

**Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel
June 2014 to May 2015**

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 Due to the instigation of the new Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel (SCYPP) in 2014 the membership of the CPP reduced to 8 (from 12) Members are nominated by Group Leaders. The SCYPP has begun well, and may require a separate annual report as it matures, but for the moment a short paragraph here would be appropriate. Briefings have been given on a variety of subjects, such as: the child's journey; a day in the life of a social worker; CSE; and the role of the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB). In addition a programme has begun of Councillors adopting a Social Worker, or an individual case. Each member of the Panel has now been paired up with a Social Worker, to gain some insight into their work, the breadth and range of their cases, or to follow an individual case from MASH to conclusion, which may include family visits, strategy discussions, Section 47 conferences and court work. So far this has been a success.
- 2.3 Councillors Andrew Davis (Vice Chairman), Jon Hubbard, Jacqui Lay, Alan MacRae (Chairman), Pip Ridout, Ricky Rogers, Ian Thorn and Bridget Wayman formed the membership of the Panel during the period May 2014 to May 2015. Councillor Alan MacRae was Chairman. The Lead Officer is Karen Reid (Virtual School Headteacher).
- 2.4 The meetings were regularly attended by the following Officers:
- Dave Brown (Missing Children Coordinator), Helen Fielden (Voice and Influence Coordinator for LAC), Carolyn Godfrey (Corporate Director), Christina Gregory (Voice and Influence Research Policy Coordinator), Terence Herbert (Associate Director), Bethany Lewis (Children in Care

Council representative), Dr Stuart Murray (Designated Doctor for Looked After Children), Karen Reid (Virtual School Headteacher) and Anita Traynor (Interim Head of Service – Care and Placement). Other Officers attended as required to present particular reports.

- 2.5 All Councillors have received an enhanced DBS check and the majority of members on the CPP have now completed the specialist Total Respect training which is co-facilitated by both adult and young trainers. The young trainers are all care experienced and have all completed the Open College Network (OCN) accredited 'Train the Trainers' course. The course aims to raise awareness of the issues faced by children and young people in care and to promote their involvement in all aspects of social care. In addition a number of Panel Members have completed an on line training module in raising awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation issues.
- 2.6 Panel members are invited to attend events involving Looked After Children and Young People, which take place throughout the year. The summer barbecue at Braeside is always well attended by children and young people and their families. Braeside staff go out of their way to welcome everybody, and in 2014 once again we were blessed with excellent weather. Panel members have attended and helped with drinks, met the families, talked with young people, and it is always great to see so many young people enjoying this annual event. The Christmas Party is also well attended, and the delight on particularly the younger children's faces when Santa appears is a joy to see. Councillors have been involved in the past in donating Santa's gifts, and the CPP would like to thank all those who have generously donated.
- 2.7 The Panel has considered the following items for discussion :
- Health update
 - Barnardo's Paper – Beyond Care
 - Review of Wiltshire's Independent Visitor Scheme 2013/14
 - Annual Report of the Health of Looked After Children 2013/14
 - Structure of Children and Families and Integrated Youth Services
 - Adoption update
 - Adoption support and the Virtual School
 - Annual Private Fostering Report
 - Foster Carer Recruitment
 - Briefing in response to concerns over delays with Initial Health Assessments
 - Update on Missing Children and Young People
 - Annual report of the Virtual School Headteacher
 - Annual report of the Conference and Reviewing Service
 - Housing.
- 2.8 Since the number of Panel members has reduced, any absence becomes more noticeable and, despite arranging for the CPP and SCYPP members to substitute for each other, there have still been occasions where the number of Councillors is less than the number of young people attending. The Chairman would wish to remind Councillors that they should make every effort to attend,

and seek a substitute if absence is unavoidable. In addition, the Chairman would remind all Councillors that they are all Corporate Parents, and would welcome any of them to any of our meetings or Shared Guardian Sessions.

