

Wiltshire
Corporate Parenting Panel
Annual Report
September 2020 – July 2021

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

19 October 2021

Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel
September 2020 to July 2021

Executive Summary

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

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

The report gives an overview on the Panel's work programme, the scrutiny of performance, the Corporate Parenting Strategy, details and data within the key service areas, challenges/successes during Covid-19, progress since the 2019 Ofsted inspection, the Panel's impact and ambition, the work of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel and planned next steps to further strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.

This report was reviewed by the Children' Select Committee Standing Task Group on 22 September and by the CPP at their meeting on 28 September 2021.

Proposals

1. To receive and note the Annual Report and the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to date, its functions and impact of its work and to ratify the improvements required to further strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.
2. To receive and note the Annual Report of the Children in Care Council 2020/21 attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

Reasons for Proposals

To remind all Councillors that they have responsibilities as a "corporate parent" for children and young people who are Looked After in Wiltshire.

To ensure that the voices of children and young people continue to be heard and understood by Members, officers and all Corporate Parents whilst ensuring that these opinions are fully reflected in practice improvement.

Martin Davis
Director of Families and Children's Services

Lucy Townsend
Corporate Director – People/Director of Children's Services

Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel
September 2020 to July 2021

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.
- 1.2 The report captures the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for children looked after and care experienced young people. The report outlines the key principles and priorities for the Council as Corporate Parents including a review of the performance data and activity aligned with this. The meetings relate to the strategic objectives as agreed by children and young people and elected members. This year has seen the growth and development of the work of the Child and Youth Voice team, ensuring the voice of young people are heard and transparent in all the work that we do.
- 1.3 The government introduced clear corporate parenting principles that require all departments within a local authority including staff, elected members and partner agencies to recognise their role as a corporate parent and encourage them to look at the support and services they provide. The principles are:
 - To act in the best interest and promote the physical, mental health and wellbeing of children and young people looked after;
 - To encourage children and young people looked after to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - To consider the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people looked after;
 - To help children and young people looked after to gain access to, and make the best use of, the services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for children and young people looked after;
 - To ensure children and young people looked after are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education and/or work place;
 - To prepare children and young people looked after for adulthood and independent living.

2. Background

- 2.1 The role of Wiltshire's Corporate Parenting Panel is to secure Councillor involvement and commitment throughout the Council to deliver better outcomes for children and young people who are looked after, or care experienced. 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 Wiltshire Corporate Parents are responsible for 434 children who are looked after (end of Q1 2021/22) and 296 care experienced young people (66 aged 16-18, 174 aged 19-21 and 56 aged 22 – 25). Of those children in our care, 26% are voluntarily accommodated (children who were taken into care with the parent's agreement), with the remaining children subject to an interim or full Care Order. 81% of children looked come to our attention due to abuse or neglect, followed by 13% due to the family being in acute stress and 6% due to an absent parent.¹
- 2.3 Since 2014, the number and rate of children in care in Wiltshire has steadily increased up until the most recent year, 2020/21, when it started to reduce. This mirrors the increasing trends seen in the national and statistical neighbour data however the latter group have seen a sharper increase over this period. The 2020/21 Wiltshire rate of 39 per 10,000 children aged 0-17 years remains significantly below the latest published rates (2019/20) for our statistical neighbours (57 per 10,000) and the National average (67 per 10,000).
- 2.4 Councillors Pat Aves, Mary Champion, Jane Davies, (Vice Chair), Peter Hutton, George Jeans, Laura Mayes (Chair), Stewart Palmen, and James Sheppard formed the membership of the Panel during the period July 2020 to May 2021.
- 2.5 On 6 May 2021 the local elections were held and the Panel's membership is now as follows: Councillors Mary Champion, Peter Hutton (Chair), Cllr Laura Mayes, Cllr Dominic Muns, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cllr Jack Oatley, Cllr Stewart Palmen, Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney. The Lead Officer is Iona Payne (Head of Children in Care and Young People's Service).
- 2.6 The meetings were regularly attended by the following officers and representatives:

Neil Adlam (Children in Care Team Manager), Gary Binstead (Head of Commissioning – Families and Children), Naomi Black (Designated Nurse for CLA), Dexter Chipeni (Commissioning Support Assistant), Kathryn Davis (Service Manager – Virtual Head and Vulnerable Groups), Martin Davis (Director – Families and Children), Judy Edwards (Commissioning Programme Lead) Sally Ellis (Public Health Specialist), Simon Fairgrieve (Children's Services Information Lead), Samantha Heathcote (Locality Team Manager), Sara James (Service Manager – Quality Outcomes), Michele Llewellyn (Head of Service – Children in Care and Placement Services), Dr Cathy Mallet (Designated Doctor for Children Looked After (CLA)), Elly Mills (Operational

¹ CPP Performance report is provided at Appendix 1 – CLA Starts Breakdown

Lead for IRO's and Child and Youth Voice), Steve Parfitt (Foster Carer and Wilts Fostering Association representative), Iona Payne (Head of Children in Care and Young People's Service), Lena Pheby (Designated Nurse for CLA), Rhys Schell (Communities Specialist Manager), Jemma Sherman (Personal Advisor), Karen Stokes (Missing Children and CSE Co-Ordinator), Cameron Strawson (Youth Voice Support Worker), Joe Sutton (Youth Voice Lead Worker), Lucy Townsend (Director of Children's Services), Jay Williams (Kinship and Fostering Manager) and representatives of Wiltshire CCG. Other Officers attended as required to present particular reports.

Tia Fear (Youth Consultant) attended the meeting on 19 January 2021 and Alex McDermid (Chair of the Children in Care Council) attended the meetings on 19 January, 23 March and 29 June 2021.

3. Work Programme

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) has discussed a broad range of topics whilst considering the young people's views. A Children in Care Council (CiCC) representative has been invited to attend each Panel meeting and, whilst not able to attend all, they have provided invaluable help and opinion.

