

Corporate Parenting Panel
Slough Borough Council
Terms of Reference 2020/21

1. Purpose of the Corporate Parenting Panel

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel assists the Council to fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities towards looked after children and children leaving care, under the Children Act 1989 and Children(Leaving Care) Act 2000. The role of local authorities and the seven key Corporate Parenting Principles are set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 1.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel (the 'Panel') is a private meeting of Slough Borough Council (SBC), and acts strategically to ensure that **all** councillors demonstrate their commitment to deliver better outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers.
- 1.3 In particular this includes:
- High quality care, nurturing supportive and meaningful relationships that encourage their growth of self-esteem, confidence and resilience; enabling young people to cope with change and difficult times
 - The highest standard of education which is consistent with the needs and abilities of the child
 - Opportunities and encouragement for self-development and keeping fit and healthy
 - Encouragement to take up hobbies, acquiring life skills and being a good citizen
 - Opportunities for education, employment and training, including open days and work placements and apprenticeships
 - Assistance with the transition from care to looking after themselves, including the provision of suitable accommodation

2. Responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel

2.1 The Panel should:

- Champion and provide clear strategic and political direction in relation to corporate parenting
- Ensure the needs of children and young people in care and their carers are prioritised and these are reflected in the pledge to Slough's children in care
- Use the LGA's "*10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children*" to assess the effectiveness of the services provided to children and young people in care and care leavers
- Receive regular reports on the level, range and quality of services provided to children and young people in care and care leavers, and identify areas for improvement
- Receive regular reports of key performance and quality indicators (as set out in the corporate parenting scorecard) relating to in care, and identify areas for improvement
- Engage with and support the work of the various Reach Out! (Children in Care Council) groups
- Engage with and support the work of Reach Out And Review (ROAR)

- Take account of the views of children, young people and their carers and involve them in the assessment and development of services
- Champion the provision of dedicated, specialist council-based work placements and apprenticeships for young people in care
- Promote achievement and acknowledge the aspirations of children and young people in care by supporting celebration events and activity days
- Meet with Ofsted inspectors (where appropriate) for their input into inspections
- Encourage members to participate in the Slough Fostering Panel
- Agree an annual work plan for the Panel, based on the Corporate Parenting Strategy priorities/pledge to looked after children
- Review membership of the Panel and the impact that it has had on the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
- Report formally on an annual basis to the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel and cabinet/council where appropriate.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership will be reviewed annually as follows:

- (a) For the council by the relevant political groups, at the commencement of each municipal year.

3.2 In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interests, the Chair of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel and the council's representatives on the SCST Board shall be prohibited from sitting on the Panel as members.

3.3 All seven elected member appointments to the Panel by the Council will be made on a politically proportionate basis.

3.4 Attendance at meetings

Representatives of Children Looked After and Care Leavers will be invited to attend at the start of each meeting to present their Hot Topics or any matters the Panel seeks their views on.

Chairing the Panel

3.5 The Panel shall be chaired by the council's Cabinet Member for Children and Schools.

3.6 The Vice Chair shall be confirmed at the commencement of the municipal year

Non-Councillor members

3.7 Non-voting members are required to attend all meetings, or to nominate a substitute in the event of their absence.

3.8 The non- Councillor members of the Panel shall be as follows:

- The council's Director of Children, Learning and Skills
- Chief Executive, SCST
- At least one Non Executive Director of SCST
- Head of Children Looked After Service – SCST
- Head of Care Leavers Service - SCST
- Foster carer

- Reach Out! Group representative
 - The council's Service lead for strategic housing services
 - Thames Valley Police representative (will attend when necessary)
 - Designated Nurse for Children in Care (East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG))
 - Virtual School Headteacher - SCST
 - The council's Service lead for Communities and Leisure
- * The Looked After Children's Nurse is not a permanent member of the Panel but will be invited to attend meetings as and when appropriate.

4. Operation of the Panel

Meetings

- 4.1 The Panel will meet a minimum of four times a year.
- 4.2 Each meeting of the Panel will be based on one or more of the key themes within the Corporate Parenting Strategy (based on the Pledge), as agreed at the first meeting of each municipal year (see appendices 1 and 2).

Administration

- 4.3 The agenda for each meeting shall be agreed by the council's Director of Children, Learning and Skills as part of the Panel's ongoing Forward Work Plan for the municipal year.
- 4.4 Administrative support will be provided by the council's Democratic Services team, who will arrange the meetings of the Panel; maintain the Forward Work plan and publish its agendas. The agreed agenda will be despatched by Democratic Services, at least five working days in advance of the meeting.
- 4.5 An officer from the council's Democratic Services team will be responsible for the minutes of the meeting and their subsequent circulation.
- 4.6 Attendance at meetings and access to the minutes will be restricted to members of the Panel, as set out above.
- 4.7 Requests from non-members to view the minutes will be considered, based on the request fulfilling a valid 'need-to-know' requirement.

Accountability/Governance

- 4.8 The Panel will provide a child friendly response to the list of hot topics identified by Reach Out and Review members and discussed at their meetings. This summary will be provided within 14 working days of the meeting taking place.
- 4.9 The Panel will provide an annual report to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel setting out work to deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy. This report will be presented by the Chair of the Panel.

Review

- 4.10 These terms of reference will be reviewed annually by the council's Director of Children, Learning and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools.
- 4.11 Any revisions must be endorsed by the Panel and the Member Panel on the Constitution before being approved by full council.

