

**Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel
June 2016 to May 2017**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report forms the annual update to Council from the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

2. Background

- 2.1 The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel is to secure Councillor involvement and commitment throughout the Council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who are looked after. All Councillors are reminded that they have responsibilities as a "corporate parent" for children and young people who are looked after in Wiltshire.
- 2.2 Councillors Pat Aves, Andrew Davis (Vice Chairman), Jon Hubbard, Jacqui Lay, Howard Marshall, Laura Mayes (Chairman), Pip Ridout, and Phil Whalley formed the membership of the Panel during the period May 2016 to May 2017. The Independent group chose not to take a place on the Panel; the Conservative Group therefore nominated an additional member. The Lead Officer was Martin Davis (Head of Service – Care, Placements and EDS).
- 2.3 The meetings were regularly attended by the following officers/representatives:

Martin Davis (Head of Care, Placements and EDS), Leanne Field (Senior Commissioning Officer), Carolyn Godfrey (Corporate Director), Chelsea Goozee (Children in Care Council representative), Jo Harris (Children in Care Council representative), Terence Herbert (Associate Director), Blair Keltie (CSE Manager), Janice Lightowler (Manager – Conference and Reviewing Service), Lena Pheby (Designated Nurse for Looked After Children), Karen Reid (Virtual School Head), Sally Smith (Foster Carer and Chair of Wilts Fostering Association), Karen Stokes (Missing Children Co-Ordinator) and Matthew Turner (Service Manager – Placement Services). Other Officers attended as required to present particular reports.

3. Work Programme

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel has discussed a broad range of topics in depth taking into consideration the young people's views. Children in Care Council (CiCC) representatives have been invited to attend each Panel meeting. The Panel have received the following reports and information:

Performance Data

- National and Local Performance Indicators for Children in Care data
- Looked After Children Missing data and commentary
- MOTIV8 (Substance Misuse Service) data

Annual Reports

- Health of Looked After Children - 2015/16
- Wiltshire's Independent Visitor Scheme - 2015/16
- Conference and Reviewing Service - 2015/16
- Private Fostering - 2015/16

Updates

- Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leaver's Improvement Group
- Work of the Children in Care Council
- Looked After Children who have Special Educational Needs
- Disruption Meetings
- Children's Placement Budget Management Project
- Position of the Virtual School Head

Challenge from Scrutiny

- What Provisions should the Council make for our Care Leavers?

Strategic Priority Focus

- Strategic Priority 7 – *Ensure that Looked After Children and Care Leavers have timely and easy access to mental health services* – Presentation from Wiltshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Wiltshire Council's Lead Commissioner

Reviews

- Review of CiCC's Introduction to the Corporate Parenting Strategy

- 3.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel continued to monitor closely work that is underway across the Council and partner agencies to improve outcomes for our Looked After Children and Care Leavers. While the Ofsted inspection in June 2015 identified our services as requiring improvement, it also noted

many areas of good practice. Outcomes for children looked after continue to improve, children benefit from consistency of worker, the adoption service offers a sensitive and effective service and children leaving care receive an improving level of support in their transition into adulthood. A clear set of strategic priorities have been agreed targeting the key areas in which improvements are required; these include ambitious targets to recruit additional foster carers and return children to Wiltshire placements, achieving legal permanence more quickly for children in long-term care and ensuring our Care Leavers have better access to appropriate housing, education and employment opportunities.

3.3 Data relating to educational outcomes for Looked after Children (statistical neighbours' data is not yet available):

- In Wiltshire there are 305 school aged children and 215 care leavers.
- The number of children in care attending good or better schools has increased to 268 from 211 in 2015.
- Attendance at remains strong at 94% and unauthorised absences remain low.
- Virtual School Officers are now working with the Fostering Service to further reduce the number of authorised absences and will continue to monitor attendance through Personal Education Plan meetings.
- There have been no permanent exclusions of children in care since 2008.
- There are currently 8 young people in AEP, a reduction of 2 in the last 12 months.