3.2 The Panel has received the following reports and information:

Quarterly Performance Data

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

3.3 In Autumn of 2020 an Officer/partner working group had been set up to look at how the performance data was presented to the Panel and how the data might be matched up with the Panel's 8 strategic priorities. This was not a straightforward task as there was not a natural fit for some of the metrics, however a list of 8 categories/domains of data was devised as follows;

- i) Health and wellbeing
- ii) Safety and security
- iii) Stability and permanence
- iv) Timely and consistent support
- v) Education
- vi) Fostering
- vii) Care leavers
- viii) Child's voice

Annual Reports

- Adoption West – 2019/20
- Health of Looked After Children – 2019/20

- Virtual School – 2019/20
- Wiltshire’s Independent Visitor Scheme – 2020/21
- Independent Reviewing Officers – 2020/21
- Update on Disruption Meetings – 2020/21

Updates

- Management of the Children’s placement budget
- Foster Carer Recruitment/Fostering Excellence Programme
- Councillors Strategic Priorities
- Virtual School – Provision educational results and analysis
- Work of the Children in Care Council and Youth Voice
- Key areas of Children’s Services
- Forecast modelling on the Anticipated Increase in Demand for Children’s Services
- Review of Local Offer for Care Leavers
- Mental Health Support Team Programme for Wiltshire Schools
- Panel’s achievements for last 4 years and proposed workplan moving forward
- MOTIV8 service
- Working with young people – Community Engagement Team
- Update on Children’s Services Demand (Covid recovery)

4. Scrutiny of Performance

- 4.1 There are two aspects to the scrutiny function of the Panel; the receipt of reports relating to the identified priorities (and the resulting analysis and discussion) and the scrutiny of performance data.
- 4.2 A new performance report was developed in late 2020 which aims to provide a consolidated view of data about our children, their achievements and the quality of the parenting they receive from us. The report consists of 3 main elements:

1. The CPP Scorecard

The scorecard aims to provide a balanced view of performance across the range of responsibilities and priorities Wiltshire has as a corporate parent. It provides a single view of indicators broken down into 8 domains (Health & Wellbeing, Safety & Security, Stability & Permanence, Timely & Consistent Support, Education, Fostering, Care Leavers and Child’s Voice).

It has been developed upon the following principles.

- Report the latest data available for each indicator at the time of the corporate parenting panel.
- Report data that needs to be reported, not that which is ‘easy to report’ and has always been reported.
- Report data that can be compared with expected performance levels, previous time periods and where possible with other similar local authorities.

- Provide the data in a format which balances accessibility with completeness.

At each meeting, an exception report is presented by the Head of Service for those indicators which are outside the expected range or below the required target level.

2. At a Glance Datasheet

This element provides demographic, placement and legal status breakdowns of our current caseload, those starting to be looked after within the year and those who have previously been in our care.

3. Data spotlight

This section provides an area where a more detailed view of data can be presented on a specific area of our corporate parenting responsibilities, the theme of which is agreed at the previous meeting.

A copy of the CPP Performance report is provided at Appendix 1 of this report.

5. The Corporate Parenting Strategy

5.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy was reviewed in 2020 and approved by Full Council in October 2020.

5.2 The fundamental aims of the Corporate Parenting 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 care experienced, scrutinising the quality, effectiveness and performance of the services that support them.

5.3 **The Priorities:** The Strategy, has eight strategic priorities. Each member of the Panel has a lead role for a strategic priority ensuring oversight and critical challenge. The revised priorities and the Councillor/Officer lead are detailed below:

1. A loving home where I have good relationships, respect and the opportunity to see my family. *Cllr Mary Champion – Support Officer – Michele Llewellyn – Young person lead – Amber M*
2. To have links with my local community where I am trusted, respected and accepted. This means I can access the local community and I am not left

out. *Cllr Laura Mayes - Support Officer – Rhys Schell – Young people leads – Konrad and Alex*

3. To feel and be safe. *Cllr Peter Hutton – Support Officer – Sara James – Young people leads – Konrad and Amber L*
4. Support with my mental health especially at school, at a time and a place that suits me and not services. *Cllr Stewart Palmen – Support Officer – Saffia Ahmad– Young person lead - Alex*
5. Support to be healthy and this includes opportunities to be involved in new activities. *Cllr Jack Oatley – Support Officer – Chris Hussey – Young person lead – Jess*
6. Support to be the best I can. *Cllr Dominic Muns – Support Officer – Kathryn Davis – Young people leads – Rose/Alex*
7. Support for as long as I need it. *Cllr Simon Jacobs – Support Officer – Neil Adlam – Young people leads – Daniel and Alex*
8. To be heard – my voice is not the only way I am heard, it may come out as my behaviour. *Cllr Sam Pearce-Kearney – Support Officer – TBC – Young person lead - Alex*

5.4 Following the elections in May 2021 all Cllrs were invited to attend an induction training session titled “Introduction to Families, Children and Education Directorate” which included understanding what is corporate parenting and their role as a corporate parent. We had 53% attendance for this event, however those who could not attend were able to access the recording. This was followed by a more specific Corporate Parenting Panel training in June 2021 for existing Cllrs on the Panel and newly elected members joining the Panel. We had 75% attendance for this training as it clashed with the LGA Conference on CPP however again those who could not attend were able to watch the recording. The training was delivered by officers and children and young people from youth voice.

6. Our Virtual School

6.1 Kathryn Davis, the Virtual School Head (VSH), provided a verbal update to panel in September 2020, reporting on Key Stage 4 exam outcomes for academic year 2019-20. Unvalidated data indicated that 30.56% of our young people who have been looked after for at least 12 months achieved a 9-4 pass in English and Maths (27.91% for all children looked after). This was a significant increase on Wiltshire attainment in previous years and higher than most recent published national CLA data. Looking towards the end of the new academic year 20-21, the panel asked about predicted KS4 outcomes and the VSH advised that prior attainment data suggests attainment outcomes are not likely to be as strong, although aspirations remain high and models of support rigorously implemented.