- 2.9 The Council is responsible for Canon's House which is an 8 bedroom 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 and SCYPP are invited to attend with the officer to carry out the visit. Between June 2014 and May 2015, ten Councillors have attended as part of the unannounced inspections.
- 2.10 Cllr MacRae, as Chairman of the Panel has attended Passport to Parliament meetings in Exeter and Bristol with young people from the Children in Care Council. At one such event in Portcullis House, Westminster, the young people were asked to list all of the areas of their Local Authority that they were involved in. We are delighted to report that Tara and Jo managed to list so many areas where our young people are directly involved that they won the prize, beating many other Local Authorities as for involvement.

3. Special Events

STAR Awards

- 3.1 Both the Primary and Secondary STAR Award events see a large number of children and young people attended to receive their awards and celebrate their achievements with foster carers, social workers, family members and others. From now on these events will occur biennially and the next dates will be set for 2016.

ASPIRE Awards

- 3.2 The Aspire Awards were held on 19 February 2015 and this was first event specifically for the 17+ age group. A red carpet welcome, formal reception and dinner set the scene to celebrate the high level of achievement of those young people nominated for particular success in education, employment or training, most of whom are Care Leavers. This event was designed to be something that young people will aspire to be nominated for in the future. It will also be a biennial event.

Aspire House

- 3.3 Aspire House in Melksham was officially opened on 2 September 2014 by Edward Timpson MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families. Following the opening the Minister wrote to the Virtual School Headteacher and was extremely complimentary about the vision for Aspire House and described it as a 'sanctuary' for the children and young people who are looked after by the local authority. Feedback from children and young

people is extremely positive, such as, “I like being at Aspire because you get the right support for your needs.....”

Children in Care Council

- 3.4 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) meets on a regular basis and the members link with the CPP through the Shared Guardian Sessions.
- 3.5 The CiCC have prepared an annual report of their work and this is attached as Appendix A to this report.
- 3.6 The Promise is the commitment of the CPP to the Looked After Children and Young People and was drawn up through a consultation event with the Young People of the CiCC.
- 3.7 The new shape of the panel continues to evolve, and now we have a young person representative, nominated by the CiCC, who sits on the panel and takes part in agenda setting. We now have topics suggested by CiCC, discussed during the Shared Guardian Sessions, and reported on at the next panel meeting, often with Cabinet Members, Portfolio Holders and senior officers present, both in SGS and at panel. The Panel would like to thank all those who attended for their time and willingness to engage directly with our young people.
- 3.8 The split format of our meetings continues to work well, with the Panel meeting to discuss major items and review indicators of performance in the formal part of the meeting, before the Shared Guardian Session, led by young people. However, we continue to make improvements. For example, we have recently altered the running order of the agenda, moving the routine data to later in the meeting, which allows sufficient time for information and debate on the major items. The formal part of the Panel meetings is designed so that Councillors receive reports from Officers covering the whole range of issues and aspects of the Care system. Performance data, service provision, plans for improvement and feedback from young people are the means by which Panel members are able to advise on further developments and improvements. Recent meeting themes have included: Emotional Wellbeing, Housing, Education, Permanency Planning, Transition to Leaving Care and Health.
- 3.9 These major items are now themed and tied in with the Shared Guardian Sessions. Major themes are planned in advance and relevant officers prepare reports or deliver presentations, with additional attendees as appropriate.
- 3.10 Panel meetings are planned through pre-meetings between the Chairman of CPP, and Lead Officer to ensure that Officers' reports are checked and signed off, the agenda is confirmed with all relevant parties and pre-brief sessions highlight any particular items for celebration and or challenge at the Panel meetings. Another recent innovation is the involvement of our Young people in this part of the process. A member of the Children in Care Council is now invited to take part in these planning meetings, which helps ensure the

panel looks at areas of concern for our young people, and helps to tie-in with the Shared Guardian sessions.

