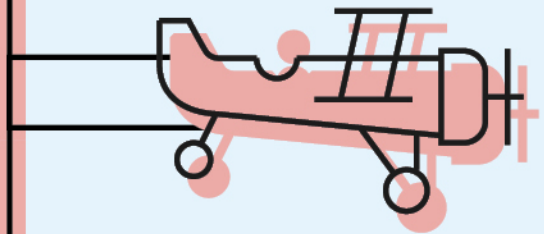


**Wiltshire Council
Corporate Parenting Panel
Annual report**

Q1 April 2023 – Q4 March 2024



Wiltshire Council

Full Council

23 July 2024

**Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel
April 2023 to March 2024**

Executive summary

This report forms the annual update to council from the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) in accordance with the council's constitution.

The role of Wiltshire's Corporate Parenting Panel is to secure Councillor involvement and commitment throughout the Council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who are in care or care experienced. All Councillors are reminded that they have responsibilities as a corporate parent for children and young people who are in our care, in Wiltshire.

The report gives an overview on the panel's work programme, the scrutiny of performance, the Corporate Parenting Strategy, as well as quantitative and qualitative information within the key service areas. Furthermore, it provides information following Ofsted's Inspection, the Panel's impact and ambition, and planned next steps to further strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.

This report covers the period from Q1 (April 2023) to Q4 (March 2024) 2023-24.

This report was reviewed by the Children' Select Committee Standing Task Group on 21 June 2024 and by the CPP on 25 June 2024.

The report highlights the extent of the activities that the Corporate Parenting Panel have overseen and robustly scrutinised to ensure that progress for our children in care and care experienced young people is strong and that they are supported to receive the best outcomes that they can. This was reflected in the findings following the OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services in September 2023 (which led to an overall grading of Outstanding) who identified the following:

"Leaders across the council are incredibly proud and motivated corporate parents. There is robust scrutiny of the development and impact of services for children in care and care leavers through a high-functioning corporate board. Children in care and care leavers take part in a regular programme of activities to help increase their confidence and life skills as well as influencing how services and support are developed and provided".

The CPP meets five times per year and has strong representation from across the Families and Children service teams and wider partners. This year saw the implementation of the new Corporate Parenting Strategy which was approved and adopted by Full Council in October 2023. The new strategy has five strategic priorities. Members of the Panel have a lead role for a strategic priority ensuring oversight and critical challenge. (**Appendix 2** shows reports considered at meetings and how they link to Strategic Priorities).

The new strategic priorities and the Member/Office and Voice Ambassador leads are detailed below:

1. To feel safe and happy in a stable home and in my local community Cllrs Peter Hutton and Mary Champion – Support Officer – Roxanne Devine – Voice Ambassador - Leioni
2. To be the best that I can be, to achieve personally and educationally throughout my life and be supported to engage with training and employment opportunities. (During 2023-24 this was Cllr Dominic Muns, now Cllr Nabil Najjar) - Support Officer – John Spring – Voice Ambassador – Paige
3. Ensuring my physical and emotional wellbeing is supported and at a time and place that suits me. Cllr Stewart Palmen – Support Officers – Sam Heathcote/Anne Gray - Voice Ambassador – Destiny
4. To have positive relationships with people who are important to me and for me to be part of my local community where I am trusted, respected, accepted and feel included. Cllr Laura Mayes – Support Officer – Michael Graham – Voice Ambassador – TBC
5. For my voice to be heard and for it to matter and influence decision making and drive change. Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney – Support Officers – Gary Norton-Sanders/Joe Sutton – Voice Ambassador – Krishnel

This report focuses on a number of areas which the CPP are proud of and want to highlight as a success this year:

- The Ofsted report highlighted that our children in care make good progress and live in stable homes. They are supported to stay healthy, to attend and to achieve in their education, to enjoy family time and to pursue their hobbies and interests. Children in care are supported by caring social workers who are proud of their children's achievements and social workers build enduring relationships with children and have high aspirations for them. Our care experienced young people are supported exceptionally well by caring and compassionate personal advisers who are determined in their efforts to provide the right support to help them to achieve their ambitions.
- Our Children in Care numbers are largely the same as previous years and Officers are pleased to report that performance particularly around communication and visits

and support and quality of assessment and reports has remained exceptionally strong and compared favourably with our statistical neighbours.

- The annual report of the Virtual School was shared in January 2024 and showed strong outcomes and the Virtual School Head is an active member of the CPP.
- In relation to our children and young people's health and wellbeing, last year a Standing Task Group raised and reviewed the issue of annual health and dental checks, and it is to be noted that this has improved over the last year. The Designated Doctor/Nurse team have carried out additional audits to look at the quality of support and this work will continue to progress.
- The Fostering and Kinship annual report will be shared with the CPP in September and foster carer numbers remain stable. There is an increase in kinship carers which is positive for our young people as this means that they are placed with other family members or other carers that know them well.
- We have continued to focus on the recruitment and retention of foster carers and Wiltshire are co-leading with Cornwall Council on the development and implementation of the Regional Recruitment and Retention Hub that went live in May 2024.
- The Care Experienced Hub (as recommended by Mark Riddell, Care Leaver Advisor for the DfE) was opened at a space in County Hall in January 2024 and provides a safe place for care experienced young people to drop in, take part in activities, meet with their PA or other professionals as needed.
- A number of projects have been progressed over the last year including Lifelong Links which supports young people who have been in care that do not have strong links with their families and helps them to build a network of support around them – this project is still in the early stages.
- The Voice and Participation annual report (**attached as appendix 4**) highlights what the team are proud of. There is an active Children in Care Council who take part in a range of activities and this demonstrates how we listen to their voices and how they can shape our services moving forward.
- The employment of 10 Voice Ambassadors is a strong positive and this has increased and enhanced the voice of our young people within the service through their involvement in recruitment/interviews/fostering panels/consultation and attending the CPP.
- The annual Star Awards event gives the opportunity to celebrate the successes of our children and young people with nominations being made by those who know them well. These events are incredibly well attended and showcase the talent and progress of our children and young people in care.