- 6.2 In January 2021, the Head Teacher's Report was shared at CPP with an opportunity to scrutinise the Virtual School's performance at each key stage and to understand what this meant in terms of individual children's outcomes. Performance data was shared for attendance, exclusions, attainment, progress, PEP timeliness and PEP quality. The report also included a breakdown of Pupil Premium Plus spend of £763,600 and, for the first time, analysis was shared on impact of spend against pupil outcomes achieved, allowing for better quality scrutiny of 'what works well' for supporting care-experienced children in schools.
- 6.3 In order to support work towards CP strategic priorities, the Virtual School Head continued to meet with the Lead Member for Education and SEND during the academic year (AY), which included a meeting with our link young person in January 2021. The focus for the link work on the priority 'support to be the best I can' has been on education, employment and training opportunities for children in care and care leavers Post 16. In July 2021, the Virtual School Head met with the new Lead Member for Education to provide an update on the role of the Virtual School, with the next meeting for strategic priority development work scheduled for 2 September 2021.
- 6.4 The Virtual School has contributed to each data set for the new CPP score card introduced this year. In June 2021, education was the scheduled 'spotlight' focus for panel. The Virtual School Head highlighted to panel that National curriculum statutory assessments for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 were cancelled by DfE for the academic year 19/20 and for 20/21 due to Covid-19. Therefore, the attainment data in the scorecard (with the exception of GCSE results) is from latest published data in academic year 18/19. In the absence of statutory assessments, the Virtual School has continued to seek end of year teacher assessments from schools, so that important judgements about (and support for) the progress and attainment of our children could continue to be made. The Virtual School Head has proposed that this teacher assessment data is included in the score card from September 2021 (with a clear marker that these are not statutorily assessed outcomes) in order that panel can continue to provide effective scrutiny and make meaningful comparisons when looking at AY 21-22 data.
- 6.5 The VSH provided panel with a teacher assessment update noting that the percentage of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) increased by 20% in 19/20 from the previous academic year. The percentage of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 1 increased by 9.6% in 19/20 from the previous academic year. The percentage of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2 increased by 15.37% in 19/20 from the previous academic year.
- 6.6 Latest published data (LAIT 2018 - 2019) shows that attendance of Wiltshire looked after children was higher (96.6%) than for looked after children nationally (94.9%), in the South West (94.4%) and for statistical neighbours (94.5%). There is no published data for 2020 or 2021 due to removal of requirements to report in the context of Covid-19. However, internal data sets,

before the Covid-19 impact from March 2020, we were on track to have absence rates lower than for CLA nationally (at 4.7%) by the end of the academic year. In academic year 2020-21, attendance reporting was again impacted by Covid-19. Schools and settings remained open to looked after children during the lockdown period January through March 2021.

- 6.7 Many education good news stories have been shared at CPP during the last year. Examples have included:

J (Y10) joined her school in September as a new student. This is the message received from her teacher during the most recent lockdown: "I am writing to let you know how impressed I have been with J's work in our live English lessons lately. Despite being faced with a new way of learning and submitting work, J has responded with nothing but resilience, tenacity and self-discipline. It is a pleasure to be her teacher. Please congratulate J on her hard work and encourage her to keep up the good work!"

C has been voted in as a prefect at her 6th form college

A is an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child and is in the last year of his L3 Engineering course at Chippenham College. He was supported to complete his UCAS personal statement by his VSO and SW and, due to A's commitment and effort, he has been offered a place at Anglia Ruskin University and has conditionals at UWE, Brighton and Bournemouth. He now has both apprenticeship and HE options available to him, which is so well deserved.

E achieved fantastic GCSE results - 6 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above including a Grade 7 in Humanities. E attends a special school for SEMH and has really shown huge maturity and resilience particularly in the latter part of Y11. He has now started a Level 3 course at college, which he is very happy about.

T lives with his foster carer in Wales. His attendance at school before coming into care was around 35%, but at his new school in Wales he has had excellent attendance, receiving 100% attendance certificates 2 years in a row. In year 10 during a History trip to France, T was given the honour of placing the Welsh Guards' wreath on the memorial in Belgium. This honour is only given to young people who have proved themselves worthy and staff felt that T's support of other students and also of staff on the trip had been exemplary. T's commitment to the school community was also a factor in their choice. He was highly thought of amongst teachers and peers and managed to achieve his GCSEs this summer, including the equivalent of 5s (Welsh schools still use letter grading) for English Literature and Science, and is now progressing on to college.

- 6.8 This academic year has again generated many challenges for our children in care and care leavers, with a particularly significant Covid-19 impact for those in exam year groups. We know how hard our care experienced young people have worked; we know that it wasn't always easy and we know how much it matters. We're proud of all they have achieved and look forward to reporting to

CPP in the new academic year about the next stages of their education and training.

7. Placement Stability

7.1 There is a range of information made available to the Corporate Parenting Panel which helps to indicate the effectiveness of the Council's work in terms of Priority 8 "A loving home where I have good relationships, respect and the opportunity to see my family". In **June 2021**, the Panel were presented with a data spotlight report on stability and permanence. The two National Indicators relating specifically to placement stability are:

- i) **% of looked after children with 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months.** In 2020/21, Wiltshire performance was 6.5%, exceeding the target range of 7-10%. This is a significant improvement to 2019/20 where it was at 11.0% and is much better than similar local authorities at 13%, the South West at 12% and the national average of 11%.
- ii) **% of children looked after for more than 2.5 years and in placement for at least 2 years.** In 2020/21, Wiltshire performance was 78.1%, again well within the target range of 75 to 82%. This is also an improvement to last year where it was at 77.0% and is again much better than similar local authorities at 66%, the South West at 68% and the national average of 68%.
- iii) A review of the 2020 – 21 data on placement moves identified that 83% of changes of placement were positive planned moves predominantly in line with the child's care plan. 17% of change of placement were due to the child's behaviour or the child requesting to end the placement.

7.2 It was also highlighted to Panel that children fostered who are in our in-house provision (including Connected) is 50.2% well within the target range of 45 to 55%. This is an improvement to last year where it was at 44%. This improvement was due to the Fostering Excellence project and with another 12 months to go we are ambitious this will rise to 75%. **The Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officers** presented in the **June 2021** Panel also highlighted that there are plans in place for 2021/2022 to ensure that Care plans promote permanence and stability for children in care and effectively meet their development needs.

7.3 In **September 2020** the Panel were informed the Commissioning team had reviewed residential placements and highlighted that a focus had been in place on 11 young people of which 3 had a successful move on placements from a residential home. This included positive moves to foster homes and semi-supported accommodation. Whilst we want as many of our children in care to be with our foster carers we also recognise for some young people residential homes are in their best interest and best placed to meet their needs. One young person as part of the children in care council and working with the commissioning team was able to share about her positive experience of being in care.