- 3.11 At least 15 young people have contributed to Shared Guardian Sessions over the past year. Council Members and Senior Council Officers from outside of Children's Operational Services have attended to discuss issues such as Housing. This reinforces the whole Council responsibility for the services we provide for children and young people in care and care leavers.

4. Further Developments

- 4.1 It is the aim of the CPP to ensure that all Councillors are aware of their responsibility as corporate parents to Wiltshire's Looked After Children and Young People and to ensure that all Councillors and Wiltshire Council departments are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents proactively. This may involve, for example, the Panel organising specific education and training events for all members to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be corporate parents.
- 4.2 Total Respect training will be re-launched during 2015/16 and once the new training programme is launched, Councillors will be expected to participate. (See Appendix B - Extract from the Council's Constitution - Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors in relation to Corporate Parenting).
- 4.3 It is expected that Councillors attend the Shared Guardian Sessions relevant to their area of responsibility, in order that they are directly involved in the discussions about issues affecting Looked After Children and Young People and can be part of the solutions and improvements. In our forward work programme there will be broad themes listed and other members are welcome to attend any meeting which would be of interest to them.
- 4.4 It is planned that the number and age range of the young people attending the Shared Guardian Sessions will increase again over the coming year.

In conclusion:

- 4.5 The new way of working within the CPP has significantly heightened the input from young people in shaping and improving the services they receive. For example, young people are producing leaflets to send to Care Leavers to inform them of their entitlements on behalf of Wiltshire Council.

5. Main Considerations for the Council

- 5.1 The Council is asked to note the work of the CPP to date and to become involved in the meetings in their role as Corporate Parents.

6. Safeguarding Implications

- 6.1 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.

7. Public Health Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

8.1 Not applicable.

9. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

9.1 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.

10. Risk Assessment

10.1 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.

11. Financial Implications

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

12. Legal Implications

12.1 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.

13. Proposal

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

Carolyn Godfrey (Corporate Director)

Report Author: Karen Reid (Virtual School Headteacher)

Date of report: 27 April 2015

Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A: Wiltshire's Children in Care Council Annual Report 2014/15
Appendix B: Extract from Part 12 of the Council's Constitution – Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors in relation to Corporate Parenting

**Wiltshire's Children in Care Council
Annual Report 2014-15**

**“It’s about making a change and hearing it from the
young people who are in it” (Children in Care
Council member, September 2014)**

**Report authors: Christina Gregory and Helen Fielden
Voice and Influence Team, March 2015**

1. Introduction

The Government white paper *Care Matters: a time for Change* (2007) sets out that the role of the corporate parent, as part of children's trusts, is key to improving the outcomes for looked after children and young people. The paper identified that it was important that children and young people have a chance to shape and influence the parenting they receive.

In order to improve the role of the corporate parent the government expects every local authority to put in place arrangements for a 'Children in Care Council', with direct links to the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member. This gives looked after children and young people a forum to express their views and influence the services and support they receive. Every local authority also sets out its 'Pledge' to looked after children and young people (appendix 1). The pledge covers the services and support looked after children and young people should expect to receive. A vital leadership task of the Director for Children's Services and Lead Member is to take lead responsibility for ensuring that their Children in Care Council regularly addresses the expressed issues raised by looked after children and young people and responds effectively to such issues.

Within Wiltshire the Children in Care Council is coordinated by the Voice and Influence Team. The team aims to ensure that no policy or service for children, young people, parents or carers is developed without first seeking their views and where possible including them at every stage of its development and to make sure that participation and involvement becomes 'the business' of every service and organisation that works with children, young people, parents and carers.

Wiltshire currently runs 2 Children in Care Councils; one for older looked after children (ages 14 – 20) and one for younger looked after children (ages 7 – 14). The older group (Children in Care Council - CiCC) meet once per month and the younger group (Cool Care Kids - ChiCC) meet every 12 weeks. The purpose of the groups is to ensure looked after children and young people have a voice and influence over local decision making. They represent the looked after population and tell the local authority how they can improve the experiences of looked after children, young people and care leavers.

