

Corporate Parenting Panel – Meeting held on Tuesday, 18th July, 2023.

Present:- Councillors Dauti, Gill, Hulme, Kelly, Qaseem, Jones-Jardine, Sears and Bartos

Non-Voting Members:

Sue Butcher, Executive Director of People (Children) & CE of Slough Children First (SCF)
Caroline Bartos, Accommodation Group Manager
Liz Jones, Communities Group Manager
Lynette Jones-Jardine, NHS Frimley ICB
Cherie Sears, Virtual School Head (SCF)
James Mather, Thames Valley Police

In Attendance:

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive (SBC)
Ben Short, Director of Operations (SCF)
Kay Jones, Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency (SCF)
Reshma Bessesar, Head of Service, Children Looked After (SCF)

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Lianne Garstang

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor (Cllr) Dauti declared an interest by virtue of providing an individual support group for Kinship Carers, and as a carer.

2. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all members, particularly, the Council's Chief Executive and new members who were attending a Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) meeting for the first time.

3. Election of Chair

The Panel agreed to vary the order of the agenda.

Cllr Kelly nominated, and Cllr Qaseem seconded the appointment of Cllr Hulme as Chair of the CPP. The Panel agreed to appoint Cllr Hulme as Chair for the 2023-24 municipal year.

Resolved – The Panel resolved to appoint Cllr Hulme as Chair for the 2023-24 municipal year.

4. Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference - To Note

The Monitoring Officer introduced the Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference (TOR), which had been agreed at the Annual Council meeting in May 2023.

He advised that revision to the current membership set out in the TOR would be reported to the Council meeting in July 2023 for approval.

The Panel **Resolved** to: Noted the Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference on condition that changes are approved at the Council meeting in July 2023.

5. Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 April 2023

The Panel **Resolved** to: Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2023 as a correct record.

6. What is Corporate Parenting? Purpose, Membership and Frequency of Meetings

The Panel received a presentation from the Slough Children First (SCF) Sufficiency & Permanency Lead.

In brief, the presentation highlighted:

- The role of Corporate Parenting and responsibilities to Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) in Slough.
- As of April 2023, there were 255 CLA with 291 young people who were entitled to a leaving care offer of support. Also in this period, there were 259 CEYP (16 +).
- The legal requirements including the Children Act 2004, placed a duty on local authorities (LA) to promote co-operation with 'relevant partners'. Additionally, the Children Social Work Act 2017, ensured the nurturing and positive experiences for CLAs, young people and care leavers.
- Our responsibilities – The task of parenting becomes the responsibility of everyone at the Council as corporate parents, when a child comes into care. This includes Councillors, officers, school staff and partner organisations. Children are at the centre of the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy and Council was also required by law to have a Pledge covering the six areas set out in the presentation.
- The purpose of the CPP, its membership and frequency of meetings.
- As well as the role of Cllrs being vital, it was also crucial to ensure that the right people from the Council and partner organisations were represented on the Panel, to enable the Panel to have overview and scrutiny, where officers could be asked about the services being provided for children and young people. It would also mean that

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cabinet members and officers could be responsible for each of the 6 areas of the Pledge, with Cllrs becoming champions. The Pledge could be used as a way of measuring and keeping an oversight to ensure the delivery of services to children and young people.

Panel members welcomed the presentation and discussed that the LGA had raised concerns about how often the Panel met and the level of involvement of children.

A question was asked about how effective the CPP had been in the past, the Executive Director of People (Children) and CE of Slough Children First (SCF) (ED) reported that Ofsted had highlighted the CPP as being poor, and at a low base. This was further noted from the LGA Peer Review and urged for their recommendations to be implemented.

Hearing young people's voices was vital, and one of the ways of doing this was for a representative to attend REACH Out! meetings (the ED attended the meeting in April 2023). Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) requested being able to view pictures of accommodations allocated prior to them viewing the properties.

(The Chief Executive left the meeting)

The SCF Head of Children Looked After & Support Services suggested that the role of the CPP should be published on the Council's website and advised that she would be working with the SCF Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency, to develop a programme for improving the CPP, and would look at ways of raising awareness that everyone was responsible for corporate parenting.

The Panel **Resolved** to: Note the presentation.

7. Local Government Association (LGA) - Review Headlines and Recommendations

The Panel received a presentation on the Corporate Parenting Peer Diagnostic following the LGA Peer Review in March 2023.

The Head of Children Looked After & Support Services explained that feedback received in April included recommendation about the actions that the CPP could take to improve and become more effective. One of the areas of focus was on how to develop and improve hearing the voice of the child, for example, by involving young people in the development and delivery of services.