- 7.4 Disruption Meetings allow us to reflect upon situations that arise, leading to unplanned endings of arrangements for children. It is important that we learn the lessons about what happened and what could be done differently in the future, thus improving retention.
- 7.5 The Annual Disruption Report was presented to Panel in **June 2021** and three particular themes were identified, similar to previous years there was the support, supervision and training provided to foster carers; secondly the skills, experience and resilience of the foster carer, where we are reminded of the fact that foster carers come from a range of different backgrounds and experiences and these have an impact on continuing life experiences. The third area was the experience of the child or young person, acknowledging the impact of adverse childhood experiences and the trauma it produces and how this impact on their chronological functioning. To address these three areas we have introduced further training: therapeutic and trauma informed; increased supervision through increased social work capacity.

8. Children Missing from Care

- 8.1 The impact of COVID has been considered during 2020/21 and noted that whilst overall numbers of missing incidents reported had reduced, those that related to children looked after were consistent with previous reporting periods prior to the pandemic.
- 8.2 In January 2021 it was highlighted that 29% of all missing return interviews offered had been declined by the young person. It was noted that it is not mandatory for a young person to participate in a missing return interview, some young people state they have been out with friends and arrived home later than curfew and many do not share a reason why they do not want to take part in the process and simply decline. Work has been undertaken with Child and Youth Voice lead to discuss the missing return interview format and how best we can engage all young people in the process wherever possible. Changes to the reporting was undertaken to share the young person's voice with members.
- 8.3 In January 2021 it was also noted that the % of children looked after with a missing episode at 8.5% is lower than our statistical neighbours at 11%. Also the average number of missing incidents per CLA at 3.4 is below the reported average of 5.4. (Data from 19/20 published data, 903 census).

9. Our Fostering Service

- 9.1 The Fostering Excellence programme was implemented in Spring 2020, following planning and preparation, including consultation with foster carers, over several months. Fostering Excellence is a three-year project seeking to transform our kinship and fostering services. Our ambition is that by creating positive change it will lead to improvements in our service, which will be reflected in our recruitment and retention data. An example of positive change is the introduction of Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) that we have 'bought in' to train social work staff and others across the directorate and our

foster carers, specifically with reference to the PACE model. PACE acronym stands for Playful, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy. This has been delayed somewhat due to lockdown and reduced virtual group size. We have also been able to appoint an additional Assistant Team Manager using the Fostering Excellence funding.

- 9.2 Our main target is to have 65% of our children looked after living with Wiltshire Council approved foster carers by April 2023. There are two key aspects to achieving this ambitious target. First, seeking to recruit, assess, and approve approximately 100 new fostering households by April 2023 which would hopefully lead to a net increase of 60 fostering households. The second part is the retention of current fostering households through improved payment and support. If we seek to minimise our losses and increase our gains, our overall net growth of carer households will grow and enable us to achieve our target.
- 9.3 During 2020/21 (year 1 of 3) we successfully approved 36 new mainstream fostering households and de-registered 16 mainstream fostering households, providing a net growth of 20. This was a significant achievement as in the previous 5 years we had only achieved a net growth once and on that occasion, it was a net growth of 1. During the other 4 years we broke even once and experienced net losses on three occasions. Therefore, we can see the positive impact of the Fostering Excellence programme at a time when local authorities in England were overall shrinking in terms of approved household numbers. However, the evidence across England is that local authority available fostering beds have grown by 10% over six years, up until 2020. Our gains last year alone enabled us to grow by 8%, in terms of beds available. Since January 2021 we have been purposefully seeking specialist carers, to better meet our sufficiency need for older teenage children and children and young people with complex needs.
- 9.4 In January 2021 we ran a campaign to recruit specialist foster carers, which included our STEPS carers (Short Term Emergency Placements), Parent and Child, and Home Away from Home – Specialist. Working together with Comms and an external marketing agency we created a new digital brochure available to download and new independent web landing pages [Wiltshire Council - Fostering \(fosteringwiltshire.uk\)](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fostering). We have continued to improve our digital advertising and social media, and our footprint continues to grow, in terms of followers and overall impact. We ran a specialist fostering information session, linked to this campaign, which we recorded as this enables us to send the link to the film, to people who express an interest in those specific types of fostering.
- 9.5 As a result of the campaign to recruit specialist carers we have recruited an additional STEPS carer, parent and child carers, carers who have been able to take siblings and an application for specialist short breaks.
- 9.6 100% of foster carer enquiries are responded to within 1 working day. In this quarter the average response time continued to be 0.3 day. Across Q4 there were 30 formal enquiries, leading to 27 initial home visits and 15 applications to foster. There were 30 fostering assessments at various stages at the end of the

quarter and we approved 13 new carers in this period, 7 mainstream and 6 Connected carers (Kinship or Family and Friends carer). There were however, 4 mainstream de-registrations and 13 Connected Carers de-registered, although these were planned. National statistics indicate that our mainstream deregistration continues to be in line with other local authorities across England.

- 9.7 We make good use of our fostering capacity without compromising on placement matching as evidenced through our very strong stability rate; our occupancy is currently 79% compared to a national average of 62%. We will continue to monitor the impact of the fostering excellence programme including a review of the recruitment strategy.

10. Our Adoption Service

10.1 Adoption West is a collaboration between Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire local authorities, whose aim is to deliver an adoption service that offers improved outcomes for both children and those who want to adopt. Working together as part of a larger region will help recruit new families more effectively, enable children to move into their permanent homes faster and will improve adoption support services as well as allowing best practice to be shared and make our services even better.

10.2 The Panel received the annual report of Adoption West in **September 2020** and the performance of the Council in terms of achieving legal permanence for children through adoption. Children placed for adoption meets the CPP Strategic Priority 8 – *A loving home where I have good relationships, respect and the opportunity to see my family*. The headlines of the report were noted as:

- 15 Wiltshire children with a decision that adoption is in their best interest, not yet placed
- 22 children placed with their adoptive families in this period, awaiting Adoption Order
- 10 Adoption Orders made so far this year.

10.3 The **Wiltshire Council Adoption Service 2020 – 21 Year End report** is being submitted for 14 December 2021 Cabinet and to CPP 18 January 2022 which is just outside of the reporting period for this CPP Annual Report. It can be confirmed however for 2020 – 2021 that 23 children were adopted and of these 18 (78%) were placed within 12 months of the decision that adoption was in their best interest. At the end of the financial year there were 13 children waiting for an adoptive placement. In 2020/21 there were 33 families living in Wiltshire approved by Adoption West as suitable to adopt.