The work of both of the Children in Care Councils in Wiltshire in the past year has influenced a range of decisions and work practice within the local authority. This report sets out what the Children in Care Councils have been doing over the last year including their key messages and the impact they have had.

2. Children in Care Council management information

At the end of February 2015 there were 409 children and young people in the care of Wiltshire Council. 11 young people from CiCC and 9 children from ChiCC have regularly participated in the forums during 2014/2015. In 2014/15 there were 11 CiCC meetings plus a number of additional meetings to work on specific issues, for example organising the personal advisor training and working with the fostering team.

Outlined below is how the demographic of CiCC compares against the wider looked after population in Wiltshire:

Age (years)	Wiltshire wide	CiCC and ChiCC
0-4	18%	0
5-11	30%	15%
12-16	31%	55%
17 and older	21%	30%

Like the wider looked after population, the majority of CiCC and ChiCC members are placed with Wiltshire Council foster carers. We also have members who are in the following types of placements:

- Kinship care
- Foster care through an independent fostering agency
- Independent living
- Host family
- Voluntary sector children's home

There are no members who are currently placed out of county but 1 member has experience of this.

All but 1 member of CiCC and ChiCC are White British. One member is Black African and is an unaccompanied asylum seeker. Other ethnicities are not represented.

3 (15 %) of CiCC and ChiCC members have a disability compared to 5.6% of the wider looked after population.

Boys and young men are under-represented on CiCC and ChiCC, forming only 30% of membership. Efforts are being made to recruit more boys and young men in order to redress the balance.

3. Children in Care Council: key messages and areas of work

3.1. The CiCC action plan

In September 2014 the CiCC created an action plan which sets out what they want to focus on over the next year. This included a focus on:

- Awareness of child sexual exploitation
- Organising and leading on training for personal advisors
- Designing some training for designated teachers
- Creating a young person friendly leaflet explaining the role of personal advisors
- Raising awareness of mental health issues and bullying

The following points highlight the key messages from CiCC and what is being done in response.

➤ We want to be involved in the recruitment of staff

7 looked after young people and care leavers are now trained as interviewers. Stronger links with Human Resources means that these young people are regularly invited to be on interview panels, including that of the Associate Director for operational children's services.

➤ We want to understand the role of a Personal Advisor (PA) for Care Leavers better and understand the level of support a PA can give

Members of the CiCC have designed a leaflet that explains the role of a PA. This will be circulated to other care leavers before they leave care. The leaflet has been approved by the Looked after Children, Young People and Care Leaver's Improvement Group. Some final changes are being made before it is shared with PAs for their comments. It is intended that the leaflet will be available to care leavers by the end of May 2015.

6 young people delivered training to 16 PAs on the 30th of January 2015 to raise awareness of some of the difficulties that young people have in working effectively with their PA. This training enabled dialogue between PAs and plans are now in place for the CiCC to review the Leaving Care procedures and Pathway Plans. As a result of the success of this training session they have been scheduled to take place twice a year.

The following action has been added to the Looked after Children, Young People and Care Leaver's Improvement Plan: gather feedback from looked after young people about the work being undertaken by Personal Advisors, specifically the work to help them be safe and stay safe (action 3.1.1). This feedback should give an indication of the quality of the work that PAs do and whether the training has brought about any improvements.

➤ **Communication between the Children in Care Council and Corporate Parents should be improved**

A CiCC member now attends the Corporate Parenting Panel and feeds information directly to the CiCC. The CiCC sets the agenda for and facilitates the Shared Guardianship Sessions which follow the Corporate Parenting Panel. These sessions allow opportunities for young people to speak directly to councillors about the issues that are affecting them.

CiCC members have led sessions on health, housing and leaving care, and have participated in a session on education. Outcomes from these sessions have included the creation of a budgeting form for care leavers, the consideration of mentors for care leavers and housing officers being invited to CiCC to further discuss the housing needs of care leavers.

