

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Meeting: Children's Select Committee
Place: The Kennet Room - County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN
Date: Tuesday 4 September 2018
Time: 10.30 am

The Agenda for the above meeting was published on 24th August 2018. Additional documents are now available and are attached to this Agenda Supplement.

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 713035 or email roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225)713114/713115.

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7 **Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report (Pages 3 - 24)**

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 31 st August 2018

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Wiltshire Council

Full Council Meeting

16 October 2018

Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel
May 2017 to April 2018

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, Pauline Church (Vice Chair), Jane Davies, George Jeans, Laura Mayes (Chair), Stewart Palmen, Melody Thompson and Phil Whalley formed the membership of the Panel during the period May 2017 to April 2018. 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), Judy Edwards (Senior Commissioning Officer), Sarah Gray (Assistant Team Manager), Sarah Heathcote (Head of Child Health Improvement), Terence Herbert (Corporate Director), Lucy Kitchener (Lead Commissioner), Janice Lightowler (Manager – Conference and Reviewing Service), Claudia Megele (Head of Service – Quality Assurance & Principal Social Worker), Lena Pheby (Designated Nurse for Looked After Children), Sally Smith (Foster Carer and Chair of Wilts Fostering Association), Karen Stokes (Missing Children Co-Ordinator), Matthew Turner (Service Manager – Placement Services), Lucy Townsend (Director Families and Children's Services) and Chris Whitfield (Virtual School Head). 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
- Emerald Team – Missing Children data

Annual Reports

- Independent Reviewing Officers Report 2017/18
- Health of Looked After Children - 2017/18
- Wiltshire's Independent Visitor Scheme - 2017/18
- Update on Disruption – 2017/18
- Conference and Reviewing Service - 2017/18
- Private Fostering - 2017/18

Updates

- Children's Placement Budget Management Project
- Looked After Children, Young People and Care Leaver's Improvement Group
- Work of the Children in Care Council
- Adoption West
- Mockingbird Proposal/Family Fostering Groups
- Councillors Strategic Priorities
- MOTIV8
- Independent Reviewing Officers Workflow Timeliness
- Work of the Virtual School

4. Children in Care Council

- 4.1 The Children in Care Council are a key stake holder group in the Corporate Parenting agenda. 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 changed the format of these meetings, agreeing to hold two business meetings and two social events in the year.
- At the Session held on 26 September 2017 we reviewed the Promise to children living in care and care leavers. We discussed each item and its continued relevance. It was agreed that the Promise is aspirational and

represents how the Council should be working for children and young people, even though sometimes this presents challenges. As a result of the discussion the Promise was amended and adopted by Corporate Parenting Panel at its following meeting in November 2017.

- At the Session held on 13 March 2018 we considered emotional wellbeing and mental health. We discussed the triggers that can cause stress and anxiety. Children and young people living in care are exposed to the additional stress of separation, moving home and school. Cllr Pullman agreed to use the issues identified in his work on this priority area and feedback to CPP and CiCC on progress made. We also met with the manager of the Passenger Transport Unit (PTU) to explore the impact and safety issues when taxis are sometimes late. As a result of this discussion PTU put new processes in place to ensure that journeys for young people coming to meetings are less problematic, and the manager took away some individual examples of problems to resolve.

4.3 Membership of CiCC has steadily grown throughout the year however this work will continue throughout 2018-19.

5. Our Performance

5.1 During the year CPP undertook a Review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2018, through consultation with Children in Care Council the same seven priority areas for focus were agreed.

The fundamental aims of this 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, there are seven Strategic Priorities. To ensure that strategic oversight and critical challenge is effective, it is 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 and this forms the basis of the CPP Annual Report.

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 the Chair of Select Committee always receives minutes from each CPP meeting.

I have also concentrated on raising awareness of the need for more foster carers and mentors for children in care. The Foster Carer recruitment film has been shown at all Area Board Meetings, and I have shared recruitment ads on Facebook. I took part in the annual Foster Care week by adding my name to the campaign. This was widely shared on Social Media. The recruitment film was played in the background at a Full Council meeting.

I have recruited two new mentors for the Independent Visitor Scheme and continue to promote the scheme through my work as a councillor in the community.