Notable strengths and areas for development as set out in the presentation were highlighted. Focus on priority areas to avoid "they say, and nothing happens" syndrome, and the need to develop a whole Council approach for Children's Services.

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The LGA had also offered to provide support including reviewing and giving advice on documents such as the Corporate Parenting Strategy. In addition, training and guidance was offered to the CP Panel members on the role/functions of a CPP.

During discussion, members were informed that several statutory and annual reports were required to be reported to the CPP, which would need to be included in the forward plan.

The Communities Group Manager reported that the CPP had been instrumental in Everyone Active setting up a national leisure offer scheme for children.

It was noted that Thames Valley Police (TVP) would send representatives to meetings in relation to relevant topics and would support appropriate local campaigns. It was also noted that the police had internal policies, procedures and duties that were relevant to CLA and CEYP that will require the input and oversight of the CPP in their development to ensure a joined up and coordinated approach. The Council's Accommodation Group Manager and the SCF Director of Operations worked closely with the Police.

The Panel **Resolved** to: Note the presentation.

8. Corporate Parenting Panel Score Card

The Panel considered the Corporate Parenting Scorecard, which provided an overview of June 2023.

The Head of Children Looked After & Support Services explained that the new format would help the Panel to develop oversight using the data at each panel meeting. It provided key performance indicators and a snapshot of what is happening for our children. A full snapshot had been provided initially to identify patterns, themes and trends, but just the overview will be provided in the future.

It was highlighted that:

- There were 248 CLA at the end of June 2023 (under 18), compared with statistical neighbours.
- Forty-three unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were taken into care in the last three months.
- There had been a 3% increase from the previous year to 59% of CLA from BME communities, due to an increase in unaccompanied children.
- One hundred and fifty-five children (62.5%) lived with foster families, which was below statistical neighbours (65%) in southeast and (69%) in England. The children were supported through in-house services. The aim was to move children from residential provisions and place them into family homes.

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- Although there had been a reduction of children with 3+ move in June (11%), this had increased over 12 months period from 7%, which was higher than statistical neighbours (10%) in England but in line with the South (12%). It was noted that children in Slough placements would need to be reviewed to try and reduce the number of children living in residential homes.

In response to a question about placements that were not registered with Ofsted, it was noted that just two young people were in such placements and strict safeguards were in place with appropriate risk assessments carried out. Ofsted was also informed about regular visits made, one daily and one weekly, whilst the search for placement was on-going.

With regards to a question as to why CEYP were NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), the Virtual School head explained the academic years 12 and 13 – Post 16. There were 97 Post 16 and 43 of them were unaccompanied and new to the country. Seventy six percent were either in employment, education, or training. In addition, some of the children had arrived late in the academic year, which meant that appropriate provisions were not in place immediately, with access to education being tailored to the young people's needs, but this was now in place for all. Every young person had a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place.

In relation to the data for 19-21 Education Employment and Training, which was below comparator groups, the Panel discussed that further consideration would have to be given as to what could be done to support this age group. One suggestion was to develop a skills plan for Slough to make a clear statement of what the Council was doing to support this group as corporate parents. For example, the CPP could work to ensure that all CEYP had opportunities to access work experience, apprenticeships and employment within the 'Family Business' (SCF/SBC), with each department prioritising the needs of CEYP in their service plans.

The Panel **Resolved** to: Note the Corporate Parenting Scorecard for June 2023 period.

9. Next Steps and Forward Plan

The Panel discussed the following:

- Provide some ideas about sufficiency placements by September.
- Change the start time of meetings to 5.30pm but start at 5pm if young people were attending a meeting, notified in advance of agenda despatch.
- The SCF Head of children Looked After & Support Services and Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency to bring forward planning proposal to the next meeting.
- The Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency would see whether the LGA could help facilitate a workshop in September.

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- Suggested the need for the voice of the child to be heard possibly through personal stories and videos, if not able to attend in person at the time.
- Publicity to send message out to all staff via the intranet, internal communication regarding CP role/responsibilities.
- Set up a consultation panel that can make recommendations to Cabinet and to hold lead members to account. Lead members had direct links to Cabinet.
- Aim to strengthen health navigator role, which was interim and no longer available, as the post was funded by the health service.
- Work with the Participation Officer to revisit and review the way young people could engage with the CPP.
- Meetings could take place at various venues, such as leisure centres to engage young people.

The SCF Head of Children Looked After & Support Services and Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency would meet with the Chair to discuss the September meeting.

The Panel **Resolved** to: Agree to progressing work on the 2023-2024 Forward Plan in September.

10. **Date of the next meeting: 26 October 2023**

The Panel agreed on an additional date on Thursday 21 September to progress the Forward Plan.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.02 pm and closed at 7.00 pm)