

Corporate Parenting Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 21st September, 2023.

Present:- Councillors Hulme (Chair), Dauti, Gill, Qaseem, Rana and Tomar

Non-Voting Members

Sue Butcher, Executive Director of People (Children) & CE of Slough Children First (SCF)

Liz Jones, Communities Group Manager (SBC)
NHS Frimley ICB

In Attendance:

Reshma Bessesar, Head of Service, Children Looked After (SCF)

Kay Jones, Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency (SCF)

Yemi Ukwenu, IFA Registered Manager (SCF)

Kate McCorriston, Head of Service, HR & OD (SCF)

Awais Raza, Performance Manager (SCF)

Saima Arif, Head of Regulated Services (SCF)

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Kelly and Lianne Garstang , Lynette Jones-Jardine,

PART 1

11. Declarations of Interest

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

12. Minutes of the last meeting held on 18 July 2023

The Panel Resolved to: Agree the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 as a correct record, subject to it being amended to note that:

- Cllr Rana was present at the meeting.
- The next meeting would be on 21 November, as a workshop would be held on 26 October date.

13. Changes to the CPP Terms of Reference - Draft for Consideration

The Panel considered a draft proposed revised Corporate Parenting (CPP) Terms of Reference (TOR). It noted that the amendments had been submitted following recommendation from the LGA review and alignment with best practice from other local authorities.

(Cllr Gill joined the meeting).

During discussion, the Panel made the following comments:

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- Welcomed the inclusion of the CPP vision and further expansion of the responsibilities of the Panel (At point 4). It was felt that this would provide a better understanding to new panel members.
- Noted recommended membership (At point 5) from all agencies, particularly strategic managers - key to strengthening the effectiveness of the panel. It was acknowledged that regular attendance was needed from all agencies and that the Chair would write to the Director of Housing regarding this issue.
- Highlighted that in July 2023, the Council had agreed to make care experience a protected characteristic.
- Accepted the increase in the frequency of meetings to bi-monthly, which equated to 6 meetings in the municipal year.

The Panel welcomed the changes and noted that once agreed, the proposed revised TOR would need to be agreed by the Member Panel for the Constitution and ratified at a Council meeting.

The Panel Resolved to: Agree the proposed Changes to the CPP Terms of Reference, subject to it being reported to and agreed by the Member Panel for the Constitution and ratified at a Council meeting.

14. Next Steps and Forward Plan:

The Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency introduced the Corporate Parenting Action Plan, and Annual reporting/participation themes papers.

Draft Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2023/24

Members were informed that the draft Action Plan was a live document which covered specific themed areas, and that a Task and Finish group (T & F) should be set up with strategic partners to work on implementing planned actions.

Members were encouraged to submit ideas and views to the Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency, on how the action plan could be developed further.

Areas requiring further development were highlighted as follows:

- Point 3 – Overarching Aim – Further Development of our Local Offer for CEYP (Care experienced young people). The Panel agreed that as care experience was now a protected characteristic, the category should be included under the equalities impact section of the Council's report template.

The Director of Children's Services Chief Executive SCF would take the suggestion to the senior leadership team.

It was noted that full details regarding the Care Leaver Local Offer was available at:

<https://www.sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk/care-leaver-local-offer/>

- Cllr Tomar made an offered of free cricket club membership to be included in the local offer.
- Point 4 - Overarching Aim – Ensure Active Participation and Engagement with our CLA (Children looked after) and CEYP.
- Point 3 – Overarching Aim – Themed activities linked to Pledges (to become promises).

The Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency would provide an updated version of the CPP Action Plan at the next meeting on 21 November 2023.

Annual Reporting/Participation Themes

Members noted the themed activities set out in the CPP Annual Reporting Schedule/Themed Topic, which provided a list of topics for each meeting and included forthcoming events throughout the year. The schedule also provided Panel members the opportunity, as champions, and as corporate parents to share the information with others as appropriate.