- The Dragons Den style feedback event held in April 2024 (next one due for October 2024) provides young people with the opportunity to scrutinise Officers/Members on the progression of the strategic priorities – with positive feedback and helpful suggestions to review and respond to.
- We have experienced challenges in respect of placement sufficiency in Wiltshire and as a council we are passionate and want to be able to offer all our young people suitable accommodation within Wiltshire. This year we have implemented a range of initiative and projects to ensure that we progress with this.
- Full Council approved capital investment of £10.560m earlier this year to provide housing for 68 care experienced and asylum-seeking young people which will enable us to provide accommodation and commission providers at reduced rates along with providing smaller residential accommodation for children and young people with complex needs.
- The CPP is fully sighted on these challenges and continues to monitor the service so that they maintain and improve strong performance across the board and ensure that targets are consistently achieved in order to improve strong outcomes for our children and young people.
- Our key priorities for the next 12 months include improving the educational outcomes and progress and to increase the access to a range of training and employment opportunities for the young people, whilst continuing to progress the voice and participation of children in care and build on existing relationships with Councillors and officers.
- The effectiveness of this support is highlighted in feedback received from one of our young people:

“I just wanted to send my thank you to the entire team who have helped me to attend university. The support has not gone unnoticed. Please let them know how grateful I am to have access higher education, this would not have been possible without you and them. You guys were acknowledged in my dissertation “Thank you to my corporate parents (Wiltshire Council) for funding my degree, without you this would not be possible. I express my gratitude for the endless support. I don’t have much to say but thank you for everything, I know I can never repay you guys but you have truly changed my life for the better. I am blessed to have had you guys with me on my education and personal journey”

An acronym list is included as **appendix 1** to this report.

Attached as **appendix 5** to this report is the young person version of the annual report which will be shared with our children and young people.

Proposals

1. To receive and note the Annual Report and the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to date, its functions and impact of its work and to ratify the improvements required to further strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.
2. To receive and note the Annual Report of the Child and Youth Voice Team from April 2023 to March 2024, attached as **appendix 4** to this report.

Reasons for proposals

All Councillors have responsibilities as a corporate parent for children and young people who are in our care in Wiltshire. This includes responsibility for ensuring that the voices of children and young people continue to be heard and understood by Members, Officers and all Corporate Parents, whilst ensuring these opinions are fully reflected in practice improvement.

Lucy Townsend

Corporate Director – People/Director of Children’s Services

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

23 July 2024

**Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel
April 2023 to March 2024**

Purpose of Report

1. This report forms the annual update to Council from the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
2. The report captures the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for children in care and care experienced adults. The report outlines the key principles and priorities for the Council as Corporate Parents, including a review of the performance data and activity aligned with this. The meetings relate to the strategic objectives as agreed by children and young people and elected members.

Background

3. Corporate parenting principles require all departments within a local authority including staff, elected members and partner agencies to recognise their role as a corporate parent and encourage them to look at the support and services they provide. The principles are:
 - To act in the best interest and promote the physical, mental health and wellbeing of children and young people looked after;
 - To encourage children and young people looked after to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - To consider the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people looked after;
 - To help children and young people looked after to gain access to, and make the best use of, the services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for children and young people looked after;
 - To ensure children and young people looked after are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education and/or workplace;
 - To prepare children and young people looked after for adulthood and independent living.
4. All Councillors have responsibilities as a corporate parent for children and young people who are in care in Wiltshire and the role of Wiltshire's Corporate Parenting Panel is to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who are in care or care experienced through the following:

- Scrutinise and challenge how the Council performs in delivering its services as a Corporate Parent
 - Engage effectively, with energy, consistency, and confidence with children and young people so that their voice is heard and has influence
 - Support and enable children and young people to challenge where services need to improve
 - Maintain a comprehensive overview of the progress of children who are looked after and care experienced, ensuring they consistently scrutinise the quality, effectiveness and performance of the services that support them.
5. To ensure consistency the corporate parenting strategic priorities provide the basis of the strategic oversight by the corporate parenting panel. The Corporate Parenting Strategy was last reviewed during 2023 and was approved by Full Council on 17 October 2023.
6. The new strategy has five strategic priorities. Members of the Panel have a lead role for a strategic priority ensuring oversight and critical challenge. The new strategic priorities and the Councillor/Officer and Voice Ambassador leads are detailed below:
- To feel safe and happy in a stable home and in my local community Cllrs Peter Hutton and Mary Champion – Support Officer – Roxanne Devine – Voice Ambassador - Leioni
 - To be the best that I can be, to achieve personally and educationally throughout my life and be supported to engage with training and employment opportunities. (During 2023-24 this was Cllr Dominic Muns, now Cllr Nabil Najjar) - Support Officer – John Spring – Voice Ambassador – Paige
 - Ensuring my physical and emotional wellbeing is supported and at a time and place that suits me. Cllr Stewart Palmen – Support Officers – Sam Heathcote/Anne Gray - Voice Ambassador – Destiny
 - To have positive relationships with people who are important to me and for me to be part of my local community where I am trusted, respected, accepted and feel included. Cllr Laura Mayes – Support Officer – Michael Graham – Voice Ambassador – TBC
 - For my voice to be heard and for it to matter and influence decision making and drive change. Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney – Support Officers – Gary Norton-Sanders/Joe Sutton – Voice Ambassador – Krishnel
7. Wiltshire Corporate Parents are responsible for 468 children in care (end of Q4 2023) and 340 care experienced young people (1 aged 16, 74 aged 17-18, 186 aged 19-21 and 79 aged 22–25). Of those children in our care, 20% are voluntarily accommodated (children who came into care with parental agreement), with the remaining children subject to an Interim or Full Care Order which means legally we have overriding parental responsibility for them.
8. The 2023/24 Wiltshire rate of 44 per 10,000 children aged 0-17 years remains significantly below the latest published rates (2022/23) for our statistical neighbours

(67 per 10,000) and the National average (71 per 10,000). This is positive and a result of our strong prevention work enabling children and young people to safely remain within their families.

9. The OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services in September 2023 graded the service we offer to our children and families in Wiltshire as Outstanding. In respect of corporate parenting, the findings recognised that:

"Leaders across the council are incredibly proud and motivated corporate parents. There is robust scrutiny of the development and impact of services for children in care and care leavers through a high-functioning corporate board. Children in care and care leavers take part in a regular programme of activities to help increase their confidence and life skills as well as influencing how services and support are developed and provided".

10. Councillors Mary Champion, Ernie Clark, Peter Hutton, (Chair), Simon Jacobs, Laura Mayes, Dominic Muns (Vice Chair), Stewart Palmen, and Sam Pearce-Kearney formed the membership of the Panel during the period April 2023 to March 2024.
11. The Lead Officer was Netty Lee (Head of Children in Care and Young People's Service) from April to July 2023 and from August 2023 the Lead Officer was Katrina McJannet (Head of Children in Care and Young People's Service).