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

Permanence is the framework of emotional permanence (attachment), physical permanence (stability) and legal permanence (the carer has parental responsibility for the child) which gives a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity. The objective of planning for permanence is therefore to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond. Permanence provides an underpinning framework for all social work with children and families from family support through to adoption.

Permanence can be provided for children through adoption, long term fostering, an order such as a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or child arrangement order (CAO) or a return home.

Research undertaken:

We have held regular meetings with both Matthew Turner, Service Manager Placement Services, and had access to briefings written by Lynda Cox, Head of Performance Management & Information Team.

We have begun to scrutinise Wiltshire Council processes for complying with statutory requirements for permanency and internal scrutiny, these are set out in appropriate guidance to staff. Key panels are established and appear to function well, including Adoption Panel and Permanence Panel, in the year ahead it is our intention to observe both on a regular basis.

Effectiveness:

Adoption Score Card 2014-17 for Wiltshire shows strong results in the three key areas:

A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family is 469 days. The England average is 520 days. A lower number is a good result. (Improving trend, reduced from 545 in 2013-16.)

A2: Average time between the local authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family, 2014-17 is 186 days. The England average is 220 days. A lower number is a good result.

A3: Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %) is 85 (69%). A high number is a good result. The England average is 2014-17 is 53%.

Internal Wiltshire data on LAC permanence 2017/18 shows:

Long-term placement stability at 77% is good (looked after for at least 2.5 years, in the same placement for the last 2 years), this is above the end of year target (72%) and national averages (68%).

12% of children (35) experienced 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months. (A low number is good.) This is higher than we would have hoped for and will therefore become an area of focus in the year ahead.

The percentage of children who are in a long term matched placement after 18 months of being in care has increased from 46% to 63%. (A high number is good.)

In addition, panel has received summary reports outlining learning from placement disruptions and Cllr Davies and Sally Smith have met with the Service Manager – Placement Services to monitor how recommendations from learning are implemented.

Corporate Parenting Panel has given its support to the implementation of a Mocking Bird type project in Wiltshire. This initiative, led by Wiltshire foster

carers, has seen foster carers working together to support each other. Panel will continue to monitor the impact that this has upon children cared for within these hubs, it is anticipated that this will further improve permanency rates.

Evidence suggests permanence planning is now well embedded in Wiltshire's care planning process. However, there is an agreed move to Adoption West on the horizon, therefore we need to keep performance under close scrutiny so that any dip in performance is challenged quickly. This priority should remain on the CPP list until the Adoption West model is secure.

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, he 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. As a member of Foster Panel, Pat can scrutinise the quality of work produced by the Fostering Service, and as Chair of the Wiltshire Foster Carer Association Sally is able to reflect on the quality of support that the service provides to carers.

During the last 3 years an additional 78 Foster Carers have been approved. While the average length of time a foster carer remains registered with the Council is higher than the national average, during the last 3 years despite the increase in the number of new approvals there has been no net increase in the number of foster placements available. As a result, while the proportion of children living in foster placements at 77% is good the proportion placed in-house remains too low at 43%. While long-term placement stability is maintained at high levels as reported elsewhere in the report, performance in relation to short-term placement stability, while not significantly out of line with the national average, is an area for development which is clearly linked to placement sufficiency.

The Fostering Service has recruited a new manager and through the Family and Children's Transformation project a workstream has been created to oversee the effectiveness of a new foster carer recruitment strategy. A more commercial approach is now being taken to advertising, with an external company engaged to develop and implement a new campaign, this will go-live early Autumn 2018. Alongside this we have heard that the Wiltshire Foster Carer Association has agreed to work with the Fostering Service to recruit new carers. Through word of mouth and personal contacts our foster carers will attempt to encourage others to consider becoming a carer themselves.

The Council has now adopted a Fostering Friendly approach whereby employees who foster for Wiltshire can access additional benefits; an Introduce a Friend Reward Scheme is in place; children and carers have been filmed and their stories are now used to publicise the service.

We will continue to monitor the progress of the new strategy in the year ahead. Regular meetings will be scheduled with the Service Manager where performance information will be discussed. In turn, we will keep CPP updated.

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 Melody Thompson and George Jeans)*

We have had a number of meetings with Martin Davis, Head of Care, to discuss changes taking place in central government to increase responsibility for Councils to look after care leavers from 18 – 25 years old. This prompted the start of investigations into Wiltshire Council’s care leaver offer.