Key Stage 2

- The cohort sitting Key Stage 2 SAT's in 2016 was small (19 children) and a significant number (13 had an ECHP), 5 of the SAT cohort were disapplied due to their learning needs. The number of children reaching expected standard was:

Reaching expected standard

READING	%	WRITING	%	SPAG	%	MATHS	%	R/W/M	%
2	10.5	4	21.0	4	21.0	2	10.5	1	5.3

Performance at Key Stage 2 was poorer than statistical neighbours, Corporate Parenting Panel have received updates from the Virtual School on the action now being taken to monitor and support this group of children so that they are able to make educational progress.

Key Stage 4

- In Wiltshire there are 32 children in KS 4 who have been in care for 12 months continuously. Nine achieved 5 A*-C including E&M (30% of the total cohort). This performance is strong and compares very well with regional and national data.
- In addition to this four children who failed to achieve 5 A*-C made significant progress (Progress 8 measure) during KS4.
- For the remaining LAC across KS4 progress is stronger for Eng and Maths than that for other disadvantaged groups including FSM but attainment remains lower for both Eng and Maths, suggesting that they start from a lower base. These issues will be further explored and reported to Corporate Parenting Panel in the forthcoming annual report from the Virtual School Head.

3.5 Aspire House continues to provide an increasing range of activities and support for Looked After and Adopted children and young people, including English, Maths and Science tutoring as well as independent living skills for Care Leavers.

3.6 During the year two apprentices, employed by Wiltshire Council, have worked within the Virtual School and have now successfully completed their apprenticeship. These Care Leavers have followed Customer Services and Youth Work apprenticeships. One apprentice has since moved to work for a supported housing provider and the second is has more recently secured permanent employment.

3.7 The Council is responsible for Canon's House which is an 8 bedded home in Devizes that provides short-term residential breaks for young people (age 5-17 years) with a severe learning disability who are assessed by Wiltshire Council's Children's Disability Teams as being in need of that service. Monthly unannounced inspection visits are carried out by a senior Council officer and members of the CPP are invited to attend with the officer to carry out the visit. Between June 2016 and May 2017, 7 Councillors have attended as part of the unannounced inspections. As a regulated setting Canon's House is subject to inspections by Ofsted. The most recent inspection judged the home as 'requiring improvement', in addition to our contribution to the monthly monitoring visits, Corporate Parenting Panel have asked for sight of the service improvement plan and to receive regular updates on progress made.

4. Children in Care Council

4.1 The Children in Care Council are a key stake holder group in the Corporate Parenting agenda. A representative from CiCC attends both agenda setting and wash-up sessions following meetings of the Panel. There is a mature relationship between CiCC and as a result young people have helped to shape the way in which we undertake our work.

- 4.2 Historically following each meeting of the Panel there was a 'Shared Guardian' session where young people and Councillors met to discuss key themes. While these sessions have largely been successful as evidenced by the 'You Said, We Did' audit, following feedback from the young people we are changing the format of these meetings. In the year ahead the number of meetings will reduce, as will the number of Cllr's attending; this will enabled more focused and consistent discussions to take place.
- 4.3 An induction event for CiCC was held in for late March 2016 and since then we have seen membership increase. Currently there are 5 young people regularly attending CiCC, recruitment activity is ongoing and we would hope to see the number of young people attending the group grow throughout the year.

5. Our Performance

- 5.1 The Corporate Parenting Terms of Reference were reviewed and a two year Corporate Parenting Strategy was approved by the Panel in January 2016 (which was then ratified by Council on 10 May 2016 for inclusion in the Council's Constitution). The fundamental aims of this new strategy are to ensure that Councillors:
- Understand their roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents
 - 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 for care leavers, scrutinising the quality, effectiveness and performance of the services that support them.
- 5.2 Within this Strategy, seven Strategic Priorities were drawn up. To ensure that strategic oversight and critical challenge is effective, it was agreed that each member of the Panel will have a lead role in relation to delivery of a strategic priority. At each Panel meeting the Lead Member is asked to provide an update on the following:
- Research carried out
 - Meetings/discussions held
 - Findings
 - Actions identified
 - Actions progressed
 - Proposals for further work.

- 5.3 Panel Members have provided the following annual summaries of their work between the period January 2016 to February 2017.

