Mandy Lewis – Head of Virtual Schools
Sally Carnie – Head of Looked After Service
Caroline Bragg - Employability and Skills Strategy Manager
Zoe Child – Team Leader – Youth Employability Service
Belinda Trunfull – Member Services

40. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2023

40.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2023.

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

41.1 There were no apologies for absence.

42. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

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

43. URGENT ITEMS

43.1 There were no urgent items.

44. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

44.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for items 6 and 7 on the agenda (see minutes 44 and 45) 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.

45. QUARTERLY REGISTERED CHILDREN'S HOMES REPORT

45.1 The Panel considered Quarterly Registered Children's Home reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Brodrick House
- Homefield Cottage
- Hazel Lodge
- Silver Birches
- Lansdowne Secure Children's Home
- Acorns
- The Bungalow

45.2 The Panel considered Ofsted Inspection reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Silver Birches
- Lansdowne Secure Children's Home
- Acorns

45.3 The Panel welcomed the reports and received a verbal update from Fiona Lewis, Head of Service Looked After Children.

45.4 The Panel were updated on recruitment for Lansdown Secure Children's Home and informed that there are challenges around recruiting for the managerial post, this is due to the senior level of the role, however once the post is filled, recruitment of the wider posts will proceed.

45.5 When Lansdown Secure Children's Home re-opens, it is anticipated that around 10 rooms will be in use.

45.6 The Panel discussed residential home visits and agreed that it would be beneficial for Panel Members to visit.

45.7 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

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

46.1 There were none.

47. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

- 47.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on Looked After Children (LAC) statistics.
- 47.2 Sally Carnie, Head of Looked After Service updated the Panel on the latest position for LAC in East Sussex. The service remains very busy and the sufficiency of placements both in-house and in the independent sector is extremely challenging.
- 47.3 The Panel heard that in the last quarter, there has been an increase of 10 children living in care, bringing the total to 664. Of this total, 357 children are in foster care (a decrease of 1).
- 47.4 The number of children living with kinship foster carers remained stable with a total of 71 children (a decrease of 2).
- 47.5 The number of children living in regulated residential children's homes has increased from 85 to 92. Due to ongoing challenges faced by the service around sufficiency of foster care places, ESCC has had to place an increasing number of younger children in residential provision. Currently there are 25 children under the age of 11 in residential children's homes, preference would be for younger children to live in a family setting.
- 47.6 The number of young people seeking asylum was 74 which remains stable. The number of Asylum-Seeking young people who were care leavers went up significantly from 92 to 110. This is largely due to majority of this cohort arriving at the age of 16 resulting in a shorter stay in care.
- 47.7 The Panel discussed missing unaccompanied children and asked what was in place to address this. The Children's Services department informed the Panel that collaborative work is ongoing with the police and other key agencies to address this situation.
- 47.8 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

48. OVERVIEW OF NEW OFSTED SUB JUDGEMENT FOR CARE LEAVERS

48.1 The Panel received a presentation from Kathy Marriot, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care outlining Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services and the new judgement on Care Leavers.

48.2 Following consultation by Ofsted with children, care experienced adults and families, and organisations representing the views of the care experienced people, it was concluded that embedding their evaluation of the experiences and progress of care leavers within the wider 'children in care and care leavers' judgement has not maximised the profile of care leavers to the extent intended. Therefore, from January 2023 Ofsted will introduce a new separate judgement for care leavers.

48.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the information within the presentation.

49. PRESENTATION ON POST 18 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SUPPORT FOR CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE IN EAST SUSSEX

49.1 The Panel received a presentation outlining the post 18 Education, Employment and Training (EET) support for care experienced young people in East Sussex.

49.2 Mandy Lewis - Head of Virtual Schools, provided the following update:

- As of December 2022, 85.7% of 16–17-year-olds in East Sussex were participating in EET, compared to 80.2% nationally and 79.3% in the South East.
- 13.6% of 16–17-year-olds were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in East Sussex compared to 16.3% nationally and 16.2% in the South East.
- For those aged 19-21 years old 55% were participating in EET, which compares the same nationally and 57% in the South East.
- Funding has enabled the service to offer additional help to develop skills and increase engagement of LAC and care leavers, as well as establishing a good partnership with a range of partners offering a wide range of support and opportunities for young people.

49.3 Zoe Child - Team Leader, Youth Employability Service (YES) updated that YES offers a range of support to Children Looked After such as dedicated advisors; support from Year 10; support for care leavers up to the age 25; and support for out of county LAC.

49.4 Caroline Bragg - Employability and Skills Strategy Manager provided the following update:

- The service continues to work with the Careers Hub linking in with educational establishments and running career events.
- Funding of up to £1k is available to care leavers, employers and training providers through apprenticeships and bursaries.
- Any applicant flagged as a care leaver is entitled to an interview if they meet all essential criteria when applying for a job at ESCC. In addition, LAC and care leavers are listed as a priority group which can provide a fast track to recruitment through employment agencies.
- Peer research is being conducted into barriers faced by young people looking to enter employment in Hastings, with outcomes of the research to be used to inform and address identified issues.

49.5 The Panel welcomed the presentation and requested for more information regarding the use of the Open University and number of care leavers employed by ESCC. In response, the Panel was informed that the Open University is not currently being used, however the service will look to explore this opportunity. The Children's Services department also updated that 29 care leavers have been recruited by ESCC since 2019.

49.6 The Children service's department further updated that additional opportunities are explored and promoted via the Military and Music.

49.7 The Panel RESOLVED to note the update.

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

50.1 The Panel discussed the Youth Cabinet meeting which Councillor Bob Bowdler attended and found very informative. The Panel suggested inviting LAC and CLs to a future meeting as it would be beneficial to hear from them first hand. The Children's Services Department agreed to consider how to best make this work.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm.

Councillor Kathryn Field (Chair)