Following the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 our duties and responsibilities to care leavers have been extended. Included in the Act is a requirement to publish a Local Offer for care leavers, providing information about services which the local authority offers that may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living.

The Wiltshire Care Leaver Offer has been developed through consultation with Care Leavers, Personal Advisors, Employers, Colleges and other interested parties. Oversight has been provided through Corporate Parenting and Children’s Select Committee. A Rapid Scrutiny Panel was established to consider the final draft proposal.

We were involved in the initial overview and scrutiny meeting to outline the ‘care leavers offer’. Corporate Parenting, Rapid Scrutiny and most importantly care leavers via their Personal Advisors were asked to comment on the priority ordering of the most costly elements of the Local Offer. An example of this ordering is included in the table below. Ultimately Children’s Select agreed with the priority ordering assigned by care leavers themselves.

	Corporate Parenting Panel	Personal Advisers	Rapid Scrutiny
1 st	Funding for 2 extra Personal Advisors	Funding for 2 extra Personal Advisors	Funding for 2 extra Personal Advisors
2 nd	Grandmentors	Grandmentors	Grandmentors
3 rd	Free Bus Pass	Free Bus Pass AND Contribution to Wifi costs	Free Bus Pass (to assist care leavers in attending education, interviews and employment) AND Contribution to Wifi costs
4 th	Council Tax Exemption	Leisure Centre Pass	Leisure Centre Pass
5 th	Extra Care Leaver’s Grant	Council Tax Exemption	Council Tax Exemption

6 th	Leisure Centre Pass	Extra Care Leaver's Grant	Extra Care Leaver's Grant with the addition of "to include a discretionary amount that could be given on a case by case basis, as determined by the team managers"
7 th	Tuition Fees	Tuition Fees	
8 th	Contribution to Wifi costs		

While good engagement across Council services has helped to identify a wide and improved range of services for care leavers, there is further work to be done to extend the principles of corporate parenting beyond Council services and into Wiltshire businesses and key strategic partners. In this way, we will be able to build upon this initial offer so that we provide every opportunity for our care leavers to excel and achieve in adulthood.

We have also attended one meeting of the Looked After Children and Care Leaver Pathway Steering Group and was impressed at the support from different organisations including the DWP who have helped to dispel myths around Universal Credit and the Building Bridges programme. The number of younger care leavers in education or employment compares favourably with statistical neighbours and the England average (68% Wilts, 57% SN, 62% Eng) but our performance is poorer for 19-21 year olds (46% Wilts, 47% SN, 50% Eng). Each of the young people who are not in EET will be referred through the Building Bridges programme and success reported to the Steering Grp. I will continue to provide regular updates to Corporate Parenting Panel so that members are sighted on the outcomes achieved.

Further work is underway in this area including the introduction of Council work placements, mock interviews and a guaranteed interview scheme for Wiltshire Care leavers. An administrative post within the Fostering Service will be advertised with a preference for applications from Care Leavers, depending upon the success of this the Council will look to roll out more widely.

Suitable accommodation rates remain high with performance consistently above 90%. Teams maintain contact with the vast majority of care leavers, throughout the year less than 10 care leavers have not had regular contact with their Personal Advisor.

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)***

Central to all our efforts to improve the education outcomes for all our LAC is the performance of the Virtual School (VS). In this respect, we have had a year of sustained and substantial progress. We have a dynamic new Head of

the Virtual School in place, Chris Whitfield, who has produced properly constructed action plans with timeframes, targets and outcomes.

Also, we have reintroduced the Virtual School Performance Review Meeting with Corporate Director and Cabinet level attendance (which I also attend in my role as Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills), and most significantly have established a Virtual School Governing Board, with an external Chair, which met three times during the year. I also sit on the Board.

The VS also has visits from its Wiltshire Challenge and Support Partner (CASP). This is ensuring that the performance of the VS is continually in focus and regularly monitored. In addition, I have had regular meetings with Chris Whitfield during the year and met with her team at staff meetings.

Central to the new plans and strategy is the determination to intervene earlier and to more effectively use the Pupil Premium, and engage more actively with the designated teachers in schools.