10.4 Achieving permanence for children through adoption is a high priority for the Council. The Adoption West partnership continues to develop with regular scrutiny through Cabinet and its own partnership scrutiny arrangements.

11. Participation of looked after children

- 11.1 At June 2021 Panel, The Conference and Reviewing Service Annual Report was presented. The work and impact described in this helped the Panel to understand how children and young people are best supported.
- 11.2 The report shared that Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) chaired a total of 1191 reviews and 94.3% of these were held on time. This is an improvement from 89% last year. When a child can contribute directly to their review and it is held on time, the likelihood is that the arrangement will be better, difficulties can be spotted and resolved more quickly and children will have a positive family experience living with their foster carers and enjoying opportunities to achieve and succeed. The report showed that in the year 2020/21 95% children and young people participated in their reviews. This is an increase from 89% from 2019/20.
- 11.3 In April 2021 our new Child and Youth Voice (CYV) Team was launched. This includes a support and lead worker. CYV have been working closely with CPP and the CiC Teams at Wiltshire Council to enable all children in care to have a voice. CYV have been working collaboratively with CiCC and have set up the new CiCC Ambassador and Consultant schemes. CiCC Ambassadors can be CiCC members, council staff and councillors who have a specialist interest in an important issue to CiCC such as mental health, housing, jobs, activities and tackling racism. These will reflect our priorities. We currently have over 30 CiCC Ambassadors. All of the Ambassadors get together at least twice a year to share information with each other.
- 11.4 The CiCC consultancy scheme means young people in care can be consultants and help the Council with important business and offer consultancy. Consultants are offered a high level of support, training and reimbursement by way of vouchers for their time and expertise. There is more about the CiCC Consultant and Ambassador Scheme in the separate CiCC annual report which is attached as **Appendix 2** to this document.
- 11.5 Our CYV team have enabled children in care to be part of the recruitment of Social Care staff. CiCC members and consultants have interviewed Social Workers, Assistant Team Managers, CiC Personal Assistants, Independent Reviewing Officers and Independent Visitors. The CYV team supported CiCC members and consultants to deliver some training for the newly elected members.

12. Children in Care Council (CiCC)

- 12.1 CYV were given the responsibility of supporting and facilitating CiCC in January 2021. Due to the COVID19 pandemic we were unable to meet face to face initially. In partnership with the CiCC chair a decision was made to hold twice monthly online CiCC meetings. These would be held on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 4.30pm. The one on the first Thursday of the month would be a fun activity and the one on the third Thursday of the month would be offered up for consultancy. We have seen a gradual increase in membership

and have about 19 members (membership does tend to be transient) but we are very lucky to have a dedicated CiCC Chair who has attended all of the sessions. There have also been fortnightly CiCC planning sessions with CYV and the CiCC chair to ensure collaboration and focus for all of the CiCC work.

12.2 As lockdown eased we were able to have some face to face activities. We have had a pizza night, a walk in the park with a 'shakeaway' and a trip to Longleat. We have also planned a residential weekend away at 'PGL' for 19 young people who are in the care of Wiltshire Council. The activities have been very popular, and we plan to have a twice yearly residential and trips every school holiday.

12.3 A breakdown of numbers of young people attending CiCC is in the full CiCC report in the appendix. For our CiCC meetings we usually have between 3 and 7 attendees. The trips and activities do tend to be very popular and get booked up quickly (this reindeer was very popular on the Longleat trip as it provided 'selfie with a reindeer' opportunities).



CYV support worker with a monkey on the Longleat trip

12.4 The Children in Care Council continues to be a key stake holder group relating to matters included in the Corporate Parenting agenda. CPP have worked hard to maintain positive collaborative relationships with the CiCC. Through the Shared Guardian sessions, they have helped to influence the work and priorities of the CPP. Shared Guardian Sessions were held on 22 September 2020 and 18 March 2021. The next session is due on 16 September 2021.

12.5 CYV have just supported CiCC in a mental health consultation. This involved 2 big surveys (one for CiC facilitated by Bristol University) and one universal

survey for all young people in Wiltshire promoted over social media. CYV team also consulted with children and young people at schools and youth clubs. The findings of this consultation were shared at a 'meet the leaders' session in July 2021. A follow up session will be held in 6 months so CiCC members and consultants can 'hold the leaders to account' and ensure they have acted on the information provided appropriately.

- 12.6 CYV supported CiCC to undertake a 'young person's inspection' at Wiltshire Council's registered children's home 'Aspire House'. This also included a follow up inspection to ensure the recommendations had been actioned. The CiCC inspectors were very pleased to see all of the recommendations had been implemented. CiCC members gave advice on steps that could be taken to make the home more welcoming. These included a welcome book and bag. Advice was also given on hair and skincare to ensure all children and young people who stay at Aspire have their needs met and catered for.
- 12.7 CiCC had a session with one of the fostering managers about 'what makes a good foster carer'. This was the most popular CiCC session to date. The fostering manager has been able to feedback to the fostering service to ensure the service promotes the attributes identified. This session has also enabled a positive relationship link between CiCC and the fostering service. Two of the CiCC members are considering being part of the fostering panel to enable the voice of CiCC to be evident in panel.
- 12.8 CiCC have undertaken some work on 'what makes a good IRO' and 'what makes a good Social Worker'. The findings from these sessions have led to additional interview questions within the recruitment for these roles to reflect the views of CiCC.

13. Performance:

- 13.1 Performance reporting continues to be developed on the principle of reporting data that covers the full range of our corporate parenting responsibilities, over and above the standard measures which are reported nationally. Where local authority data can be benchmarked against other local authorities, our performance is reported against a range of comparators including Wiltshire's statistical neighbours, the regional and national averages, and those authorities who have received an 'Outstanding' Ofsted assessment.
- 13.2 Annually, the indicators themselves, together with their expected ranges and targets are reviewed in consultation with Heads of Service and the development of the new format Corporate Parenting panel performance report, as detailed in section 4, has been used to inform this process in 2021-22. The revised suite of indicators and target ranges is due to be presented and approved by the Performance and Outcomes Board in November 2021 and includes:
- Data relating to looked after children including social work performance, health and education outcomes, where they are living and placement and social worker stability

- Private Fostering data
- Adoption data focusing on outcomes for Wiltshire Council's children.

13.3 The full dataset is not repeated here but the key performance indicators are available within the performance scorecard in Appendix 1.