Work Programme over the last 12 months:

12. The Corporate Parenting Panel meets five times per year and during each meeting scrutinises performance through exceptions reporting, placement sufficiency, placement budget position and receives updates from the Voice and Participation Service.
13. Children in Care Council (CiCC) representatives from across the partnership and Voice Ambassadors are invited to attend each Panel meeting and provide invaluable opinion and direction.
14. Panel members also oversee a range of topics from across the council and the following reports were received and reviewed by panel members over the last 12 months:
 - Annual Report of the Child and Youth Voice Team
 - Wiltshire Fostering Annual Report
 - Missing Children and Young People
 - Annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officers
 - National Care Leavers Covenant overview
 - Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People
 - Education Results update from the Virtual School and Annual Fostering Report 2022-23
 - Grandmentors scheme update (six monthly)
 - Independent Visitor Scheme Review of Service 2022-23

- Update on the progress of recommendations of the Child Practice Safeguarding Review: Long term sexual abuse of Children in Care
- Adoption Service Year End Report 2022-23
- Second Phase Review into Children Residing in Independent Special Schools
- Staying Close Project Overview and 6 monthly updates
- Update from Connect (Substance Misuse) Service
- Outstanding Ofsted Overview
- Annual Report on the Health of Looked After Children 2022-23
- Annual Report of the Virtual School Head
- CAMHS In-Reach Overview – six monthly
- Care Proceedings ending and Special Guardianship Orders granted during Quarters 1 and 2 2023-24
- Bi-annual update on Children Looked After placed more than 20 miles from home (twice during the year)

The frequency of reporting and details of all reports considered matched up with the strategic priorities is attached as **appendix 2** to this report.

Scrutiny of Performance

15. There are two aspects to the scrutiny function of the Panel; the receipt of reports relating to the identified priorities (the resulting analysis and discussion) and the scrutiny of performance data.
16. At each meeting an exception report (see **appendix 3** for the 2023-2024 dataset) is presented by the Head of Service for those indicators which are outside the expected range or below the required target level and successes are acknowledged. This exception report is also scrutinised within monthly team Performance and Outcomes Group (POG) meetings and Quarterly by the Director of Families and Children's Services within Performance SMT. These reports are also received by the Performance and Outcomes Board, chaired by the Corporate Director of People/DCS with attendance by elected Members.

Children in Care Teams:

17. OFSTED findings from the inspection in highlighted that children in care make good progress and live in stable homes. They are supported to stay health, to attend and to achieve in their education, to enjoy family time and to pursue their hobbies and interests. Children in care are supported by caring social workers who are proud of their children's achievements and social workers build enduring relationships with children and have high aspirations for them".
18. We have 468 young people in our care (Q4) which is up slightly on the 467 at the end of Q3 but still within our expected range. 17 of these are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. At the end of Q4, 62% are placed within the boundaries of Wiltshire. 35% of children are placed >20 miles from home which is within target (34-37%), with 14% of these still within the Wiltshire boundary close to local connections including birth family. At the same point last year (2022-23), 60% were placed within Wiltshire, 34% were placed > 20 miles from home, with 11% of these still within the

local authority boundary. In 2022-23, the same figures for our comparator groups were England - 56%, 21% and 4%, statistical neighbours – 59%, 32% and 11% and Good+ authorities – 51%, 20% and 6%. This shows that whilst a greater number of children are placed more than 20 miles from home in Wiltshire than national and Good+ authorities, our figures are aligned more closely with our statistical neighbours, authorities with similar population geographies. A weekly Placement Panel oversees all placement changes and tracks our care experienced young people destinations monthly.

19. Two-year stability decreased slightly in Q4 from 67% to 66% and is below the target range (75-82%). Wiltshire has historically performed very well for this indicator and our target has always been set higher than our comparators evidencing our ambition to continually improve. All placement moves are reviewed, with an increase in carers giving notice (across all placement types but particularly Independent Fostering Agencies and Residential). This is linked to the national marketplace challenges that are well known. For in-house foster carers, detailed exit interviews are undertaken by Fostering Independent Reviewing Officers and analysis presented at POGs. The Conference and Reviewing Service is now taking a lead for placement stability, providing increased oversight and monitoring by IROs. Wiltshire continues to perform in line with Good+ authorities (68).
20. Performance in the Children in Care teams is strong across a range of our performance indicators as follows: Placement Plans and PEPs completion rate at 95% and 94% respectively at end of March 2024 and 3+ placements in past year (NI 62) has stayed low at 6.1% and is within target range. Despite this we are conducting an audit in relation to children who have had 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months to provide additional insight, given the significant challenge any placement breakdown can produce in this sufficiency climate.
21. CLA statutory visits in time is 91% for the period 2023-24 (performance target is 90%) for our Children in Care teams and review timeliness and participation performance remains strong. Exceptions reporting is in place for any visit outside of this target to ensure that reasons are known.

Children Through Care Teams:

22. Personal Advisors are allocated at 15 years and 9 months to aid with positive transitions when a young person's social worker ends intervention at age 18. Wiltshire has 340 care experienced young people in March 2024 (end of Q4) which is a small increase from the 326 reported in December 2023. We now have a Senior Personal Advisor in each of the children in care teams to increase management oversight and support to PAs as well as an emotional well-being PA in each team to work alongside PAs to provide additional and focussed support to young people where necessary.
23. The OFSTED inspection graded the experience and progress of care leavers as Outstanding, and the findings recognised that “Care Leavers are exceptionally well supported by caring and compassionate personal advisors who are determined in their efforts to provide the right support to help them achieve their ambitions. Care leavers are supported in their education, training, apprenticeship and employment

and they are helped to pursue further and higher education and benefit from support packages to help them achieve further qualifications”.

24. The effectiveness of this support is highlighted below in feedback received from one of our young people:

“I just wanted to send my thank you to the entire team who have helped me to attend university. The support has not gone unnoticed. Please let them know how grateful I am to have access higher education, this would not have been possible without you and them.

You guys were acknowledged in my dissertation “Thank you to my corporate parents (Wiltshire Council) for funding my degree, without you this would not be possible. I express my gratitude for the endless support.

I don’t have much to say but thank you for everything, I know I can never repay you guys but you have truly changed my life for the better. I am blessed to have had you guys with me on my education and personal journey”.

25. We are tenacious in keeping in touch with our care experienced young people and continue to perform highly regarding being in-touch, 98% for age 19-21 and 99% for age 22+. Checks continue for all those with an in-touch status not recorded. Our monthly Education Employment and Training (EET) panel targets care experienced young people not in education, employment and training and we have a whole Council offer for work experience opportunities and apprenticeships. At the end of Q4 2023/24 we were just below our target of 65% for EET for age 17-18 at 63% but above our target of 55% for ages 19-21 at 55%. Our annual reconciliation as part of our statutory data return will show improved performance figures as data entry omissions, errors and recording delays are resolved. Final reconciled figures will be presented in our Q1 exceptions report. Colleagues from Employment and Skills Participation Team and Children in Care teams consistently discuss the needs of our young people to ensure that there is robust oversight of this, and quarterly exceptions reporting provides additional oversight. The teams are also in the process of reviewing what else can be done throughout the academic year to maximise the information gathered. Our first Careers Fair took place at the care leavers hub on 29 May.
26. Despite challenges in supported accommodation sufficiency and pressures on housing stock post covid, we continue to support young people in suitable accommodation. In suitable accommodation for age 19-21 and age 22+ is at 93% and 95% respectively and within target range.
27. Our homelessness prevention Personal Advisor works closely with Housing colleagues and has developed an information protocol for the sharing of pertinent information from the Pathway Plan with housing at the point of a housing application. A monthly care experienced young people accommodation destination panel (CLAD) discusses, plans, and tracks accommodation options for specific young people aged 16 and over.

