

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at County Hall, Lewes on 22 April 2016.

PRESENT Councillors Charles Clark, Roy Galley, Jim Sheppard,
Roselyn 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
Nathan Caine, Head of ISEND Provider Services
Nigel Hewitt, RHM Lansdowne Secure Unit
Janet Fairless, RHM Brodrick House and Homefield Cottage
Nicky Scott, Operations Manager Residential LAC Services
Helen Simmons, RHM Acorns and The Bungalow
Ian Williams, RHM Hazel Lodge

32 ELECTION OF CHAIR

32.1 Councillor Galley was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

33 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2016

33.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2016.

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

34.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O'Keeffe.

35 DISCLOSURE BY ALL MEMBERS PRESENT OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

35.1 There were none.

36 NOTIFICATION OF URGENT ITEMS

36.1 There were none.

37.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services. Nathan Caine, Head of ISEND Provider Services, set out that this was to be a Local Area inspection which would encompass Health, Social Care and Education provision. He highlighted the priority areas that have been identified through the comprehensive self-assessment, in the light of learning from the recent School Improvement Service inspection. He also highlighted the aspirations contained within the Inclusion and SEND Strategy.

- Ensure that children/young people and carers are involved in the shaping of their education provision and that there is excellent communication between professionals in drawing up and reviewing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Ensure that schools and education providers have a good understanding of the additional challenges faced by LAC with SEN and that they take appropriate steps to accelerate improvements so that they can achieve good outcomes.
- Ensure that there are robust systems in place to ensure a good transition into adulthood, independence and ongoing training/education opportunities which are aimed at realising the ambitions of all LAC.

37.2 The Panel noted that East Sussex was above the national average in terms of percentage of children identified as having SEND (3.8% compared with 2.8%) and enquired about the ratio of children entering the care system that have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an EHCP, which was commented on by Regulation 44 and Ofsted Inspectors when visiting the County's children's homes. Nathan Caine set out the percentage figure was reducing, from over 4%, and that funding arrangements for children with SEND had changed, and payments were no longer directly connected to Statements. He also set out that not all children who enter the care system have an educational need but that there is a significant proportion with EHCPs or statements, and that work was being done to strengthen school-based provision of support.

37.3 The Panel enquired about working with mental health services. The work of the county-wide Children's Integrated Therapy Service and the positive links with the ESHT paediatric services were highlighted as good examples of partnership working. Work to develop the most effective early interventions to maximise the impact was set out, including changes to Inclusion Units in schools to focus on nurturing and improving emotional wellbeing, to help the child return to a mainstream class. Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Joint Head of the Looked After Children Service highlighted the LAC CAMHS service which works with foster carers and the residential homes and secure unit, and the Virtual School who work with designated teachers to address attachment difficulties. The care leavers service benefits from the input of a mental health nurse as part of the multi-disciplinary team.

37.4 The need to target the funding from the High Needs funding block to where it will have the most effect was stressed, as was working efficiently with partners, and increasing early support in schools. The aim of achieving a person centred process, taking into account the voice of the child, was reiterated. It was confirmed that 90% of children get involved in the annual review of their statutory plan, and that the Advocacy Service was available to assist all Looked After Children.

37.5 RESOLVED to (1) note the details of the upcoming inspection programme for SEND; and

(2) note the preparation work that is underway to ensure that the County Council is best prepared for inspection and that the outcomes for children and young people are realised.

38 SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN SECURE TRAINING CENTRES

38.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

38.2 The Assistant Director reassured the Panel that there are currently no East Sussex children at the Medway Youth Secure Training Centre. Those that had been there recently had been visited by their Youth Offending Team and Looked After Children Service workers, to offer support and obtain information.

38.3 The Centre is currently the subject of a serious case review. It was also confirmed that any decision to place an East Sussex child at the Medway Centre or indeed at any other secure establishment would be made by the Youth Justice Board, taking into account the vulnerability of the child, and the child would be provided with support by the YOT and LAC services.

38.4 RESOLVED to note the action that has been taken as both a local and national level to safeguard vulnerable Looked After Children who are remanded or sentenced to secure establishments via a criminal court.

39 TO CONSIDER EXCLUDING THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

39.1 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 to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual.

40 OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

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

- (a) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (b) Brodrick House
- (c) Hazel Lodge
- (d) Homefield Cottage
- (e) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

40.2 It was confirmed that considerable work had been undertaken to address the points raised in the previous round of full inspections.

40.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the reports.

41 CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 2015, REGULATION 44: INSPECTION REPORTS FOR DECEMBER 2015, JANUARY 2016

41.1 The Panel considered Regulation 44 Reports for December 2015 and January 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

41.2 Each Registered Home Manager gave a brief oral update on activity at the home covering the period since the last Panel meeting and bringing the Panel up to date on issues such as staff accommodation and training.

41.3 The Panel RESOLVED to (1) note the reports;

(2) thank Helen Simmons for her work in managing two homes, one of which was undergoing building works, and the other managers in implementing changes recommended by Ofsted; and

(3) welcome the investment in therapeutic parenting training being undertaken by all of the residential units.

42 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

42.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on changes to Looked After Children statistics over Quarter 3 of 2015/16, which showed a slight upturn.

42.2 The Panel was informed that the reporting functions of the new client recording system were being investigated, in order to be able to provide the detailed breakdown in categories of LAC.

42.3 There are currently 88 sets of care proceedings. Foster care placements, both in-house and with agencies, are difficult to arrange at the moment, partly due to the effect of large numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers arriving in Kent in need of accommodation. The Panel was encouraged to identify interested individuals or groups, and to signpost the Looked After Children service to people who might wish to apply to be foster carers or offer supported lodgings.

42.4 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting ended at 11.35 am.