As a further outcome, the Care Leavers Charter Task Group has since been exploring the possibility of mentoring for care leavers.

There is now a housing officer whose role includes responsibility for Care Leavers who are moving in to independent accommodation.

➤ **Be more involved in the planning of and setting priorities for meetings**

In September 2014 the CiCC created an action plan setting out their priorities for the coming year and their expectations for behaviour in meetings. CiCC members now take

turns to chair meetings. Before visitors attend the group, the CiCC give their consent according to whether the visit is relevant and helpful to their priorities.

➤ **CiCC would like more opportunities to get their voice heard**

CiCC members attend the following strategic meetings:

- The Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leavers Improvement Group.
- Corporate Parenting Panel.
- The Wiltshire Safeguarding Children's Board.

The CiCC has also been represented at a range of other events and meetings:

- The task and finish group reviewing the Foster Carers Charter.
- The task and finish group reviewing the Care Leavers Charter.
- A Wiltshire Council Member (Chair of Corporate Parent Panel) supported 2 CiCC members to attend the All Party Parliamentary Group meeting for looked after children and care leavers at Westminster in June 2014.
- 5 young people made a presentation at the Wiltshire Assembly on 2nd December 2014 which focussed on child sexual exploitation. The Wiltshire Assembly is the main place where hundreds of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors and Wiltshire's communities come together to decide how to ensure a bright future for the county. The Assembly meets twice a year for its conferences which are themed according to the current most relevant topics for Wiltshire.
- 4 CiCC members are in a social work recruitment film which details what they expect to see from their social worker and what makes a good social worker. This film was used as part of a large scale recruitment drive by Wiltshire Council to attract more social workers.
- 2 CiCC members attended the regional 'Taking it to the Next Level' event on the 6th of September 2014 in Bristol organised by the National Children's Bureau. The event was designed to provide opportunities for Corporate Parents to work directly with young people, share ideas with other Local Authorities to strengthen the CiCCs, explore how Corporate Parents and CiCCs could work together more effectively, and raise the bar in terms of aspirations and actions to improve outcomes for looked after children, young people and care leavers.

➤ **Visit other local authorities and their Children in Care Councils**

In October 2014, the CiCC travelled to Bridgwater to visit Somerset in Care Council (SICC). The visit reinforced the young people's enthusiasm for their work. Plans are being made for SICC to visit Wiltshire and the hope is that relationships will bring more opportunities and learning for both groups.

- **CiCC would like to explore the use of the Mind Of My Own (MOMO) app in Wiltshire (helps young people prepare for reviews, complain etc.)**

It has been agreed that the Manager of the Conferencing and Reviewing Service will organise a presentation of MOMO and invite CiCC members to attend. The use of social media to stay in touch with care leavers is a priority action in the Looked after Children, Young People and Care Leaver's improvement plan.

- **CiCC want to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation (CSE) to other looked after young people**

6 CiCC members took part in Child Sexual Exploitation training on the 22nd of October 2014 delivered by the Sexual Health Promotion Nurse. They are now trying to find more detailed CSE training so that they can use their learning to create resources and/or training for other looked after young people.

- **Better support when leaving care (especially when moving into independent living)**

This has been the theme of a Shared Guardian Session as mentioned above and informed the training for PAs that took place in January 2015.

The CiCC have been consulted on the Care Leavers' Charter and a member sits on the working group.

A report was taken to the Improvement Plans Board chaired by Carolyn Godfrey which included information on a range of issues affecting care leavers. It was agreed that a specific strategic priority would be added to the Looked after Children, Young People and Care Leavers Improvement Plan to focus on care leavers.

➤ **The Emergency Duty Service (EDS) should be easier to contact and calls to EDS should be free from your mobile**

This issue has been raised with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding. The CiCC are awaiting further news on this.