Strategic Priorities

1. ***Strengthen the Corporate Parenting Role and Corporate Parenting function across Wiltshire Council as a whole.*** (Cllr Laura Mayes)

My overall aim has been to raise the profile within the Council of our Looked After Children, their Carer's and Care Leavers. I have done this through a number of measures including Chairing the CPP, driving improvements through the LAC Improvement Board and ensuring all Councillors receive notes from the CPP meetings.

I invited a Foster Carer, to address Members at Full Council on 10 May 2016. She talked about her experience looking after Wiltshire's children and this helped Members to understand the importance of our foster carers.

Wiltshire Councillors were invited to donate money towards the cost of our annual LAC Christmas party. The party was a huge success and was a great opportunity to meet both the children and their carers in a fun and informal way. The carers gave me excellent feedback on the service, both at this party and the Virtual School Celebration in the summer.

I have set up a Leaving Care working group to see what more we can do for young people leaving the system. We have had an initial meeting but I am aware there is much more to do in this area.

Proposals and Actions for moving my Strategic Priority Forward

I want to ensure the Councillor Induction programme in May 2017 includes a full briefing on LAC so that all Councillors are aware of their role and responsibilities.

I will suggest that when the new Panel is formed after May and the Strategic Priority leads are appointed that they populate an action plan for their priority and then progress can be tracked at subsequent meetings.

2. ***Continue to improve timeliness of permanency for looked after children across the range of permanency options.*** (Cllr Andrew Davis and Sally Smith, Foster Carer and Chair of Wiltshire Fostering Association)

We have met with the Service Manager for Placement Services on a number of occasions, in order to understand current practice and scrutiny of permanence within Children's Services, and discussed better ways to engage with the young people to achieve permanency and keep placements stable.

The Wiltshire Fostering Association have looked at the Mockingbird Family Model which is a method of delivering foster care with the potential to improve placement stability, safety and permanency for children and young people in

care and to improve support for, and retention of, foster carers. It is based on the idea of an “extended family” or network of foster carers. It uses the concept of a ‘constellation’ which is where six to 10 ‘satellite’ families of foster and kinship carers live in close proximity to a dedicated hub home of specially recruited and trained carers offering respite care. The hub empowers families to support each other and overcome problems before they escalate, and offers children a more positive experience of care.

Officers are going to work with the Wiltshire Fostering Association to develop a pilot of the model, the results of which will be reported to a future Panel meeting.

We felt that some of the staff within Children’s Services Teams appeared to be stretched and there was quite a high turnover of Social Workers. We were reassured by the Associate Director that the turnover rate of Social Workers had dropped from 25% to 10% in the last two years and that retention was now good.

We understand that there is increased scrutiny given to planning for permanence, mainly through panel arrangements in the local authority. There is a monthly Permanence Panel that considers the progress of children following their second review in care (4 months), ensuring that planning is robust and that there is a clear plan for permanence, a requirement at this stage. Cases are tracked by a panel of managers and social workers are required to account for any delay or drift. This panel also has responsibility to scrutinise and, where appropriate, endorse long term matches for children with IFA carers where there will be long term costs incurred. If given, this endorsement is then carried forward to Foster Panel where the needs of the child are considered against the skills and abilities of the foster carer and a match is recommended. This is then given to the Agency Decision Maker for the final decision. This process has produced some very robust matches over the last year where children are now placed in long term, secure placements allowing good progress to continue. Matches with Wiltshire approved foster carers are presented to Foster panel only. Again, a high number of matches have been made this year.

Adoption is a route to permanence and performance is improving in terms of timeliness of adoptive placements for children and the progress to Adoption Order.

Where long term placements of any sort end in an unplanned way, a Disruption Meeting is held, chaired by the Service Manager, in order to understand what happened and what learning is available to try and ensure that other placements do not end in an unplanned way. The outcome of these meetings are reported to the CPP.

In Wiltshire, there was a case load promise of 18 for new starters and for some this is slightly higher due to their experience. In the summer of 2016, Cabinet received a report which updated on the Social Worker recruitment and retention programme which had been a success.

In the summer of 2016 there were a small number of Social Worker vacancies, but these were due to promotion or retirement, not to employees moving to other employment. The Management Teams had been confident that they would fill the vacancies as there has been a good response to the application process and there would be a foster carer involved on the interview panel.