13.4 The recent commentary discussed at the CPP meetings.

- Given Wiltshire's low levels of deprivation, we would expect the rate of children in care to be below the national average. We have confidence in our threshold and know through external scrutiny (Ofsted 2015 and 2019) that we bring children into care at the right time. Through demand forecasting, it is anticipated that, despite the reduction seen in 2020/21, numbers will likely steadily continue in the future, despite minor fluctuations. Original 2020 modelling forecasts using long-term data across a broad range of indicators (e.g. relationship between referrals and rate of Child in Need (CIN)/Support and conversion into CLA), and national, local and strategic intelligence (including from FACT, Support and Safeguarding Service (SASS) evaluation, POG (Performance Outcome Group) and POB (Performance Outcome Board)) suggest we are likely to see our children in care numbers rise annually each year until 2023. The corporate parenting panel is regularly briefed by the Head of Performance, Outcomes & Quality Assurance on the latest forecasting data available.
- The age profile of children in care is broadly in line with the national and statistical neighbour profiles although in 2020/21, Wiltshire had slightly lower proportions of children under 5 and slightly higher proportions of children aged 10 – 15. This is likely a result of a higher rate of Special Guardianship orders (SGOs) being made in Wiltshire in 2020/21 which are primarily made for younger children. In the 6 months to May 2021, for instance, Wiltshire's percentage of children ceasing to be looked after due to a SGO was 25% compared to a statistical neighbour and national average of 13%.
- The placement profile is again broadly in line with the national and statistical neighbour profiles however in 2020/21 Wiltshire had a higher proportion of children in foster care placements at 80% (333) versus 72% for both comparator groups. 50% of these children are placed with Wiltshire Council carers, an increase on previous years. At the end of 2020/21, 10% (40) of children were placed in children's homes, lower than the national and statistical neighbour averages of 13% and 17% respectively. The other 10% of CLA would have been in either supported accommodation, living with birth parents or placed with their prospective adopters.
- In 2020-21, 94% of reviews for children in care were held in timescale and 95% included the views of children. Exception reports are provided to the Service Manager who monitors all late reviews and a suite of self-service reports are used to track review timeliness and participation in 'real time',

with Independent Reviewing Officers encouraged to make use of these reports to monitor their own performance.

- Distant placements. In 2020/21, the percentage of our children who are placed outside of Wiltshire was at 30%, better performance than Statistical neighbours (34%) and the National average (38%). However, National averages are skewed by small unitary authorities and London boroughs where children are frequently placed outside the Local Authority boundary but still close to home and for this reason we also report on children placed over 20 miles from home (whether this is in Wiltshire or out of our authority boundary). With this measure, we were at 37% which is above both Statistical neighbours (31%) and National average (20%). This reflects the challenges of securing local independent fostering and residential placements while the number of children in care within Wiltshire and across the region continues to grow.
- Placement stability. Despite limited placement choice our reported placement stability rates are strong across both key measures. As reported above in section 7, the number of children experiencing 3+ placements within the last 12 months in 2020/21 was 6.5%, considerably below that of the National average (11%), the South West (12%), and our statistical neighbours (13%). The number of children who are in secure long-term placements (looked after for at least 2.5 years and in the same placement for at least 2 years) at 78% is also better than the national average (68%), the South West (68%) and statistical neighbours (66%).
- Visits – overall the improvements in the timeliness of visits to our children in care has been maintained throughout Q1 2021/22 with 93% of visits being in time. This sustained performance has been helped, in part, by the development of a range of self-service reports which enable managers to keep better track of when visits are due in ‘real time’.
- Adoption – In 2020/21, 23 children were adopted, slightly below the expected range of 27-32. At the same time, and as was predicted in last year’s report, after several years of continued improvement against the adoption scorecard measures, performance was anticipated to worsen in 2020-21 as several older children, and therefore those harder to place, were adopted. The impact of these cases on the adoption scorecard measures is described in detail within the Annual Adoption report.
- Furthermore, over the last six years, the number of children entering care where adoption is in their best interest has decreased. This has been more pronounced in the last 2 years, primarily driven by an increase in the number of children where a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order has been determined to be a more desirable and suitable permanence option for them, adoption being the last resort. This is particularly the case for very young children who are often able to find a loving and supportive home environment with a set of grandparents. It is anticipated that, over future years, this trend, which is also seen nationally, will continue.

13.5 Priorities for the next period include:

- Improve compliance with the KPI range measures in order to improve outcomes for children
- Improve placement sufficiency so that more children are looked after by Wiltshire approved foster carers, closer to their homes, schools and communities
- Improve educational outcomes and progress for children looked after, and increase access to a range of training and employment opportunities for care experienced young people
- Continue to ensure timely adoption for children where it is in their best interest
- Have a clear line of sight regarding outcomes for care experienced young people and our local offer.

14. Challenges/successes during Covid-19

14.1 Early March 2020 saw the impact of the coronavirus, now known as COVID-19 on the country and therefore on the work of the local authority with government directed restrictive movement, temporary closure of businesses and the need for social distancing. The impact of the restrictions continued through to July 2021 with restrictions being lifted by the government on 19th July. The changes in the way we worked with children, young people and their families continued to this date and the COVID-19 Home Visit Guidance and has consistently been updated in line with DfE guidance and in partnership with Wiltshire Public Health Service

14.2 A rapid review was undertaken May – July 2020 by multi-agency partners to consider estimations of future demand based on the impact of COVID-19. In the autumn estimates considered a significant impact on the increase in children looked after however the longer the restrictions remained in place the numbers didn't increase as expected. June 2021 CPP were informed we had 430 CLA. As mentioned with the restrictions being lifted only recently in July 2021, the longer-term impact on children and families will become more apparent. We have had to therefore consider latent demand and the likelihood of more children coming into care and therefore financial planning has been taken into account with the financial pressure that an increase in CLA will bring to the Council.

14.3 With each CPP Agenda good news stories are captured about the progress and achievements of children in care and care experienced young people. For example August 2021 A level and vocational results has seen 6 year 13 students achieve results to enable them to take their next steps including university or apprenticeships. This will be shared at the next CPP in September.

15. Ofsted Inspection

15.1 In June 2019, the Families and Children's Service was inspected by Ofsted and there were five areas identified as needing to improve:

- Raising awareness of Private Fostering in the community
- The impact of services on children's health and education when they are in care
- The clarity and accuracy of children's records when they are in care
- The availability of suitable placements when children first come into care
- The quality of social work supervision.