3.2. Consultations

CiCC has participated in the following consultations:

- Young People's Payments and Rewards Protocol: key messages were that young people don't necessarily need to be paid for the work that they do for the council. They are happy if they can take part in fun activities as a reward.

As a result of this consultation, the Voice and Influence Team are working on a new Payments and Rewards Policy, to act as an incentive for young people to become and remain involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of children and young people's services. The Children in Care Council are being rewarded with a trip to Thorpe Park on the 9th of April 2015.

- Suicide and Self Harm Reduction Strategy: the young people felt that professionals should be better educated regarding self-harm and that it should be easier for young people to access help and information.

The implementation plan for the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Commissioning Strategy 2014-2017 is looking to build on young people's recommendations through changing Wiltshire Healthy School's standards to align them with local priorities. A member of CiCC is also the young person representative on the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Commissioning sub-group.

- The future of healthcare provision for looked after children and young people: the group felt that there should be greater flexibility about where they can have their health assessments.

All looked-after children have an initial health assessment of their health and well-being needs which has to be completed within 28 days of becoming looked after.

Initial health assessments are offered to children by community paediatric teams from Great Western Hospital (Swindon and East Wiltshire), GWH Community Services (in Salisbury), and Sirona Care & Health (in North and West Wiltshire).

Through their contributions to these consultations, CiCC members have influenced decision making within the council and help to shape service development

4. Cool Care Kids: key messages and areas of work

There have been 4 successful ChiCC meetings in the last year. The group have participated in consultations on improving child protection conferences, Healthwatch and fostering services.

Below are the issues that the ChiCC raised in 2014/15, and what has happened as a result:

- **All Cool Care Kids members said that they felt that ‘the promise’ to be involved in the choice of their placement from the start was not upheld**

Key messages have been fed back to the Lead Commissioner for looked after children, young people and care leavers. These messages have informed the priority actions in the Improvement Plans around listening and acting upon the voice of the child, care planning and out of area placements.

- **Young people generally reported that child protection meetings are felt to be boring or scary** e.g. the amount of people there; not knowing who everyone is; not feeling in charge. They felt that meetings would be better if they were reassured beforehand and told what to expect; will they miss school, are there refreshments at the meeting, who will be there etc. It was also reported to be more positive if an adult they liked read out their wishes and feelings.

Actions have been added to the Improvement Plans including development of child friendly information for children and young people who are looked after or subject to child protection plans setting out what they can expect from the service and what to do if that doesn't happen.

The Conference and Reviewing Service are implementing a range of methods to limit the worry that young people have about attending conferences and knowing what will happen

at conferences. For example, child protection chairs have created a new leaflet for young people explaining child protection conferences. This should be ready for circulation by the end of March 2015.

Other key messages from ChiCC are around wanting more of a say on house rules, more of a say in their care plans and for more young people friendly/understandable information.

5. Your Voice Consultation (November 2013)

Throughout 2014/15 the Children in Care Councils have also been pushing decision makers to improve practice based on the key messages that were fed back from looked after children and young people as part of the 'Your Voice' consultation in November 2013.

'Your Voice' provides the council with a snapshot view of children and young people's individual experiences of children's social care services. The consultation provided an opportunity for Wiltshire Council to hear the unique, qualitative views of 45 children and young people from across the county who are receiving their support.

The key messages from the consultation in 2013 were as follows:

- Early intervention; for workers to pick up on things quickly and provide support before things get worse.
- Better communication; provide young people with as much information as possible, prepare them for things, be clear with them and always involve them.
- Make time to listen to them – make sure all young people feel that they are really being listened to and that time is being made to listen to them.
- They want regular contact – keep to appointments. Consider alternative ways of communication e.g. text, social media etc.
- Talk to action – be clear with young people about time scales and who is responsible for carrying things out.

The following bullet points set out what has happened as a result:

- The Early Help Strategy was launched in February 2014 which is a direct response to young people wanting things to be picked up quickly.