We have been concerned about the permanency of some of Wiltshire's Foster Carers as following informal conversations with some foster carers, they had hinted that they were considering moving across to join an Independent Fostering Association. However, information from the Fostering Service indicates that no foster carers have resigned in the past year with the stated intention of moving to an Agency. We understand that the majority of de-registrations were related to specific children who had been fostered by family members and where the placements had naturally ended. A small number of carers had resigned due to changes in lifestyle or personal reasons. Of these, few were active foster carers at the point of resignation. A small number of carers have been deregistered due to concerns about their practice.

It is recognised that Wiltshire foster carers have access to a very good training pathway, they receive regular supervision and support and there is access to therapeutic support – all of which compares well to IFA arrangements. We feel that further work needs to be done to ensure the quality of support in order to retain our Foster Carers so that they can provide for our looked after children.

Proposals and Actions for moving our Strategic Priority Forward

- Develop and agree the pilot for the Fostering Family Group Model – possible implementation Autumn 2017. Action: WFA and Service Manager, Placement Services
- Continue to ensure effectiveness of relevant Panel arrangements – ongoing – Head of Service
- In order to retain and develop foster carers, ensure that practice within the Fostering Service is robust through the use of Key performance Indicators (KPIs). April 2017. Team Manager/Service Manager/Head of Service
- Consider observing Panels as described above in order to be assured about effectiveness.

3. ***Ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked after children within Wiltshire which meets the needs of those children. Prioritise placement within Wiltshire. (Cllr Pat Aves and Sally Smith)***

We have met with the Service Manager for Placement Services on a number of occasions who informed us that new Foster Carers were applying to join Wiltshire and help us to provide accommodation to meet the needs of our Looked After Children.

Fostering approvals can be regularly changed as fostering family circumstances change, which can mean that more beds become available. It is important to understand the difference between “fostering vacancies” –

approved vacancies that are available now for children – and “empty beds” – those approved vacancies that are unavailable due to circumstances such as ill health, carers on hold, unavailability of the bedroom and so on. We understand that the Fostering service is working hard to develop clear information and better understand this and this should be monitored regularly. We could meet regularly with managers from the service to discuss this and consider data, reporting back to the CPP.

Younger children are often easier to place, and are most often placed in-house. Teenagers can be less easy to place which can lead to the IFAs being used. It may be that carers who leave the IFAs do so in order to foster the younger ones again, and to get more regular placements. But it is also important to make the correct placement in the first place, so that there is a good chance of long term stability and good quality home life; young children stay with their carers and become teenagers in the same home and then become subject to a Staying Put arrangement, potentially, over time, leading to a reduction in the number of harder to place older children and the dependence on IFAs. To realise this, there needs to be an increase in placement choice within Wiltshire approved foster carers.

Fostering recruitment continues with indications of positive progress. The number of children living with Wiltshire carers is still too low and the Team is working hard to recruit, train and assess new carers to increase the numbers of placements available. About 20 new households have been approved this year and although the target was 30, this is still good progress when compared to other years. The process to assess carers has been regularly reviewed and all assessments are currently completed and presented to panel in four months. There is a recruitment strategy in place which shows the range of advertising and information giving activity that goes on.

The Fostering Team has changed the way that Duty is managed. This part of the team receives all request for placements and works to identify placements for the children referred. Carers are being encouraged to look as widely as possible at the sort of children and numbers they can care for in order to try and maximise in house placements. The working relationship with Children's Services Buyers (who identify IFA placements) is being developed in order to add scrutiny and effectiveness to placement finding. There are plans to use social work time to “home find” for children who are placed in residential settings or IFA placements and now need to return to long term Wiltshire placements.

I am concerned about IFA carers who change to Wiltshire without, in my view, proper assessment. This is an observation from my recent Fostering Panel experience. These carers are recommended for Wiltshire approval on the understanding that they are already trained and have a proven track record and experience. However, the training and preparation that carers receive with IFAs can be different and, from what I am told, may not be as thorough as that received by those recruited by Wiltshire. However, there is scrutiny of the fostering assessment, which will have been added to or amended by a Wiltshire assessing social worker, by the Foster Panel and any recommendation for approval is considered by the Decision Maker. Therefore, I am satisfied that

only suitable foster carers are approved and go on to foster for the local authority.