Our KS1 and KS2 results in 2017 were poor compared to our statistical neighbours so a key component of the plans is to work with the youngest children, to establish Early Years Pupil Education Plans (PEP's), and to identify individual learning needs so we can get these children "school ready". This enables them to more readily access the school curriculum. This will take time to manifest itself in the KS1 and 2 results but is undoubtedly the correct strategy. In year tracking data showed a positive improving trend and KS1 and 2 results improved significantly in 2018; comparator data is not yet available but we believe performance for this group of children is strong.

The GCSE results have again been good this year and for this group we substantially outperformed our statistical neighbours. The VS lays on Maths and English revision sessions for our LAC in the Easter holidays and the evidence suggests that these are an effective support. The 2018 cohort will likely find GCSE's a harder challenge than those sitting exams in the summer of 2017 however with improved tracking systems in place we will be able to chart individual learner progress and will be better able to make comparisons across year groups.

Overall the education performance of all our Children in Care is now more regularly and rigorously analysed so that we can introduce timely and appropriate interventions.

The VS is also working with designated Social Workers to reduce placement disruption at crucial exam times. Evidence shows this to be a crucial factor in exam performance and there is now less placement disruption at this crucial time in a child's life.

The VS has also now produced an excellent leaflet explaining how foster carers can support the education of the children in their care however I am keen that we build on this work and have asked that this topic be an agenda item at the next Governor's Board meeting.

My role this year is, individually and as a member of the Review Meeting and Governors, to offer challenge as a “critical friend” and to ensure that the VS continues to implement the action plans with rigor. We also need to monitor the performance to ensure that the identified measures are properly “bedded down” and being effective and if not have the confidence to make adjustments.

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 Pauline Church)***

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.

Police Missing definition:

Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.

Headline Statistics (Q3)

There were 71 episodes of 28 LAC reported missing; 11 of those children were LAC placed in Wiltshire by other LAs. The remaining 17 were Wiltshire LAC including 5 placed out of county. CPP received update reports from the Missing Co-ordinator regarding the work with individual children to reduce missing episodes and associated risk and were satisfied with the action being taken.

Actions:

- Cllr Church meets with the manager and staff of the Emerald Team and detailed reports are presented to every meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- The quality and effectiveness of return interviews is monitored by panel. The percentage of missing episodes where a return interview is offered continues to increase, push and pull factors are reported. Panel has discussed the problem the team experiences in tracking children placed in Wiltshire by other local authorities and the difficulty the Emerald Team experience when communicating with other local authorities where Wiltshire children are placed out of county. Both issues will be subject to continued scrutiny by panel.

- Cllr Church has also attended a number of MASH tours/presentations and encouraged fellow Councillors to attend the series of presentations on offer to help councillors understand their responsibilities as corporate parent.
- Cllr Church reported to Panel that she observed a good mix of social work and police collaboration with good use made of child sexual exploitation indicators. Arrangements are being made for Cllr Church to attend a return interview to observe practice.

The Q3 report to CPP highlights the “Top Missing Children”. The following criteria are used to identify top missing children who were either:

- a. missing for more than 24 hours;
- b. had 3 missing episodes reported in one month,
- c. had 9 missing episodes reported in the quarter

This analysis of missing incidents is discussed further with professionals involved in the case. Of the 20 young people listed in Q3, 7 have been referred to the Emerald Team for direct work or oversight due to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and when appropriate reviewed within the Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation group (MACSE).

Within these reports it is not clear the level of risk associated with multiple missing episodes within this cohort and it is proposed to have a system of risk RAG rating and a directional indication on whether that child’s risk is increasing or improving. This will be a continued area of focus for CPP in the next year.

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

During the last year I have primarily gained knowledge of the current methods of access to mental health services for Children in Care and the plans for changes and improvements moving forwards. I have attended meetings with key Officers including Sam Shrubsole (Oxford Health), James Fortune (Lead Commissioner) and Sally Smith (Chair, Wiltshire Foster Carer Association). Most importantly I led a Shared Guardian session with young people where the focus was on mental health. From these meetings, I have identified a number of strengths and areas for development including:

Strengths:

- OSCA (Outreach Service for Children and Adolescents) is essential and used to help support families in their own environment and to provide out of hours response to critical mental health issues.
- Soft handover arrangements between Child, Adolescent Mental Health Services and Adult Mental Health Services are in place and appear to be working well.