Health and Wellbeing:

28. Our 903 Census 2022/2023 return notes that 92% of children received annual health checks and 84% received annual dental checks which continues our improvement on previous years. We have added mandatory fields for health, immunisations, dental and optical checks for all children in care reviews on our electronic database system to ensure that these are recorded ahead of all reviews and has improved oversight.
29. Annual performance for our children is as follows:
- Percentage of CLA who have had an annual health assessment in the last 12 months was 92%
 - Percentage of CLA who have had an annual dental check in the last 12 months was 84%
 - Percentage of CLA whose immunisations are up to date was 85%
 - Percentage of CLA with a completed Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) score of those aged between 4 and 16 was 87%

All of these are significantly higher than both national and statistical neighbour comparators.

30. Wiltshire continues to perform above the national average in all the health KPI's, although it was acknowledged that there was more work to do on dental checks. Commissioning for NHS dentists moved from NHS England to the ICB's in April 2023 and the Designated Nurses had been working with the commissioners to improve access to NHS dental services.
31. Quarterly performance data is shared through exception reporting and provided for all children not receiving an Initial Health Assessment (IHA) within timescale, this is oversighted by POG/POB and Corporate Parenting Panel. IHA performance remains an area of scrutiny with the ICB and commissioned provider, with monthly meetings in place to monitor improvements.
32. Improvement in Initial Health Checks can be seen over the last 2 quarters. For those children placed within County the majority received appointments within 28-working days 86% (19/22) and 95% within 35-working days (delays were due to a] one having a change of placement b] one purposeful delay to accommodate mock exams and c] UASC who had been missing from placement). For those children placed out of County, 26% (5/19) received an appointment within 28-days and 42% (8/19) within 35-working days. Following an audit by the Designated Nurse to review the quality and timeliness of IHAs, a review showed delays were due the capacity of doctors out of area, impacted further through strike action.
33. Where we encounter areas where there is a delay due to capacity, or failure to get back to us with an offer of an appointment, there is now a clear escalation process in place to challenge other areas that were not meeting the statutory duty to complete health assessments within timescale. We have monthly meetings with commissioners, BSW ICB, with the service lead attending to ensure we continue to work together to improve completions within 28 days. This remains an area of focus.

34. A new IHA form is being prepared and that would likely see changes in the way reports are then presented and Review Health Assessments are now written to be more child friendly. A further IHA audit has been repeated in April 2024 and findings from this will be shared at CPP in June 2024.

Missing Children:

Summary by Year/YTD - KPIs for Wilts CLA	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Number of Wilts CLA who went missing	60	54	56	56	64
Total number of Wilts CLA in year	629	585	563	595	624
<i>% of all Wilts CLA who went missing</i>	10%	9%	10%	9%	10%
Number of Missing Episodes for Wilts CLA	314	261	258	220	298
<i>Average number of episodes per CLA who went missing</i>	5.2	4.8	4.6	3.9	4.7
Number of episodes where RI offered for Wilts CLA	287	251	208	196	280
<i>% of episodes where RI offered</i>	91%	96%	81%	89%	94%
Number of RI accepted for Wilts CLA	217	188	156	142	178
<i>% of RI offered that were accepted</i>	76%	75%	75%	72%	64%

35. Regular reviews of missing children take place within the Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) panel providing oversight; additional resources have enabled the Emerald (exploitation and missing team) structure to scale up impact upon the missing agenda for all children.

36. During 2023-24 we have seen a return almost to pre-Covid levels for missing incidents and the number of individual children reported missing. The proportion who are children in care has remained stable and the number of children reported missing on more than 12 occasions has also held steady and is lower than previous years (except for 21-22). In 23-24 the number of looked after children who went missing at least once was 64 (10% of the children in care cohort) and this includes both those placed in Wiltshire and those out of county. The percentage of return interviews offered for children in care in 2023-24 was 94% with those accepting 64%, further analysis of the reasons for this was undertaken in Q4 which provided assurance in relation to the decline in the missing return interviews seen during the previous quarter. Exceptions reporting highlighted that 14 episodes related to the same young person and the reasons for their missing episodes were well known by the professional network supporting them and steps to reduce the risks were in place.

37. We continue to undertake quarterly reviews of missing reports, and these are scrutinised within POGs and SMT on a quarterly basis, as well as the SVPP Child exploitation subgroup and Corporate Parenting Panel.

Fostering and Kinship Service:

38. The annual Fostering report is currently being prepared and is being presented to the Performance and Outcomes Board and to Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2024.

39. Recruitment and retention remains a key priority for the team and we have continued to maintain the high response rate to contacts (response on same working day). We have a current total of 156 in-house foster carers and kinship carers (of which 34 are kinship carers) and a total of 259 children placed in these arrangements, which equates to 56% of the full cohort.
40. The number of active Kinship carers has continued to increase with Q4 seeing a particular rise from 9 in the previous quarter to 46 in Q4 and the number of Kinship carers with temporary approval is 23.
41. Occupancy rates for our in-house foster placements remains high at 88% and we continue to focus heavily on foster care recruitment and retention. We have seen a significant increase in contacts received in Q4 (168 compared with 73 in Q3) of which 17 are progressing to an assessment (compared with 8 in Q3).
42. To further increase the number of fostering households in Wiltshire, we are co-leading with Cornwall Council the development and implementation of the Regional Recruitment and Retention Hub which went live in May 2024. This is a national programme funded by the Department for Education which we successfully bid for.
43. Our fostering assessments are good quality as evidenced through quality assurance, feedback from panel and the agency decision maker. Compliance with Annual Reviews for foster carers being held within 12 months continues to be very strong and is consistently above 90% or higher (97% at end of Q4). The introduction of Fostering Independent Reviewing Officers (FIROs) has delivered independent scrutiny, feedback and this support and has been welcomed by our foster carers.
44. The FIROs are managed by our Conference and Reviewing Service and the function is developing positively, helping us to drive and maintain high standards. We have two full-time FIROs who undertake the foster carers annual reviews, lead on investigation reports following any significant concerns/allegations against foster carers and conduct exit interviews with carers who are leaving their employment. 15 exit interviews were completed during the year and the Fostering Team Manager reviews them to identify any themes, learning or action required.
45. Following the recent Fostering audit undertaken by SWAP the findings of exit interviews will be reported to POG on a quarterly basis starting in Q1. This will identify numbers of carers who have been de-registered in that quarter, number offered an exit interview, number who took up the offer, reasons for leaving and any themes. We also report on the reasons why carers are de-registered in the annual Kinship and Fostering performance report and the Wiltshire Fostering annual report which will be presented to the Corporate Parenting panel in September.
46. KPIs for foster carers continues to be consistently strong across 2023-24 and at the end of Q4, unannounced visits were 99%, DBS checks 99%, Medicals for primary carers at 96% and Health and safety checks at 92%. Social Worker supervision was at 100%.
47. In respect of Private Fostering, there continues to be a clear and detailed awareness raising action plan. The five-year rolling average for new notifications is 44; in

2022/23 we received 45. In Q3 we received 13 notifications, the same as in Q2. Of the 13 notifications, 10 were applicable for initial visits and 100% were completed within seven days of notification. We continue to support children to move onto permanency and in Q3 we had 5 private fostering carers in the process of an assessment for a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and 1 in the process of a child arrangement order (CAO). Becoming a child in care and implementing an SGO allows for ongoing support from the Kinship and Fostering team, even after the child's 16th birthday.