We need to keep placements stable – this is where support in difficult times becomes important, and why I would like feedback from the social worker who attended the conference on the Mockingbird System last year in Birmingham. My understanding is that this is being run with success in Oxford, Plymouth and Birmingham already, having begun in the USA, hence the name, and has led to improvements in stability of placements. It is anticipated that an adaptation of the model will be piloted in Wiltshire and the impact will need to be carefully considered. It will not replace all the usual activity that takes place to support foster placements and bring about stability.

From my experience on the Fostering Panel I have noticed how important the instantly available support of friends and close family can be in an emergency or as a stress reliever – when occasionally the friend or carer is also a foster carer the benefits become obvious – someone who is DBS checked and has had all the training, the experience, and who the child knows through normal family life and friendship associations, who lives nearby and can be there within a very short time. It can mean that calling EDS becomes unnecessary, and in the calm of the morning a call to allocated supervising social worker to update is all that is needed. Less intrusive follow up can happen later.

I am concerned about staffing in the fostering Service. I understand that there are vacancies, long term sickness, maternity leave and performance issues within the team. Whilst, this is no different from what other teams experience, it must be impacting on the workload of the others. That said, I understand that caseloads are well managed and broadly in line with the equivalent volume in other social work teams. This is reassuring. The Mockingbird System would help relieve the pressure on both the EDS and the social workers significantly. It would in no way replace social workers and professionals, but support them too. As indicated, we could adapt it to suit our own needs and call it something else, but a support network amongst carers can do no harm and could do a lot of good. This already exists unofficially amongst a few of them. Parents have always done it as part of family life, but amongst foster parents such an arrangement would no doubt need official sanctions in order to comply with law. Foster carers using Delegated Authority also helps provide children they care for with a more “natural” experience as the foster carers can make many of the day to day decisions.

Proposals and Actions for moving our Strategic Priority Forward

In addition to tasks identified above:

- On a six monthly basis, review the monthly Fostering Recruitment updates which is provided to the LAC Improvement Board to assure that the direction of travel is positive – Action: PA/SS
- Spend time with the Duty Team and Children Services Buyers to better understand duty work and placement finding – Action: PA/SS

- On a six monthly basis, meet with the Service manager to review Children's Services performance information relating to Fostering Recruitment, placements, stability and so on. Action: PA/SS and Service Manager

4. ***Improve care leavers journey by ensuring an enhanced offer to care leavers across all areas: education, employment and training, independent living, housing options and health. (Cllrs Jacqui Lay and Pip Ridout)***

We have suggested that it might be possible to work with some young people to help them with their budget management. We are aware that some care leavers who are working are not earning enough to manage all of their bills. It was suggested that we could meet with some Personal Advisors to see what the issues are for the young people.

When we first looked at the Council's Housing Strategy we noted that it still did not contain any clarity or priority for care leavers. We had a meeting with the Head of Care, Placements and EDS and the Associate Director for Adult Social Care and Housing James where we expressed concern about the lack of reference to looked after children/care leavers in the Housing Strategy. We were also made aware of 2 x 3 bedroom houses in the South which were to be offered to care leavers as a pilot scheme.

We were informed of the meeting between the Head of Care, Placements and EDS and the Housing Heads of Service when it was confirmed the new Housing Strategy was in development and there was opportunity to review status and access that care leavers have to housing options.

It is recognised that as a Council we are a corporate parent to our care leavers and Housing are keen to work with partners to assist in the development of options to ensure they have the choice of affordable accommodation as well as receiving appropriate support. Housing reviewed the Allocations Policy and considered placing Care Leavers into our highest priority band.

This was consulted on towards the end of 2016 for adoption from 1st April 2017. Housing have also included care leavers as a priority in the new Housing Strategy which is shortly due to go out to formal consultation. Care Leavers will be considered as part of our Housing related Support Review which is due to be completed mid-2017.

We would find it useful to have details (mapped) of our young people who are approaching 15 to see where they are in the County and what the housing availability is too.

Children's Services have confirmed that the care leaver needs analysis completed in the Spring of 2016 grouped care leavers into three bands; high support (31%), medium support (45%) and low support (24%).

