

Corporate Parenting Panel update

Key points/issues from meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel – 24 September 2024.

- **Voice and Participation Team Update**
The Panel were given details of the consultations and activities that the team, Voice Ambassadors and the Children in Care Council had been involved with since the last meeting. It was highlighted that a second Dragons Den style event would be held in October with on focus on the Panel's Strategic Priority 4 (to have positive relationships with people who are important to me and for me to be part of my local community where I am trusted, respected, accepted and feel included). A draft version of a Children in Care magazine that was planned to be circulated twice a year was shared. An advocacy service was now part of the Voice and Participation team. The four Voice Ambassadors at the meeting gave an update on what they had been working on/involved with.
- **Examination Results Update from the Virtual School**
The Panel were given details of the (unverified) examination results for our Children Looked After and young people for the 2023-24 academic year.
- **Annual report of the Conference and Reviewing Service 2023-24**
The Panel were given details of what the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) and Child Protection Chairs had done over the year to help the children and young people, an overview of performance, details of the updated team structure, what changes were made in 2023-24, the successes of the IROs, and the priorities moving forward.
- **Update on the Grandmentors Scheme**
The Panel received details of the current matches and referrals of young people with a Grandmentor and the challenges for some matches due to some complex needs. The promotion of the scheme was also discussed.
- **Annual report of the Kinship and Fostering Team 2023-24**
The Panel were given details the number of approved fostering households and that there were 56% of our children looked after placed with Wiltshire approved foster families. They were also informed of the support available for foster carers and that retention of existing carers was a key focus. Wiltshire and Cornwall Councils were the lead authorities for the new Southwest region Fostering Recruitment and Retention Hub and there were targets set by the DfE to increase enquiries to become foster carers and for there to be an increase in foster carer approvals by 2026.
- **Impact and Outcome update from the Connect Service 2023-24**
The Panel received details about the Connect provision and what other services it worked in collaboration with. A case study of a 12 year old child looked after who was referred by their school for cannabis use was shared. Details were given of hospital referrals and the young person's outcomes and the apps and websites used to support young people with self-help tools.

- Corporate Parenting data and exceptions report for Quarter 1 (April to June 2024)
The Panel received details of the greens to celebrate and reds of concern in the most recent data collection.
- Data Spotlight – Young People aged 16+ in Education, Employment and Training (EET)
The Panel were informed that the numbers of Wiltshire’s young people who are in EET was very positive and compared favourably across the region but had remained static and below the target ranges for those people. Two care leavers had secured apprenticeships with Wiltshire Council. A further care leaver had started a 6-month internship, spending time with virtual schools, SEND and Personal Advisor teams.
- Bi-annual update on Children Looked After placed more than 20 miles from home
The Panel were informed that as at September 2024 there were 36% of children placed more than 20 miles from home (excluding UASC and adoptions) and 12% more than 20 miles from home but in Wiltshire.
- Placement Sufficiency Update
The Panel received an update that the first of the Council’s residential homes (Phoenix Grove in Melksham) had opened recently. The provider was currently recruiting the team for a second home in Melksham, and it was hoped that this would open in November 2024. Further capital funds had been secured to develop a specification to tender for a provider to deliver complex care in Wiltshire owned properties.
- Update on the Care Experienced Development Plan
The Panel were informed that Wiltshire were now a member of the care leavers regional group and that they had signed up to the regional care leavers app, which was more interactive, engaging and showed what support was available across the region. When comparing offers for care leavers, Wiltshire had the best local offer and other local authorities had to come in line with Wiltshire. Officers were continuing to look for a suitable space for a care leavers hub in the south of the county.
- Updates from other Council Teams and other Representatives
The Panel received details of the take up of the intensive swimming lessons that had been arranged for the summer holidays for children aged 4-16 that were unable to access lessons with a particular focus on older children who had not had this opportunity. The Panel also received an update from the Designated Nurse for children looked after on initial health assessment timeliness, vaccinations and dental assessments. The Designated Nurse also shared the findings of an audit of training for maternity staff and general health professionals to raise awareness of children looked after and care experienced young people. The quarterly newsletter from the Care Leaver Covenant was also noted by the Panel.

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 26 November 2024 and Children’s Select will receive an update at their meeting on 15 January 2025.