In respect of dates for the 2024 municipal year, these would be confirmed after the committee meeting dates had been agreed at Council in due course.

Members were invited to notify the Head of Service, Sufficiency & Permanency of any forthcoming events to be included in the schedule. The Neighbourhood Manager would send details regarding events at the leisure centre.

During discussion, the Panel agreed that some meetings would need to be arranged at informal settings to encourage young people to participate, and to share their views with Panel members.

The Panel Resolved to: To note the Next Steps and Forward Plan Including the Corporate Parenting Action Plan and the Annual reporting/participation themes.

15. Revised Corporate Parenting Panel Score Card

The Head of Service, Children Looked After and Support Service presented the revised CPP Score Card to August 2023, which had been simplified with reduced data.

The Panel's views and comments were sought on the revised format, which now also provided explanations.

Members reviewed the new format and made the following comments:

- Noted that there had been a reduction in CLAs to 231 compared to 244 in August (Aug) 2022.
- Asked for demographics to be presented in text rather than in graphics format.

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- Noted that the number of children entering care (Year to Date) had dropped from 64 in Aug 2022 to 32 in Aug 2023, whereas the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children had increase from 21 to 28 in the same comparative period.
- Requested data on the number of missing children, with explanation of where they were located. The Panel was advised that work was still in progress in this area, including the need to develop clear definitions of missing children, from children who had gone away.
- Acknowledged that 68% of exits from care were for positive reasons but asked for details to be provided about the position of the remaining 32% of children.

In answer to a question as to whether contingency plans were in place for missing children, it was explained that some children may have been adopted, placed in special guardianship order or moved into living independently.

The Panel Resolved to: To note the CPP Score card and comments on the revised format to be taken into account for the next CPP meeting.

16. Fostering Annual report

The Service Manager, Slough Children First (SCF), Independent Fostering agency, introduced the SCF Independent Fostering Agency 2022-23 Annual Report.

The report set out details of activities that had been undertaken to provide safe and secure foster care placements for children looked after (CLA). It also provided an overview of measures that had been taken to increase the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

During a presentation the following points were raised:

- There were 45 mainstream foster careering household and 81 individual foster carers on 31 March 2023.
- For single household foster carers, 36 were males and 45 females.
- The carers age ranged from 20-24 (the youngest) and 60 – 65 (the oldest) with the average between 40 and 49.
- Further work was needed to recruit more carers and for succession planning and management.
- The majority of carers were white British, which meant that ways of recruiting carers from diverse background needed to be further explored.
- The highest fostering requirement was for children aged 10 and over, whilst young people tended to remained with their foster carers through 'Staying Put' arrangements.
- There had been a recent celebration of the longest serving foster carer who had been fostering for 20 years.

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The Chair stated that such long term fostering achievements should be announced at a Council meeting and asked for the Service Manager, SCF Independent Fostering Agency to provide further details.

Members were informed that there were proposals to increase respite support for foster carers, as part of the Sufficiency Strategy, which had also led to the increase in Recruited Households to seven in 2023, compared to two in 2022. It was however acknowledged that much work was still needed to increase carers for difficult placements, such as large sibling groups. A wrap around service was being provided as part of the Retention of Carers and included training.

It was further noted that there had been 9 resignations post Covid and this included some foster carers who had returned to work. The SCF Independent Fostering Agency had received a rating of 'good' at the Ofsted inspection in 2021, with two specific requirements relating to panel and foster carer recording log claims.

The Panel Resolved to: To note SCF Independent Fostering Agency 2022-23 Annual Report.

17. **Discussion about LGA Workshop: CPP Vision, Aims and Best Practice Approach**

The date of the LGA workshop was confirmed as Thursday 26 October 2023 from 4.30pm to 7.30pm at the Curve, Slough.

18. **Members' Attendance Record**

The Panel Resolved to: Note the Members' attendance record.

19. **Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 21 November 2023**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 21 November 2023

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.37 pm and closed at 7.06 pm)