- LAC specialist therapist embedded within the Fostering and Adoption Service work well to support carers and stabilise placements.
- The Training provided to foster carers is very good.
- Referrals to CAMHS are more frequently made once a child is in a stable/long-term placement.
- The support provided within schools is valued
- The SDQ process is now well embedded

Areas for development

- The proportion children in care who receive a formal service from CAMHS is low. Why is this?
- I have heard from carers that more could be done to tailor supports to different age groups.
- Staying Put Policy 18+ provides the opportunity for children to remain with carers but where these young adults experience mental health issues is Staying Put enough, what would Staying Put + look like?

I have arranged a meeting with Phil Alford to discuss the CAHMS Scrutiny Task Groups perspective.

During the year ahead I plan to get more closely involved with the teams providing CAHMS support and the users to help see where the critical support paths are and what can be done to ensure the Strategic Priority is successful.

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 2017 and January and April 2018. 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.

- 7.2 Councillors Pat Aves, Mary Champion, Pauline Church (Vice Chair), Jane Davies, Mary Douglas, Ross Henning, George Jeans and Laura Mayes (Chairman) formed the membership of the Panel during the period May 2017 to May 2018. The Lead Officer is Jen Salter (Head of Service – Support and Safeguarding).
- 7.3 In the last year, the SCYPP has continued to receive briefings to enhance member’s knowledge and understanding of Families and Children’s Services responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people.
- 7.4 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, updates on the Children’s Services Integration Project (CSI) which is now the Families and Children’s Transformation (FACT) Programme, consideration of specific complex case studies to understand the processes, an update on School Nursing provision, information on quality assurance audits and an overview of counselling provision for children and young people in Wiltshire.

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 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. Terence Herbert 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.

Terence Herbert (Corporate Director Children, Education and Skills)

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

Date of report: 28 August 2018

Background Papers – None

Appendices - Annual Report of the Children in Care Council April 2017 to March 2018

Wiltshire
Children in Care Council
Annual Report
April 2017 – March 2018

1. Introduction

Wiltshire's Children in Care Council (CiCC) is coordinated by the Joint Commissioning Team within Wiltshire Council. The work of 'voice and influence' staff within the Joint Commissioning Team supports the Council's ambition that no policy, or service, related to children and young people is developed without first seeking their views. Wiltshire Council believes that participation and involvement becomes 'the business of every service and organisation that works with children and young people.'

This report provides a summary of CiCC activities over the last twelve months, highlights key messages and outlines priorities for future development.

2. What is CiCC?

CiCC is a forum for young people who live in care, and care leavers. Members put themselves forward to have their voices heard, to improve the lives of children and young people living in care and leaving care. Membership fluctuates as young people move onto new opportunities and given the time that they have available. CiCC is open to all young people aged 10 and above, and aims to be as inclusive as possible. Current membership:

Girls	Boys
1 x 17 years	1 x 15 years
2 x 15 years	1 x 11 years
1 x 14 years	1 care leaver
1 x 13 years	
2 x 12 years	
2 x 11 years	
1 x 10 years	
Total female: 10	Total male: 3
Of whom	
1 asylum seeker, 2 out of county, 2 SEND	

3. Messages from CiCC members

Since April 2017, CiCC has been consulted on a range of issues and has made the following input - *You said*. In response, councillors and officers have taken actions – *We did*.

	You said	We did
1	We have views on foster carers, including what makes a good carer and what they can help us to achieve. We have recorded those here .	Recording taken to LAC/YP & CL Improvement Group for information and to inform team development. Also, used in foster carer training and other recruitment activity, for example it will be used on the Fostering Website, and to inform Facebook campaign.
2	We like the revised approach to Missing Return	Coordinator for missing children attended