15.2 Progress on actions in response to these areas are highlighted below:

Raising awareness of Private Fostering in the community

Improvements/positives in the last 12 months April 2020 – March 2021:

- The Kinship and Fostering Team had a detailed Private Fostering Awareness Action Plan 2020 – 2021. The following improvements were:
- A virtual workshop on Private Fostering, during Private Fostering week (November 2020) for staff to attend to gain advice and information about Private Fostering.
- Ongoing virtual workshop sessions
- Better oversight of PF cases, as all PF work is held within the kinship staff group, with consistency of workers.
- Improved and updated marketing materials.
- The SCYPP, continue to raise awareness of private fostering, linking to relevant multi-agency strategies, and through their website
- Recently, configuration changes have enabled private fostering data to now be captured on our case management system which will facilitate increased scrutiny of this data going forward by allowing staff to track their performance in 'real time'.

The impact of services on children's health and education when they are in care

In the 2019 Ofsted Report, inspectors stated that *leaders are not sufficiently rigorous in their monitoring of the work and impact of the virtual school officers resulting in the quality of personal education plans (PEPs) being variable*. The 2019/2020 CPP annual report highlighted:

- New Quality Assurance processes for PEPs drafted October 2019 and finalised November 2019
- A PEPs feedback and resubmission process for active PEPS via Welfare Call e-PEP from November 2019 was put in place.
- An internal PEP audit schedule had been created; first activity was scheduled with Director of Education & Skills in January 2020
- Pupil Premium Plus policy had been written, ratified and published (Jan 2020), in line with statutory requirements.

This year we have:

- PEP Quality Assurance rubric in place and has improved the consistency of QA judgements;
- PEP moderation activity takes place monthly at every Virtual School team meeting;
- introduced new training sessions for Designated Teachers, focused entirely on completion of a high quality ePEP;
- The virtual school now holds monthly POGs (a performance and outcome group) and
- the Virtual Head and Head of Service for Children in Care meet monthly to update on progress and new developments of the VS and work programmes

Regarding the health needs of children in care, inspectors stated that “challenges remain in ensuring that all children benefit from a timely initial and review health assessment”.

- Review Health Assessments have remained high with 94% of children who had been in care for 12 months on 31st March 2021 having had a review health assessment in the last 12 months.
- A portal has now been developed which will provide an automated notification when a child becomes looked after this will enable more effective communication between Wiltshire Council and Virgin Care with the ambition of eliminating the risk of late notifications. This will be in place by mid-September 2021 following testing.
- The commissioning arrangements and more detailed KPIs for Virgin Care were completed in July 2020
- In 19/20, the CCG commissioned an in-depth review of CIC health services including those provided by Virgin Care and CAMHS. In 2020/21, IHA performance for children placed within Wiltshire had improved significantly with 87% of IHA’s completed within 28 days. This is subject to ongoing scrutiny and challenge by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The clarity and accuracy of children’s records when they are in care

- Audits have been undertaken by the Principal Social Worker of children in care with a focus on life story work and the teams have undertaken audits on pathway plans for children in care and care leavers
- Practice leads had been recruited and identified in the children in care teams, however with change in staffing the children in care south team are developing staff to undertake this role.
- Ongoing improvements are being implemented in Liquid Logic (children’s management information system) to improve the accuracy and quality of children’s records, particularly around placement plans;
- “At a Glance” performance reporting has been developed in real time for children in care teams, these continue to allow reporting by exception and monitoring and enables managers to report in the performance outcome group (POG).

The availability of suitable placements when children first come into care

- As mentioned above the Fostering Excellence Plan is now in its implementation stage and has shown improved recruitment activity over the last financial year and achieved its target of a net increase of 20 carers.
- As part of the Specialist recruitment campaign there has been a focus on recruiting additional STEPS foster carers for emergency placements and carers for teenagers; and due to the positive increase in mainstream carers this has provided more placements for children in-house when they first become looked after.
- In addition to the Fostering Excellence approach described above further work is taking place with the South West Sufficiency Project (SWSP). The project aims to create a whole system approach, with new models of commissioning placements, to ensure we can achieve the desired outcomes for our children and young people. Our Head of Service for Children in Care and Young People chairs the SWSP Fostering Project Group for the South West.
- Families and Children's Commissioning have also been considering the DfE Children's Homes Capital Programme 2021-23 application.

The quality of social work supervision

- "At a Glance" reports have been developed in Liquid Logic for CIC, CIN and CLA and include case supervision
- Practice leads have been recruited to develop peer level scrutiny of supervision on a monthly basis and outcomes reported through Performance Outcome Groups and Performance Outcome Board

Ofsted Summary

15.3 The actions taken above will have met the requirements needed to improve practice within the service and improving outcomes for children and their families. We strive to continuously improve our progress against these five areas and going forward these areas will be captured in the ongoing work of the Corporate Parenting Board or through the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel.

16. Impact and Ambition

16.1 The Corporate Panel has received a breadth of activity relating to Wiltshire's children in care and care experienced young people. The body of this report indicates areas of impact whilst others are more subtle and are likely to arise because of raised awareness of the issues that most directly affect the lives of this group of children and young people:

- The Children in Care Council is now fully supported by the Child and Youth Voice team which ensures that the voices, experiences and opinions of our children and young people are reflected in operational practice development and in new areas of policy. *Strategic Priority - To be heard*

- Members have been able to consider key performance information relating to our children looked after and care experienced therefore allowing them to question officers about effectiveness, however this is balanced with narratives around good new stories, children and young people attending CPP, celebration of successes and raising awareness across the Council. *Strategic Priority – Support to be the best I can*
- The strategic priorities have been reviewed and agreed to continue into 2022. These have started to be driven jointly by Members and lead officers however we have seen newly elected Members and officers new to the CPP take on the lead for some of the priorities and there is an improved knowledge base for each area and opportunities to discuss with the Child and Youth voice team during Shared Guardian sessions. *Strategic Priority - To be heard*
- Members have been provided with information about Fostering Excellence and how this work is progressing, including the marketing campaigns. The marketing campaigns have more recently been geographically driven (more recently in Trowbridge) therefore Members can become involved at a much more local level to their constituencies. *Strategic Priority - A loving home where I have good relationships*
- There is a strong offer of council-wide support available to care experienced young people. The existing core offer has been reviewed regularly over the last 12 months, including the implementation of a care leavers app. The Offer will be further developed with the support of the CPP and will need to be a significant focus of the CPP over the next 12 months. *Strategic Priority - Support for as long as I need it*