48. To thank our carers for their dedication we are held a celebratory event in September 2023, which is in addition to the STAR awards for our children in care held in April 2024.

Our Virtual School

49. Latest DfE published data for Wiltshire Virtual School educational outcomes (2024) is included below:

Indicator	Wiltshire	National	South West	National (All CLA)
% of CLA 12M looked after with an EHCP Plan	44.90%	30.80%	37.70%	27.80%
% of CLA 12M with suspension in Academic Year (All CLA Stat School Age)	10.60%	12.22%	14.06%	12.99%
% of CLA 12M with Permanent Exclusion in Current Academic Year (All CLA Stat School Age)	0.00%	0.06%	0.00%	0.13%
% Overall Absence CLA 12 M	8.20%	8.30%	9.40%	9.80%
% Authorised Absence CLA 12M	6.50%	5.30%	6.50%	6.10%
% Unauthorised Absence CLA 12M	1.70%	3.00%	2.90%	3.70%
% Persistently absent CLA 12M	19.60%	20.00%	23.40%	24.30%
% Severely Absent CLA 12M	6.20%	4.90%	6.10%	6.20%
% of pupils achieving the end of KS2 expected standard in reading, writing and maths (CLA 12 months)	59%	55%	59%	36%
% of pupils achieving the end of KS2 expected standard in reading (CLA 12 months)	59%	55%	59%	54%
% of pupils achieving the end of KS2 expected standard in writing (CLA 12 months)	44%	48%	52%	47%
% of pupils achieving the end of KS2 expected standard in maths (CLA 12 months)	59%	51%	51%	50%
Average Attainment 8 score for KS4 pupils (CLA 12 months)	22.80	19.40	18.20	18.40
Average Progress 8 score for KS4 pupils (CLA 12 months)	-1.17	-1.26	-1.29	-1.39
% of KS4 pupils achieving GCSE Grade 4 or higher in English and maths (CLA 12 months)	24.20%	20.00%	19.20%	18.60%

50. Overall outcomes are strong in comparison to the national average for children in care (12 months+).
51. An average Attainment 8 measure of 22.8 for Wiltshire was published, which is higher than the national average (19.4) and the South West (18.2). The average Progress 8 score for Wiltshire is -1.17, which reflects performance that is better than the national average (-1.26) and the South West (-1.29). Attainment for KS4 (Year 11) achieving a grade 9-4 in English and Maths was 24.2%, which is higher than the national average (20%) and the South West (19.2%).
52. Pupils achieving the end of KS2 (Year 6) expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) was 59%, which is higher than the national average (55%) and in line with the South West (59%).
53. Rates of suspension were 10.6%, which is better than the national average (12.22%) and the South West (14.06%). Overall absence was 8.2%, which is better than the national average (8.3%) and the South West (9.4%).

54. The Virtual School has a robust attendance process that was amended in the summer term 22-23 in preparation for the start of this academic year. VSOs are informed about absence directly via email from Welfare Call (who obtain our daily attendance directly from schools/settings). Where attendance intervention is required, VSOs record this through the CLA attendance intervention trackers which are then regularly reviewed by SLT to ensure effect action is being taken to address the barriers to positive attendance.
55. Through effective governance (including two Virtual School POGs focused specifically on attendance during 23-24), it has been identified that a bespoke Virtual School Education Welfare Officer (EWO) would support with additional capacity to address attendance code discrepancies and complete attendance support plans with identified CLA as an escalation beyond the existing professional network (e.g. VSO/Social Worker/Designated Teacher etc). This role commences in June 2024 and will be one day per week.
56. A total of 113 (36.5%) of our children in care are placed out of area and 50 (44%) of those have an EHCP. To ensure that there is no educational delay for any young people placed out of Wiltshire the Virtual School has works closely with SEND colleagues to ensure effective collaboration. The VSH has also recently joined the South-West SEND Strategic Group as a representative for CLA.
57. The virtual school oversees the payment of the higher education bursary to our eligible Care Experienced Young People; in 2023 we were supporting 27 young people via the HE bursary. Over the last two years we have seen our highest ever numbers of Care Experienced Young People accessing Higher Education (as measured by bursary eligibility). The Post 16 virtual school officers work closely with PAs to provide accurate signposting to HE support, thus providing information on the support available at colleges and universities across the UK.
58. The quality of personal education plans (PEPs) remains strong and continues to increase towards 100% graded as good (green). There is a clear process in place for quality assurance that utilises a rubric to enable RAG rating for each section of the PEP and therefore clear feedback for Designated Teachers about how to achieve green. In addition, PEPs that are graded as amber or red on first submission are discussed during the Virtual School weekly keeping in touch (KIT) meeting and the VSH liaises directly with VSOs and schools as appropriate to address any issues. Half-termly PEP audits are completed by the VSH and Senior VSO to ensure PEP quality remains strong and to identify any thematic issues that can be resolved through Virtual School team meetings or Designated Teacher networks. In the recent ILACS, Ofsted recognised the quality of PEPs and that they help schools to plan for and to meet the needs of children well. PEP quality progress is summarised in the table below:

59.

PEPs RAG	Green
Autumn 22-23	87.9%
Spring 22-23	89.5%
Summer 22-23	91.4%
Autumn 23-24	96.1%
Spring 23-24	98.9%

Children's Voices and Participation:

60. The Voice and Participation Service takes a relationship-based approach that focusses on building meaningful relationships with the young people to build trust and support. The participants have the opportunity to attend residential holidays and activity days which also enables them to make friends that they will be able to keep throughout their care journeys. The team has also supported those members who want to share their experience to make a podcast where they interview staff members providing a valuable learning opportunity for the directorate enabling workers to make positive changes to their practice [CiCC Cast Episode 2: Life in Foster Care - CiCC Cast | Podcast on Spotify](#). The annual report of the Voice and Participation Team for 2023-24 is attached as **appendix 4** to this report.
61. We have an active Children in Care Council with 46 children attending since 2021. These sessions are activity-based and fun, and they not only help us hear the views of our children in care, but they also help participants to make friends and feel part of a community. Over the year, 48 different children in care participated in CiCC sessions, consisting of 25 females and 23 males. Additionally, 27 new CiCC members were recruited during this year, reflecting the growing interest and engagement among children in care. The average age of attendees was 14 years old. The age range was 8 years old to 21 years old. With the older cohort who are 18+ not attending the groups but supporting with initiatives such as the Foster Carer Panels and interviews.
62. The team organised and facilitated a diverse range of activities in collaboration with Council leisure services, community partners and charities. Noteworthy activities included climbing, water sports, horse riding, drama sessions, and two residential experiences, one at PGL Activity Centre and another as a trip to Cornwall. These experiences aimed to provide opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and fostering positive and meaningful relationships.
63. Feedback from Care Experienced adults was sought as part of the review of the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) priorities. Members highlighted the need for consistent and stable support systems, we know in Wiltshire we are stronger in this area compared to other local authorities.