Vulnerability, Employment and Training, and Accommodation are the three domains where greatest need have been identified, these three areas are interlinked. While the number of care leavers who are employed or in education compare favourably with national averages, PA's commit significant time to support care leavers to remain in education and employment placements. In 25% of cases the location of housing is a significant factor; the lack of a sufficient range of housing options means that care leavers are placed outside their community or in inappropriate housing and therefore easily become socially isolated. Almost one third of care leavers in the high or medium band have significant attachment problems or complex emotional/mental health needs. When combined these factors can lead to acute crisis and PA's will spend a disproportionate amount of their time responding to these.

We attended the Wiltshire Assembly on 10 November 2016. There was a Call to Action from the Assembly for the Council which was to "Recognise that all young people will need a home of their own hence encourage registering onto housing list if they are going to want social housing early and band them according to the capabilities of being able to rent, need to rent, where to rent. i.e. if in employment they should be able to move into their own home at some point 18 – 24?! Run workshops/PHSE on home ownership and rentals to understand the responsibilities of living in our own home, costs and behaviour towards neighbours."

We have had informal discussions with a Care Leaver and an Officer on ways forward with Employment and Education. Suggested the possibility of Mentors to support young people to show what they did, what happened and their successes. We have explored the potential to set up mock interviews with recruitment agency and help with CV's.

We have suggested if there was potential for our Care Leavers to be placed within older people's environments where there are opportunities for the generations to learn and support each other. In Holland there is a scheme being run where young people move into care facilities, where they then have accommodation to live in whilst at college etc. and support also the older people.

Proposals and Actions for moving our Strategic Priority Forward

1. Housing Strategy currently in draft – CPP to follow through to conclusion.
2. Housing Support Review 2017 – CPP to follow through to conclusion.
3. Engagement with social landlords to smooth access to market place for care leavers (rent guarantee scheme etc.)

5. ***Improve the educational outcomes for looked after children; closing the gap between looked after children and other children in the county. (Cllr Phil Whalley)***

Improving the education outcomes for children in care is both a national and local government priority. The evidence is clear, whatever else goes wrong in

children's lives their life chances are significantly improved when they achieve decent education outcomes. At present however the national picture is grim with below 13-14% of LAC, for example, achieving 5 GCSE's including English and Maths at KS4 compared to a national average of about 58-60% for all children.

Throughout the year I have regularly met with Karen Reid the Virtual School Head to discuss the present system of support for our LAC and also met twice with her whole team of the Virtual School Officers at staff meetings.

Evident at these meetings was the commitment of the Virtual School Staff and their detailed knowledge of each of the LAC in their care. Apart from the routine work with the LAC and schools they also provide additional holiday activities and GCSE revision sessions.

It is difficult to assess the separate impact of the revision courses from that of other factors however there was another excellent set of GCSE results in 2016 with 30% of our LAC gaining 5 GCSE's including Maths and English compared to around 13-14% nationally. On the basis of this evidence further revision courses are being arranged for this year. More importantly there has been a steady improvement in GCSE results in recent years. The KS1 and KS2 results for 2016 were less spectacular but broadly in line with those of our statistical neighbours. We need however to be cautious when using results data because of the relatively small cohorts involved. This year for example the KS2 results were for just 19 children and of these 73% had identified learning difficulties.

Another important factor noted both nationally and locally is the importance of placement stability especially at exam times. Our VSH and VSO's appreciate this and are working with social workers to try to ensure educational stability at critical times such as in Year's 10-11.

The target to send a letter to all foster carers in September 2016 reminding them of how they can support the educational achievement of LAC such as through reading with young children, ensuring good school attendance and the completion of homework, the attendance at school parent evenings and placement stability has not been achieved. It was decided that it would be more effective if these messages were shaped by the foster carers themselves during their training days and then included in a brochure that all Foster carers will receive.

Unfortunately, the VSH resigned in December 2016. The VS presently has two further staff shortages one of which is affecting our ability to work with post-16 LAC attending College. It is important that these posts are filled as soon as possible. Also the roles of the Aspire House and the VSH are presently under review.