	<p>Interviews (MRI) and ask that foster carers are encouraged to express relief when children do return home. Anger only makes the situation worse and can lead to us disappearing again. Please remember that we have gone missing for a reason – perhaps connected to the placement.</p>	<p>second CiCC meeting to update on service developments and feedback to young people.</p> <p>Corporate parents agreed a revised approach based on feedback from young people, which suggested that guidance should only be followed when in the best interests of the individual young person.</p>
3	<p>These are our key messages for potential foster carers (as part of the foster carer recruitment drive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't do it for the money • Use your parenting skills to help other children • You can't give up on children • Treat us like you would treat your own children, if you have them • We need to feel cared for • You need to build a relationship with us • Give us space to grow but be there for us • You should have some experience of children • Don't wrap us in bubble wrap • Have boundaries • Remember that we are young people, just like other young people 	<p>Placement Services staff took comments away for inclusion in foster carer recruitment information sessions and to inform other recruitment and training materials.</p>
4	<p>We believe that children coming into care should not be overwhelmed with information. We need information that is proportionate and up to date. We like the File of Facts (that is now out date) and think it could be updated or replaced with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a simple leaflet when first coming into care • a video • information on a website • a fuller document when we have been in care for a time 	<p>IRO and IV Scheme Manager visited CiCC to discuss resources and took away young people's ideas. They created a postcard for children and young people coming into care, which is now complete and being circulated to safeguarding teams for use. File of Facts has been revised and will be reprinted in-house as a booklet, rather than a folder. Poster with artwork of corporate parenting panel has been created and will sit on website, and is on display at Aspire House. Design team yet to work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CiCC member handbook • CiCC recruitment leaflet • complaints leaflet <p>The Children's Champions Working Group is also working on guides to assessment for primary and secondary age children.</p>
5	<p>We attended fun information days in September to hear about joining the Children in Care Council. We like the idea of CiCC and want to meet with other young people like us.</p>	<p>CiCC continues to develop and grow. The issue of resourcing CiCC effectively has been discussed with the Children's Champions Working Group, which proposed that Children's Champions (who are key workers and social workers) get involved with CiCC for specific pieces of</p>

		work. This has been discussed with CiCC to establish whether this would compromise the independence of the group. Whilst there were no objections, the involvement of social workers does not solve the resourcing issue as their priority needs to be cases.
6	We are happy that our comments about the Leaving Care Survey were taken into consideration and that the survey is now available online and in paper form	This is now in place and reports are available. Currently, completion rates are low and the Children in Care Teams have been reminded of the importance of completing them.
7	<p>The Promise needs updating and this is the updated version we propose:</p> <p>We (Wiltshire Council) promise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A choice of home where you can stay until you are ready to move on from care • To keep you together with brothers and sisters whenever we can, and to help you stay in close contact with your family if that's what is right for you • To listen to your views, act on them when we can and be honest when we cannot • That your social worker will work hard for you to solve problems • To tell you what your rights are and what you are entitled to • That you will be involved in decisions taken during your looked after child review • To involve you in decisions about school and to help you get to school so that your education can continue • To arrange transport for you that is reliable, gets you to school, important meetings, and on time • To invite you to group activities with other children living in care, and those leaving care, to help you feel more confident • That we will deal with bullying quickly and efficiently • To support you when you need help with school, leaving school and preparing for 	Discussion with Corporate Parenting Panel in November 2017 resulted in adoption. Signed copy is available on website and is on display at Aspire House.

	employment and training	
8	We do not want to be asked repeatedly about services, for example, annual foster carer review. We'd rather that these things are covered in our reviews with our IROs.	Service manager, foster carer social work teams, took away feedback, as well as FACT project lead for consideration in transformation of children's services. New approach to include greater systematic and 'joined up' service user feedback.

4. Activities during the last 12 months

As well as meeting and considering policy matters, CiCC has engaged in many activities, which have included:

- Discussions and engagement with corporate parents at Shared Guardian meetings and social events
- Induction training for new staff within Children's Services
- Recruitment panels for senior appointments
- Training social work students at Wiltshire College
- Helped to run fun days at Braeside in Devizes and Five Rivers in Salisbury, resulting in new members
- Engagement in anti-bullying 'big conversation' during anti-bullying week
- Two CiCC members standing for election to UK Youth Parliament.

5. Priorities for future development

CiCC has identified priorities that it wishes to work on in 2018, in order of priority:

Action

- 1 Raise awareness of mental health and emotional wellbeing
- 2 Raise awareness about bullying
- 3 Continue to make newsletters
- 4 Training new staff – children's services induction, Wiltshire college and any other opportunities
- 5 Be professional when we have meetings and develop skills to be effective representatives
- 6 Meet other CiCCs from other counties (it will be more fun if there are some activities)
- 7 Taking part in consultations
- 8 Influence decision makers by sharing experiences and that of others

CiCC were keen on the idea of receiving training to become more skilled representatives; content is being developed in partnership with the Head of Virtual School.