16.2 It is important that the CPP ensures the best possible support is available to children in care and those who are care experienced. In terms of ambition, we want to achieve the following:

- Narrow the gap in outcome and achievement, in the broadest sense, between our children and young people and others living in Wiltshire, thus reducing disadvantage and stigma. *Strategic Priority - Support to be the best I can*
- For each of the priority areas, ensure that there are identified actions developed from scrutiny and challenge so that the CPP is an effective driver of change and improvement.
- Ensure that the comprehensive and innovative care offer to care experienced young people is based upon what they say they want and is effective. This will draw upon Council wide services and those that are provided by partner organisations and will be available to all our young people, including those who live outside Wiltshire, where applicable. *Strategic Priority - Support for as long as I need it*
- Continue to improve educational outcomes for our children and young people as we know this improves resilience and problem-solving skills, improve health and lifestyle outcomes and reduce social isolation – these are things

that young people are concerned about. *Strategic Priority - Support to be healthy*

- Increase accommodation options for children and young people, including approving more foster carers and Supported Lodgings providers, developing semi-independent and independent living options within Homes for Wiltshire and the voluntary sector. *Strategic Priority - A loving home where I have good relationships*
- Be sure that the voices of children and young people continue to be heard and understood by members, officers and all corporate parents whilst ensuring that these opinions are fully reflected in practice improvement. *Strategic Priority - To be heard*

17. Conclusion and Next Steps

17.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy received full Council approval in October 2020, with the updated strategic priorities included.

17.2 An enhanced reporting system through the CPP Scorecard and regular performance reports has helped to ensure a better understanding of panel as evidenced in the updates from strategic leads contained within this report. Members have a greater understanding of children in care and care experienced young people, through the participation of child and youth voice, the chair of the CICC, young people attending the Panel and joint shared guardian sessions. Panel have an increased narrative of children and young people's lived experience therefore enabling them to be the best corporate parent the children in care and care experienced young people need.

17.3 This reporting period has also seen a change of chairing responsibility (June 2021).

17.4 We will:

- a) Review all priority areas to ensure they are being achieved and therefore the best impact upon outcomes for children and young people.
- b) Continue to work closely with the Children in Care Council to ensure that the voices and experiences of children and young people in care are reflected in the work of the CPP and hence the wider Families and Children's Services.
- c) Promote the importance of fostering and review the impact of the Fostering Excellence programme of work.
- d) In partnership with health colleagues, continue to track the improvement in health outcomes for children and young people, continuing to ensure that Initial and Review Health assessments are completed in a timely way as already evidenced during Panel reporting.

- e) Further strengthen and develop the offer for care experienced young people, particularly ensuring that those living outside Wiltshire are not disadvantaged.

18. Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel

- 18.1 The Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel (SCYPP) (which was established in February 2014) has continued to meet in September and December 2020 and March, June and September 2021. 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.
- 18.2 Councillors Pat Aves, Mary Champion, Jane Davies (Vice Chair), Ross Henning, Peter Hutton, George Jeans, Laura Mayes (Chair) and James Sheppard formed the membership of the Panel during the period July 2020 to May 2021. From June 2021 the following Members formed the Panel: Councillors Ross Henning, Jon Hubbard, Peter Hutton (Chair), Laura Mayes, Dominic Muns (Vice Chair), Nabil Najjar, Sam Pearce-Kearney and Suzanne Wickham. Cllr Church stepped down from Panel having changed Cabinet Member responsibility and she was succeeded by Laura Mayes as the Chair. The Lead Officers are Netty Lee and Jen Salter (Heads of Service – Support and Safeguarding).
- 18.3 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.
- 18.4 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, overview of the Families and Children's Transformation (FACT) Programme, overviews of missing children and young people data, including specific analysis of the decline in missing episodes.
- 18.5 Also the following updates – Activity in the Support and Safeguarding Service related to Covid, FACT programme, the numbers of children and young people who are placed outside of Wiltshire, the annual Private Fostering report for 2019/20 and the Panel's achievements over the 2017-2021 Council term.
- 18.6 A training session for the new Panel members was held in June 2021 when the Panel Members received introductions to the Families and Children's Services, Missing Children and the data received from the Emerald Team and the Performance, Outcomes and Quality Assurance Service and learned about the role of the School Effectiveness Safeguarding Leads

19. Main Considerations for the Council

- 19.1 The Council is asked to note the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to date and the success within the year to strengthen its functions and impact of its work.

20. Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

- 20.1 In accordance with the agreed overview and scrutiny arrangements, “the draft annual Corporate Parenting Panel report was considered by the Children’s Select Committee’ standing task group on Wednesday 22 September. Due to timings of meetings, this year the Children’s Select Committee will receive the finalised annual Corporate Parenting Panel report”.
- 20.2 Reassurance was offered that Wiltshire’s thresholds had consistently been reviewed as appropriate (Ofsted inspections and Oxford Brookes University evaluation) and that the figures in Wiltshire were closer to the “proportion per 10,000” reported by local authorities classed as Good or Outstanding in their Ofsted inspection. The decision for children to become looked after remains with the Support and Safeguarding Head of Service via ‘Edge of Care Panel’ and thus provides consistency of threshold. This panel’s decisions have been subject to independent review to provide continued assurance.

21. Safeguarding Implications

- 21.1 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.

22. Public Health Implications

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

23. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

- 23.1 Not applicable.

24. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- 24.1 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.

25. Risk Assessment

25.1 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.

26. Financial Implications

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

27. Legal Implications

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

28. Proposals

28.1 To receive and note the Annual Report and the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to date, its functions and impact of its work and to ratify the improvements required to further strengthen Corporate Parenting in Wiltshire.

28.2 To receive and note the Annual Report of the Children in Care Council 2020/21 attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

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Karen Stokes (Missing Children Co-Ordinator)
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Date of report: 5 October 2021

Background Papers – None

Appendices

- 1 - Children in Care Performance Data 2021/22 Q1 as at 30th June 2021
- 2 - Annual Report of the Children in Care Council October 2020 to August 2021.