64. The participants often felt different from their peers due to the number of professionals involved in their lives and the frequency of meetings they had to attend. The majority (80%) of members reported having a loving home and good relationships and none stated not having a loving home. 60% of CiCC members reported having links with their local communities where they were trusted, and none reported a lack of local community connections. A significant majority (90%) felt they had support to maintain their physical and mental well-being and be the best versions of themselves. Feedback was beneficial and in main shows that we are on a positive trajectory in the eyes of our CiCC members, there is a further opportunity to gain a greater understanding of all children in care as we pursue the Bright Spot's surveys in 2023/2024.
65. Preliminary findings from the Bright Spots Survey highlight both successes and areas for development in the care system in Wiltshire. Children and young people in care generally report positive relationships with their foster carers, with 100% of children aged 4-7, 96% of children aged 8-11, and 94% of young people aged 11-17 trusting the adults they live with. Safety is another strong point, with 88% of children and young people feeling 'always' safe, surpassing the general population's 82%. However, challenges remain, such as ensuring children know their social worker and addressing the issue of bullying, with 30% of young people aged 11-17 feeling afraid of going to school. Additionally, understanding the reasons for being in care is lower than desired, particularly among the youngest children. The care leaver survey underscores these mixed results, showing that while 94% feel involved in their pathway planning, issues like loneliness and high anxiety are more prevalent compared to their peers.
66. We have increased the engagement of children in care to 49 young people, and successfully embedded Mind of My Own app use, with Wiltshire being a top user nationally.
67. We have 12 employed Youth Ambassadors who have lived experience of social care have been recruited to assist consultations, inspections, training, and interviews.
68. A Young Persons Fostering Consultation Panel has been set up to support the recruitment of foster carers and help prepare applicants for supporting the children and young people that live with them. The young person's feedback is shared at the main Fostering Panel and is taken seriously when making final decisions on whether the applicant is approved.
69. The work of the team, generated via co-production with our children and families, shapes, enables, and informs our work and is championed by our councillors with regular and frequent scrutiny of activity and impact through our Corporate Parenting Panels.
70. We also routinely involve young people in evaluating the work we do in Corporate Parenting panel, for example, a Dragons Den event took place April 2024 where a Councillor and Support Officers presented to our young people what we do to meet Strategic Priority number 1 – To feel safe and happy in a stable home and in my local community.

71. Our annual Star Awards in April 2024 gave us the opportunity to celebrate the successes of our cared for and care experienced children and young people at a shared event with nominations being made by Teachers, Personal Advisors and Social Workers across three categories and age groups:

- Smashed It! – for those young people who have overcome significant challenges, have done something special in their lives or have proactively excelled in their personal development (e.g. sports, hobbies, character building).
- Future Pioneers! – for young people who have made progress in their education or are excelling in employment, and
- Taking Part! – for young people who have done something to help others in their community.

From a foster carer who attended the event with their children:

“On behalf of NH / HH and I please accept our sincere thanks for allowing us to be part of a wonderful event.

*I didn't know what to expect, however I can honestly say I was completely blown away - whoever organised the evening also deserves a Certificate.
When the boys names were called out, I very nearly fell off my Chair - my heart swells with so much love for them.*

All of the children were super amazing 🤩 they have obviously been through so very much, however they have all gained the confidence to become amazing young people which they should be incredibly proud of 🙌🙌🙌🙌

Once again thank you so very much.”

72. The IRO and Conference and Reviewing Service Annual Report for 2023-24 will be presented to Corporate Parenting Panel in September 2024. The work and impact described in this assists the Panel to understand how children and young people are best supported.

73. The report shows that Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) chaired a total of 1193 reviews and 98% were held on time. This is an improvement from 94% last year and 89% the year before. When a child can contribute directly to their review and it is held on time, the likelihood is that the arrangement will be better, difficulties can be identified and resolved more quickly, and children will have a positive family experience living with their foster carers and enjoying opportunities to achieve and succeed. The report showed that in the year 2022-23, 95% children and young people participated in their reviews. This is the same as 2020-21 and an increase from 89% from 2019-20.

Our Adoption Service

74. The Wiltshire Council Adoption Service 2022–23 Year End report was submitted to Cabinet on 10 October 2024 and was presented to the CPP on 21 November 2023

and thus information in respect of performance for adoption will not be repeated in this report. The Annual Report for 2024 will be submitted to Cabinet later this year.

Canons House Children's Residential Respite

75. Canons House is our registered children's home, following recruitment challenges impacting on occupancy levels we are pleased that we have in Q4 now achieved 100% staffing and have recently increased occupancy. 30 children currently access overnight short breaks with allocations of between 12 and 24 nights per year. Suitability assessments are planned for three new children. We are open 6 days a week with a decision to remain closed on Mondays to support staff development and training. The Padlet system went live in Q3 2022/23 and enables interactive communication between home and carers with positive feedback received. Transitions Thursday has been introduced, where young people progressing their independence skills are together overnight as part of transition planning.
76. In November 2023 Ofsted conducted a full inspection of Canons House the inspection (report published on the 22 January 2024) judged that overall experiences and progress of children and young people is Good, improving on the previous Requires Improvement rating.

Link to strategic priorities – achievements in the last 12 months:

77. We have continued to develop our care experienced young people app called 'Our Words' updating our 15 'guarantees' and signposting care experienced young people to support and employment opportunities. We have joined the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum, promoting the development of quality leaving care services with member authorities and partner organisations. Wiltshire is working with the Southwest regional collaboration to build, design and publish a Regional Core Offer for our care experienced young people so that our care experienced young people do not receive different support dependent upon their post code.
78. We have a specific care experienced young people action plan in place to focus our planning and progression in this area. In January 2023, Cabinet agreed Band 1 priority for housing for all Wiltshire Council care experienced young people, who are either relevant children or former relevant children to whom the Council owes duties under the Children Act, up to the age of 25, when it is confirmed that they are ready to move on into independent accommodation. In each case, a joint assessment of the care experienced young person's ability to live independently under their Pathway Plan will have been performed by Children's Service and the Housing Department, with an independent living assessment agreed with the care experienced young person for prospective landlords. Where the care experienced young person has a tenancy with the Council or a private registered provider, and their housing circumstances mean that they have a housing need under this policy, a further housing application will be treated in the same way as the application of another transfer applicant. It was also agreed that our care experienced young people will have an enduring Wiltshire Council local connection to the area up to the age of 25.