Proposals and Actions for moving my Strategic Priority Forward

- To liaise with Martin Davis and the Review process to ensure that the improvement of educational outcomes for LAC remains the principal guiding determinant during the review into roles of Aspire House and the VSH.
- To arrange an early meeting with the newly appointed VSH.
- To monitor the Virtual School staffing levels.
- To attend VS team meetings twice a year.
- To continue the analysis of KS2 and GCSE results in order to identify priority area of work.
- To assess the impact of the GCSE revision courses and placement disruption on GCSE results so that resources can be effectively targeted.
- To identify actions that will enable KS1 and KS2 results to match the recent improvement in GCSE results.
- To press for the completion of the advice brochure being sent out to all foster carers reminding them of the key points of how they can support the educational achievement of our LAC.

6. ***Ensure that looked after children are protected from the risk of child sexual exploitation and reduce the frequency with which some looked after children and care leavers currently go missing. (Cllr Howard Marshall)***

The Council held a CSE awareness day on 18 March 2016 as part of the Council's CSE Action Plan, monitored by Cabinet, to raise community awareness of CSE.

I have met with the CSE Manager to look at the Missing Children and Young People data to separate out and look at the differences between those who are children in care and those not. I receive the monthly update reports on the Missing Children and Young People and we have looked at an action plan to make improvements overall and specifically for LAC placed out of county where improvements have been made with return interview completions increasing over the last 12 months from 8% to 65%. The improvement is due to the impact of action plans with increasing awareness and contractual requirements with placements providers to report missing episodes direct to our Missing Children Coordinators.

It seems from the data that there has been some improvement in the numbers of "Missing" children and this is to be congratulated. Particularly as the majority would appear to be single episodes. It is disappointing to see that relatively few return interviews offered are actually completed. I am aware that information is gathered informally where formal return interviews are not completed. I wonder if there is a better way of reporting this statistic so as to better reflect the actual situation and reasons for going missing. I would like to explore this idea further over the coming months.

Proposals and Actions for moving my Strategic Priority Forward

Continue to review the work that is being done to reduce frequency of missing incidents of looked after children.

Monitor completion rates of return interviews for LAC reported missing to ensure we build upon recent success and continue to see an increase in the number of interviews completed

7. ***Ensure that looked after children and care leavers have timely and easy access to mental health services*** (Cllr Jon Hubbard)

I attended a conference in mental health and wellbeing.

I met with Sam Shrubsole from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and we agreed that it would be good if someone from CAMHS could come to a Panel meeting to talk about their role and the work that was being undertaken. Sam had suggested that James Fortune (Lead Commissioner) also be invited.

At my meeting with Sam, I found out that there was a lot of good stuff going on in schools to raise mental health awareness but the entry level thresholds for CAHMS were high (i.e. things had to be pretty bad for a young person) before a referral would be made. CAHMS was not an early help service and I would like to explore what other routes there were for early help for children and young people with problems.

Chelsea (CiCC rep) was able to report that she had found that Wiltshire IAPT Service (The Association for Psychological Therapies) would see you to help you if you were on the CAHMS waiting list.

Chelsea also thought that it would be a good idea for there to be a post 18 support group so that young people could talk to someone their own age and with someone who had been through some of the same things that they had – peer support.

It was reported that BANES offer interactive counselling and that we could look at inviting them to come to a meeting to talk about what they offer so that we might be able to fill the hole with the early help aspect of mental health.

Carolyn Godfrey reported that the CCG have transformation funding available for projects and Leanne Field was asked to look at how the Council might be able to facilitate a peer support group.

At the September 2016 meeting of the Panel, James Fortune (Lead Commissioner, Children's Services) and a Roger Duncan, (Family Therapist/CSE and LAC Therapist, Oxford Health NHS Foundation) attended and highlighted the following:

- CAMHS along with other similar organisations have recognised the need

to transform their services and make dramatic improvements in the services they provide.

- The Government have identified key aspirations they would like to see in place by 2020 and a significant financial investment has been made to help transform services and improve outcomes.
- A young person friendly transformation plan has been developed to support young people's wellbeing and mental health in Wiltshire.
- In light of the national vision a new integrated CAMH Service is due to be re-commissioned, to go live on 1 April 2018.