- The key messages have informed the priority actions in the Safeguarding and Child Protection and Looked after Children, Young People and Care Leaver’s Improvement Plans.
- Children’s front-line social care services were reorganised to reflect the child’s journey and to reduce the number of changes of social worker experienced by a child/young person. This means that when a case is referred to social care the same social worker that completes the first assessment remains involved with the child or young person until the case closes, or the child is living permanently away from home. This should help the child/young person to build a positive and trusting relationship with their social worker.

6. The impact of the Children in Care Council for individuals

The following quotes from CiCC members show the impact of these forums for individuals.

“I feel more confident to speak. I’ve met new people and I enjoy being a CiCC member”
(Male, 16)

“It has really helped me to feel more confident to speak. I think it is really useful because I can help people. I learned more about equality” (Male, 17)

“I truly believe that CiCC has had a dramatic impact on X..... His view of Social workers and the work that they do has completely changed, which has helped him understand his own situation..... We have watched X develop and grow and for him to become involved with something which he feels very passionate about, the results of which I feel will have long lasting results.” (Foster Carer to 17 year old CiCC member)

“Being part of CICC has greatly increased their self-confidence and has given them skills that will (and have) aided them in the work place. As a direct result with CiCC X has provisionally been given a work placement with the leader of Wiltshire Council. They have been given responsibilities they would not otherwise have had and responded well to this.”
(Social Worker to 16 and 17 year old CiCC members).

In addition, 2 members of CICC have gone on to become apprentices at Aspire House, the base for Wiltshire’s virtual school. One member has been offered a work placement with the leader of Wiltshire Council and another will be doing work experience with the council finance team.

7. □ Children in Care Council and Cool Care Kids plans for 2015/16

The following points set out the priority actions for 2015/16:

- 1) Extend the membership of CiCC and ChiCC by recruiting more members and ensuring that they are better representing the views of the wider Wiltshire looked after population.
- 2) Support with the development and create resources and/or training for other looked after young people about child sexual exploitation.
- 3) Make better use of social media to promote what the Children in Care Councils are doing and reach more looked after children and young people.
- 4) Design and deliver training for designated teachers to raise awareness of the needs of looked after young people in education.
- 5) Continue to develop the involvement of children and young people in the recruitment of staff within children’s services.
- 6) Continue to influence worker practice through involvement in delivery of the children’s services induction and Total Respects training.
- 7) Continue to work closely with the Manager of the Conferencing and Reviewing Service to improve both child protection conferences and looked after children and young people’s reviews.
- 8) Work closely with the Wiltshire Council Fostering Service to improve practice (specifically around the recruitment and training of foster carers).

- 9) Raise awareness about mental health services and support (especially self-harm and bullying) in schools.
- 10) Improve the way we assess the impact that CICC has on individual members and the wider looked after population.

The Voice and Influence Team will also be working to better establish and strengthen the links, purpose and presence of the Children in Care Council within the Looked after Children, Young People and Care Leavers Improvement Group and Corporate Parenting Panel.

8. Conclusion

Wiltshire Council is meeting their statutory obligations under *Care Matters: a time for Change* (2007) as they have a fully established Children in Care Council that meets regularly and influences decision making.

Wiltshire Council traces the key messages from children and young people throughout the year and whether actions have been followed up and undertaken using a 'You said... We did' document. This document focuses on things that children and young people feel could be improved and what is being done in response. The views and key messages from looked after children, young people and care leavers are reflected throughout the document.

The work of the Children in Care Councils is embedded within the work of the Looked after Children, young People and Care Leaver's Improvement Group and Corporate Parenting Panel, although there is still some work to be done to strengthen this relationship and ensure that young people's voice is clearly leading to better outcomes for children and young people, and that the Children in Care Council are holding the council to account as their corporate parent.