Recruitment remains a key priority to ensure secure and meaningful representation. During the early part of 2017, local community area meetings were trialled but were not successful at increasing representation or accessibility. In 2017/18, a different model will be reviewed by CiCC members, whereby they have opportunities to meet at a different time of the week, and to have more time for fun, consultation, and personal development activities. Proposals are currently being drafted in consultation with young people from the CiCC, Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY), Youth Safeguarding Board (YSB) and partner

organisations. These **may** include a pilot to:

- Enhance separate CiCC, WAY, and YSB voice by creating a single Wiltshire Youth Forum
- 6 Saturday meetings of the Wiltshire Youth Forum, plus 3 distinct annual meetings for CiCC
- Venue – possibly Aspire House, Braeside or another central venue more conducive to youth work than County Hall
- Kick-start new programme with a launch event, following on from the 2017 Youth Summit, which identifies a work plan/activities for the year
- Youth leadership offered by trained Care Ambassadors and Care Leaving Ambassadors, plus Members Youth Parliament (x3)
- Co-facilitated and resourced by Wiltshire Council and partners
- Youth attendees: children living in care, care leavers, members UK Youth Parliament (MYPs), school council representatives from Wiltshire secondary and independent schools, colleges, Local Youth Network members, Youthwatch, CAMHS participation user group, voluntary and community sector representatives.
- Partner organisations: Wiltshire Council Children's Services, Wiltshire Council Communities Team, Wiltshire Council Public Health, Healthwatch Wiltshire (delivered by Evolving Communities), Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board, Virgin Care (delivering child health services), Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (delivering child and adolescent mental health services), Wiltshire Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum, Wiltshire Parent Carer Council, Wiltshire Community First.
- **Sample agenda:**

Time	What	Facilitator
11am	Welcome and icebreaker	Youth leaders
11.20am	Activity sharing part 1 What's the hot topic where you are? What have you done? What's made a difference? Feedback from task groups	MYPs
	Activity sharing part 2 You Said, We Did	Partner agencies
11.50	Issue-based activity/discussion e.g. mental health, community safety, school nursing	Relevant agency
12.20pm	Break	
12.50pm	Interest group break-out Children in care Care leavers MYPs Young carers LGBT community Policing/community safety Education, skills and training	Corporate parents/commissioners/police youth engagement officers/virtual school/community engagement managers/social work managers/public health/directors

	Mental health For activity/discussion and action on key areas of interest/need	
1.50pm	Skills development e.g. representation, listening, campaigning, project management Completion of Personal development tracker (Youth Wheel)	LA participation lead
2.45pm	Wrapping up and task group arrangements	LA participation lead
3.00pm	Close	

Proposals for change are considered necessary as:

- The current format for CiCC is not ensuring a good enough experience for members
- This leads to difficulties in recruiting and retaining members
- Meetings at County Hall are not conducive to the safe and effective management of the group
- Staff delivering CiCC do not have adequate skills to manage the group

6. Meeting dates

At March 2018, the following schedule for the year is proposed, although this is subject to change given proposed developments.

March	Tue 13 Mar. County Hall, Trowbridge. Shared Guardian Session (with Corporate Parents) 5pm-6.30pm
April	Tue 24 Apr. Five Rivers, Salisbury. 5pm-6.30pm
June	Wed 6 Jun. County Hall, Trowbridge 5pm-6.30pm
July	Wed 4 Jul. Strategic Youth Voice event 4.30-7pm
September	Sat 8 Sep. Devizes Leisure Centre 1.30-4pm
September	Tue 18 Sep. County Hall, Trowbridge. Shared Guardian Session (with Corporate Parents) 5pm-6.30pm
November	Wed 14 Nov. County Hall, Trowbridge Joint meeting with Wiltshire Assembly of Youth and Youth Safeguarding Board Anti-bullying week 5pm-6.30pm
December	Wed 12 Dec CiCC Christmas Get Together Details to be confirmed

Report author: Judy Edwards, Joint Commissioning

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