79. We continue to work on proposals to ensure no Care Experienced Adult is deemed intentionally homeless in line with new guidance. For those young people turning 18 on or after 1 April 2023 we have uplifted the care experienced young people grant from £2,000 to £3,000. The joint housing protocol for care experienced young people was approved and training and rollout to staff took place in March 2024.
80. The introduction of a whole Council offer for work experience for children in care and care experienced young people is a significant step and we offer a guaranteed interview to any Wiltshire care experienced young person or looked after child who applies for an apprenticeship or internal vacancies with the council, provided that they meet the essential criteria and declare their status on the application form.
81. From March 2023 to end of March 2024 we had 587 declared care experienced young people apply for roles in the council, with the majority of applications (415) being received from November 2023 onwards follow the re-launch of the new careers site; 23 were offered roles within the council. We received eight requests for work experience, two have been completed (one in IT and one in Comms, marketing and events) six we were unable to match but were signposted into suitable placements. We are ambitious and want to expand this further considering ring fencing several posts within the 'family business' and/or utilising funding for vacant posts. Our care experienced young people Steering Group continues to meet monthly to progress.
82. Every Jobcentre now has a Care Experienced Young People single point of contact to support the needs of care experienced young people and their offer includes:
- Advanced claims – care experienced young people can apply for Universal Credit up to 28 days ahead of their 18th birthday.
 - Second Change Learning Scheme – for those 18 to 21 who wish to catch up on the education they may have missed out on when younger. Housing Benefit or Universal Credit/Housing Support is available to those who take up full time study in non-advanced education (secondary level education)
 - Exemption from the Shared Accommodation Rate until they reach 25 when claiming either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and living in the private rented sector.
 - DWP Youth Offer – from day 1 of their claim, providing employment support with access to the Youth Employment Programme plus access to specialist Youth Employability Coaches for young people who have significant barriers to employment and the opportunity to access help from work coaches and the range of local partners present in DWP Youth Hubs.
 - Flexible Support fund – discretionary financial support with travel, clothing, tools and expenses.
 - Work and Health Programme accessible earlier than for non-care experienced young adults.
83. A new "Care Experience Matters" guide has been produced outlining beneficial practice for prisons, probation and local authorities to provide consistent and appropriate support for people with care experience whilst they are in prison, upon release, or under community supervision. This is informing closer working between

relevant partner agencies and setting clear standards of support, advice and guidance for the young adult and the staff supporting them.

84. A new model of 'joint recording' between PAs and care experienced young people is being developed, as well as some improvements made to their Pathway Panels to aid inclusion.
85. Our Grandmentors volunteering programme has older volunteers who use their lifetime of skills and experience to support and mentor young people leaving the care system. They support care experienced young people who are out of employment, education, or training with a guiding hand - ultimately giving them the skills and self-belief to lead successful and independent lives. All volunteers are given full support and training throughout their time on the project. We currently have nine active matches, eight successfully concluded and 19 Grandmentors ready to match within specific geographical locations across the county (the rurality of Wiltshire is impacting on our ability to match within areas Grandmentors can cover); recruitment is ongoing.
86. Wiltshire Council is working in partnership with Family Rights Group and Daybreak to pilot a Lifelong Links programme into Wiltshire Council care services. Family Rights Group is a charity that advocates for families whose children are involved with, or require, social care services. Daybreak works alongside these partnering organisations and within the community to bring people together to implement a solution when facing challenging situations. Lifelong Links aim to bring people together who can offer a young person in care support to ensure that they have a positive support network around them during their time in care and into adulthood.
87. Our Staying Close offer pilot in Wiltshire, led by our Staying Close Co-ordinator provides multi agency support (through our Education and Employment Advisor and Tenancy Sustainment Officer), has successfully worked to support 10 young people return to Wiltshire to either supported accommodation or return to family and/or live with friends.
88. We are actively working to ensure our unaccompanied young people seeking asylum are able to live within Wiltshire. We know that these young people have experienced significant adversities and challenges in their lives, and that being placed at distance from Wiltshire will cause them additional challenges as they move towards independent living. As corporate parents we are clear in our strategy to ensure that Wiltshire is a local authority that recognises, supports and welcomes the diverse needs that these young people have. We have been successful in securing capital funding to increase the range of accommodation in Wiltshire (through supported accommodation and independent tenancies) and have actively supported 8 young people who have been placed at distance to return to Wiltshire. Through our Care Experienced Hub we are increasing the connections with local communities to ensure that our unaccompanied young people feel welcomed and supported living in Wiltshire.
89. In January 2024 we launched our new hub for our care experienced young people, Young People's Services and Stronger Families Team. This is located on the ground floor at County Hall and young people have their own entrance. There is a large

activity space for music, and arts, as well as a pool table, table tennis, TV and X Box and facilities for young people to use to develop independence skills. A fully equipped kitchen is available for washing and cooking and fully accessible shower facilities. There is also an area where group work can be undertaken by a variety of professionals such as sessions on education, employment and training, sexual health, benefits advice, and focused work-based interventions relating to Court orders and safeguarding plans. A hub in the South of the County is currently being scoped.

Placement sufficiency:

90. We continue to work hard to overcome our placement sufficiency challenges and the Director for Families and Children chairs a monthly Placement Sufficiency Oversight Group to oversee the activity and impact.
91. An updated placement sufficiency and market development strategy has been produced detailing work that is underway or planned to improve sufficiency across the county. The national shortage of care placements, especially in the fostering and residential markets alongside the regulation of supported accommodation is causing uncertainty in the market. The impact of these areas is closely monitored. There is also regional work underway to tackle this challenge collectively, setting out clear messages to providers about the likely future needs.
92. To increase local capacity, commissioners are working with Independent Fostering Agencies to ensure Wiltshire children and young people are considered for any carer vacancies before children from another local authority. This is to improve the choice of local placements in the county. We have secured a 10-year block contract for 12 children's home awarded to a national provider which will see 3 Council owned buildings leased to the provider which will help to ensure long term local sufficiency and allow for a shorter mobilisation period. We are aiming for this to be operational imminently.
93. Of our children in care for more than 2.5 years, in 2022-23, 73% were in the same placement for two years or more. This is above the England, the South West, and our Statistical neighbours average at 69% and Outstanding Local Authorities at 67%. Similarly, our percentage of young people with three or more placements in a year was 8% in 2022-23. This is lower than the England average at 10% and the South West, Statistical Neighbour and Outstanding Local Authorities average of 11% and remains within our expected range of between 7% and 10%.
94. Within our Supported Accommodation provision, we have a range of young people, including children in care and care experienced, alongside Section 17. We work closely with Ofsted and the National Children's Bureau and have ensured that all providers supporting 16–17-year-olds are registered.
95. In February 2024 Full Council approved the Capital investment of £10.560m providing housing for 68 care experienced and asylum-seeking young people enabling the Council to provide accommodation and commission providers at reduced rates.