In Roger Duncan's role which is co-located role with Operational Children's Services he undertakes the following activities:

- Monthly CAMHS Consultations to the social workers and LAC nurses.
- Joint visits to LAC reviews and CSE home visits
- Systemic Therapy for LAC children who might not reach the CAMHS threshold
- Support for CAMHS referrals process and signposting
- Mental Health input to complex LAC reviews and strategy discussions
- Systemic thinking, training and case studies with both the CSE and LAC Health Teams.

Jon confirmed that the Counselling service at Canberra in Melksham was up and running and it was hoped that from the New Year 2017 they might be in a position to dedicate some ring-fenced time for LAC to see a Counsellor at the Canberra Centre, just down the road from Aspire House.

Proposals and Actions for moving my Strategic Priority Forward

To be added.

- 5.4 The additional reporting measures previously agreed have been carried forward. The Panel now report its work through the Wiltshire Council Children's Select Committee. Following each meeting the Chairperson of the Panel sends a copy of the Panel minutes to the Chairman of Children's Select Committee. On a six monthly basis the Panel Chairperson prepares a report for Chairman of the Children's Select Committee, addressing progress against each of the seven strategic priorities. In addition to this the Chairperson of the Corporate Parenting Panel presents an annual report to Full Council which will be shared with the Children's Select Committee prior to submission.

5.5 The new strategy and reporting mechanism will enable Corporate Parenting Panel to more effectively scrutinise and hold to account the services that work with and support our children in care

6. In conclusion:

6.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel has struggled in recent years to fully evidence its impact, this was reported in the 2015-16 CPP annual report. The introduction of a new Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2016-17, with new strategic priorities and an enhanced reporting system has helped to ensure greater impact by panel as evidence in the updates from strategic leads within this report.

7. Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel

7.1 The Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel (SCYPP) which was established in February 2014 has continued to meet in September and December 2016 and March 2017.

7.2 The role of the SCYPP is to secure Councillor involvement and commitment throughout the Council to deliver better outcomes to ensure that all Wiltshire children and young people are safe.

7.3 Councillors Pat Aves (Vice Chairman), Richard Clewer, Mary Douglas, Jon Hubbard, Laura Mayes (Chairman), Helen Osborn, Sheila Parker and Melody Thompson formed the membership of the Panel during the period July 2016 to May 2017. The Lead Officer is Lucy Townsend (Head of Service – Safeguarding and Assessment).

7.4 In the last year, the SCYPP has continued to receive briefings on a variety of subjects to enhance member's knowledge and understanding of Operational Children's Services responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people.

7.5 This has included; overviews of the core data which explains how the data is captured and monitored and used to compare Wiltshire with neighbouring councils and agencies, the safeguarding process and the role of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), information about pre-proceedings, an update on the plan to create a maximum caseload of 18 children promise and attract new social workers to Wiltshire, Emergency Protection Orders and details of the Children's Services Integration Project.

8. Main Considerations for the Council

8.1 The Council is asked to note the work of the CPP to date and the success within year to strengthen its functions and impact of its work.

9. Safeguarding Implications

- 9.1 Within their role as Corporate Parents, Councillors monitor closely the safeguarding of children and young people looked after by Wiltshire Council and in doing so identify issues such as children missing from placement and children at risk of sexual exploitation. These safeguarding functions continue into the future and will be enhanced.

10. Public Health Implications

- 10.1 Looked After Children 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.

11. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

- 11.1 Not applicable.

12. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- 12.1 The proposals seek to bring Councillors and Officers to work together to ensure that our Looked After Children and Young People have a voice within the Council in order to influence the improvement of services for them.

13. Risk Assessment

- 13.1 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.

14. Financial Implications

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

15. Legal Implications

- 15.1 Ian Gibbons (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. Carolyn Godfrey, the Corporate Director for Children's Services is the lead decision maker.

16. Proposal

- 16.1 To receive and note the Annual Report and ratify the improvements required to strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.

Carolyn Godfrey (Corporate Director)

Report Author: Martin Davis (Head of Care, Placements and EDS)

Date of report: 5 June 2017

Background Papers - None

Appendices - Annual Report of the Children in Care Council April 2016 – March 2017