VOICE

Children in Care Council: The Promise

We Promise:

Being in Care

- A choice of when to move on from care.
- To try not to separate brother and sisters (however, if this is not possible, try to ensure brother's and sister's placements are close together and allow contact).
- To allow looked after children and young people to be involved in the choice of their placement from the start.
- To find a place where you feel comfortable and 'at home' and can stay until the end of your time in care.

Listening to Looked After Children and Young People

- To listen to your views and act on them.
- To provide a social worker you can rely on who keeps to meetings, gives clear information, is honest and responds when needed.
- Make looked after children and young people aware of their rights and to train others in the rights of looked after children and young people.
- To ensure that young people are involved in the creation and regular review of all care plans.

Support

- Better help getting into school whatever has happened.
- To provide support so looked after children and young people can see their family (i.e. transport)
- To use reliable transport for young people.
- To organise group activities for young people in care and those leaving care.
- That if bullying arises for any looked after child or young person it will be dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- To support young people in care to find training, education or a job that suits them when they leave school.

Appendix B

Extract from Part 12 of the Constitution – Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors

6. Principal roles

6.5 To fulfil your responsibilities as a “corporate parent” for children and young people in the care of the local authority

- by having an understanding of the profile and needs of the children in the care of the local authority
- by being aware of the impact on looked-after children of all council decisions
- by considering whether this would be good enough for your own child
- by ensuring that action is taken to address shortcomings in the service and to improve outcomes for looked-after children.
- by being aware of the work and aims of the corporate parenting panel and, if nominated by your group leader, attend meetings of the corporate parenting panel as a committee member

6.6 The council has established a Corporate Parenting Panel, whose role is to secure councillor involvement and commitment throughout the council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who are looked after. The terms of reference now follow:

Part 12A – Role and Function of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Composition

The Corporate Parenting Panel will comprise up to 8 elected councillors politically balanced and nominated by group leaders.

Group leaders may also appoint substitute members to cover absences.

Role and Function

To secure councillor involvement and commitment throughout the council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who are looked after.

To ensure that corporate parenting is a key mechanism by which councillors and officers can ensure that for children and young people in its care, Wiltshire Council is providing:

- warm, welcoming and safe accommodation
- high quality care, nurturing supportive and meaningful relationships that encourage the growth of self-esteem, confidence and resilience, enabling young people to cope with change and difficult times
- the highest standard of education for all and consistent with the needs and abilities of the child
- opportunities and encouragement for self-development and keeping fit and healthy

- encouragement to take up hobbies, acquiring life skills and being a good citizen
- assistance with transition from care to looking after themselves, including the provision of suitable accommodation
- placement stability that will avoid disruption and maintain continuity of care, education placements and relationships.

The Corporate Parenting Panel will:

- undertake regular monitoring of the outcomes associated with these priorities
- make a commitment to prioritising the needs of looked-after children and young people and their carers
- receive reports from the Children in Care Council and act on their views
- provide clear strategic and political direction in relation to corporate parenting
- show ambition and aspirations for all looked-after children and care leavers
- ensure that all councillors and Wiltshire Council departments are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents proactively. This may involve, for example, the Corporate Parenting Panel organising specific education and training events for all members to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be corporate parents
- receive regular/annual reports on the level and quality of services to looked-after children and care leavers
- promote achievement and acknowledge the aspirations of children and young people looked after by supporting celebration events
- investigate on behalf of all councillors ways in which the role of corporate parenting can be improved, using examples from other local authorities
- listen to the views of children, young people and their carers to involve them in the assessment and development of services
- engage with children and young people who are looked after, or have left care, by inviting them to act as advisers to the Panel
- meet with government inspectors, where appropriate, for their input into inspections
- participate as members of the adoption and fostering panel
- champion the provision of council-based work experience placements and apprenticeships for looked after young people
- agree a work plan, review progress, membership of the panel and attainment of its role and terms of reference and report to the Cabinet and Children's Services Select Committee as appropriate, and in any case to the Full Council annually.