96. Further capacity is also being delivered for supported accommodation through continued mobilisation of a 30-place contract and we have been successful in applying for two Capital Fund bids to increase our houses of multiple occupancy for our care experienced and unaccompanied young people, increased supported accommodation in county and individual flats for tenancies so we can support our care experienced young people to live in Wiltshire communities.
97. Recognising the need for support for young people who need enhanced care and support through a residential children's home, with complex needs we have secured a 10-year block contract for 12 children's home awarded to a national provider which will see 3 Council owned buildings leased to the provider which will help to ensure long term local sufficiency and the provider will also be purchasing their own property to offer a 2-bedroom assessment home. They are expecting the first home to open by the end of June, with an aim that all 4 homes will be operational by the end of 2024.
98. In addition to this we are also developing a specification to tender for a provider to deliver complex care in county in Wiltshire owned properties; this was ratified by Full Council in April 2024.
99. We have successfully appointed the Mockingbird Liaison worker and the Hub home carer and identified the satellite carers who will be in the first constellation. We are looking forward to the launch party on 14 July 2024 before we then move on to planning our second Constellation. We have received agreement for significant capital funding to purchase homes for our children in need of supported accommodation and independent accommodation for care experienced young people, taking a whole council resolution approach to the market challenges.
100. This investment into accommodation for children in care and care experienced will:
- Help develop the existing marketplace for supported accommodation in Wiltshire, which is limited.
 - As a corporate parent ensure the continuing development of inclusive housing, close to transport links, education and workplace opportunities in Wiltshire for care experienced young people.
 - Meet the increased demand for supported accommodation in Wiltshire.
 - Support young people to be successfully independent in terms of their health, wealth and emotional wellbeing.
 - Ensure the future sustainability of statutory provision of support and accommodation in Wiltshire for care experienced young people.
 - Ensure children and young people remain within the county, closer to home.

Impact and Ambition

101. Maintain and improve strong performance across the board to ensure that targets are consistently achieved in order to improve outcomes for children and that our 3 – year strategic priorities are successfully implemented to ensure that children and young people continue to have the opportunity to be supported, well cared for and thrive in Wiltshire.

102. Continue to improve placement sufficiency so that more children are looked after by Wiltshire approved foster carers and closer to their homes, schools and communities and our ambitious placement sufficiency plans are realised
103. Improve educational outcomes and progress for children looked after and increase access to a range of training and employment opportunities for care experienced young people up to the age of 25.
104. Continue to progress the voice and participation of children in care and build on existing relationships with members and officers.

Conclusion and Next Steps

105. Enhanced reporting and regular performance reports has helped panel members understand the lived experience of our children and young people. The participation of children and young people within CPP has been a particular strength as it has enabled young people to share their voices and impact, continuing to build relationships with our children and young people through activities and forums.
106. The Strategic Priorities ensure that panel members are held accountable for progressing the outcomes for our children in care and care experienced young people.
107. The Panel have an increased narrative of children and young people's lived experience therefore enabling them to be a better corporate parent to children in care and care experienced young people. Members are active participants and have continued to join children in care for a number of activities events during 2023/24 which will continue through 2023/24.
108. The Chair continues to ensure that the Panel will:
 - a) Review all priority areas to ensure they are being achieved and therefore the best impact upon outcomes for children and young people.
 - b) Continue to work closely with the Children in Care Council to ensure that the voices and experiences of children and young people in care are reflected in the work of the CPP and hence the wider Families and Children's Services.
 - c) Review progress of our ambition to increase placement sufficiency for children and young people in Wiltshire.
 - d) In partnership with health colleagues, continue to track the improvement in health outcomes for children and young people, continuing to ensure that Initial and Review Health assessments are completed in a timely way as already evidenced during Panel reporting.
 - e) Further strengthen and develop the local offer for care experienced young people, particularly ensuring that those living outside Wiltshire are not disadvantaged.

- f) Further strengthen our oversight and understanding of children in care who go missing.
- g) Strengthen and develop our UASC team and the services it provides and ensure that their voice is visible.
- h) Progress the housing and supported accommodation needs of our care experienced young people.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

109. In accordance with the agreed overview and scrutiny arrangements the draft annual Corporate Parenting Panel report was considered by the Children's Select Committee standing task group on 21 June 2024.

Safeguarding Implications

110. Within their role as Corporate Parents, Councillors monitor closely the safeguarding of children and young people looked after by Wiltshire Council via the Children's Select Committee and Safeguarding Children and Young People's Panel.

Public Health Implications

111. Children Looked After are at particular risk of experiencing inequalities in health outcomes due to their difficult start in life. Within their role as Corporate Parents, Councillors monitor the health and wellbeing support received by our looked after children to ensure they receive regular holistic assessments of their needs supported by appropriate and accessible service provision. This may include access to a wide range of services including immunisations, emotional wellbeing support or substance misuse services. Public Health are represented at Corporate Parenting Panel.

Procurement Implications:

112. As an annual report of the activities of Corporate Parenting Panel there are no procurement implications as a result of this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

113. None identified.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

114. The proposals seek to bring Councilor's and Officers to work together to ensure that our Children and Young People have a voice within the Council in order to influence the improvement of services for them.

Workforce Implications:

115. As an annual report of the activities of Corporate Parenting Panel there are no workforce implications as a result of this report.

Risk Assessment

116. Panel Members are required to have an enhanced DBS check undertaken and Risk Assessments will be drawn up for when visits are made to vulnerable children and when Councillors attend Officer Team Meetings, etc.

Financial Implications

117. Expenses for young people participating in the CPP will be paid for from the Children in Care budget.

Legal Implications

118. The Solicitor to the Council has confirmed that the Panel is an Advisory panel and not a Committee of the Council; it can therefore make recommendations but not decisions. Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director, People and Director of Children's Services) is the lead decision maker.

Proposals

119. To receive and note the Annual Report and the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to date, its functions and impact of its work and to ratify the improvements required to further strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.
120. To receive and note the Annual Report of the Voice and Participation Team 2023/24 attached as **Appendix 4** to this report.

Jen Salter (Director of Families and Children's Services)

Lucy Townsend (Corporate Director People/DCS)

Report Author: Katrina McJannet (Head of Children in Care and Young People)

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Joe Sutton (Participation Manager, Child and Youth Voice Team)

Background Papers – None

Appendices

- 1 Corporate Parenting Panel Acronym List
- 2 Frequency of reports to Panel linked to Strategic Priorities
- 3 CPP Dataset and Exception reporting 2023-24
- 4 Annual Report of the Voice and Participation Team
- 5 Young Person Version of the CPP Annual Report 2023-24.