

### **Corporate Parenting Panel update**

Key points/issues from meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel – 26 November 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. The Dragons Den event held on 30 October 2024 was a positive opportunity to listen to the young people, respond to their questions posed and look at ways to make improvements. The focus of the event related to 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). There had been 61 referrals to the new in house advocacy since October 2024 which was positive. The four Voice Ambassadors at the meeting gave an update on what they had been working on/involved with.*

- Strategic Priority 3 Highlight – Ensuring my physical and emotional wellbeing is supported and at a time and place that suits me

*Sally-Anne Harrison (Designated Nurse for CLA) highlighted that the BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB) were looking at ways of how to improve health assessments for children looked after and that they are written up in a child friendly way. The ICB had also commissioned a new pathway for expressions of interest for dentists to provide protected slots for children looked after who cannot currently access an NHS dentist when living in the BSW footprint. They were also looking at ways to secure funding for some care experienced young people to be able to access free prescriptions as they were aware that there was a small group that are in employment and so not eligible for free prescriptions but struggling to afford the prescription charges.*

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Update

*The Panel received a children looked after update including the details of referrals between May and October 2024, the development of CAMHS wide guidance for children looked after, details of the new NHS indicators around performance and wait times, planned service development and recruitment.*

- Annual report on the health of Children Looked After and Care Experienced Young People 2023-24

*The Panel were given details of the work of the Designated Doctors and Nurses who support the children looked after and care experience young people. A children and young person version of the report would be shared with the young people via the Participation Team. There were also updates on physical, dental and emotional*

health. The year's key achievements were highlighted as well as the planned work for Wiltshire improvements in 2024-25

- Adoption Service Year End Report 2023-24 and Adoption West Ofsted Report

*The Panel were given an overview of the Adoption West performance for 2023-24 including numbers of adopters, national and regional comparators and that Officers had recently been involved in the DfE pilot to involve the Children's Guardians (CAFCASS Officers) earlier with the overall aim to seek to reduce the use of experts in proceedings and the overall length of proceedings.*

*It was also noted that the Adoption West Ofsted inspection had taken place in August 2024 and the rating was Good for the overall experiences and progress of service users, taking into account how well children and young people and adults are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers.*

- Update on Staying Close Project

*The Panel were reminded that this was a DfE funded project to support those young people who had lived in a residential setting to move on and reduce the 'cliff edge' for them with the aim to increase the chances of them entering suitable, further education, employment or training, gaining independent life skills and having mental health and wellbeing. There was an ongoing review of the current funding a decision on DfE grant funding for 2025 and beyond and a business as usual proposal had been written and shared including a request for budget allocation from the Full Council budget meeting in February 2025. The Panel highlighted that they supported the proposal for the Staying Close project to continue and that appropriate funding be allocated in order to allow this.*

- Data Spotlight – Missing Children Update

*The Panel received an overview of the Children Looked After missing episodes from April to September 2024, information about the return home interviews, and the findings of the SWAP audit which was carried out to provide assurance that data sharing for Missing Children is efficient and effective. The assurance opinion grading was substantial and there was only one low priority action relating to the escalation process for data sharing delays.*

- Placement Sufficiency Update

*The Panel received an update that the tender for a provider to deliver complex care in Wiltshire owned properties was due to be made in January 2025 and this would mean the provision of additional placements for those aged 16-25 who had a need for more specialist care. There had also been a capital investment approved to provide housing for care experienced young people and unaccompanied young people seeking asylum. The opening of the Southwest Recruitment and Retention Hub had had a positive impact and the fostering team had seen increasing levels of those interested in becoming a foster carer.*

- Update on progressing Care Experience as Protected Characteristic

*The Panel were updated that an options paper had been drafted on whether the Council should progress having care experience as a protected characteristic and that*

*they would like to incorporate the views of young people and have a few further conversations internally before presenting a recommendation to the Panel and have further time to process the possible ramifications of going forward as it would affect more than just Children's Services – it would also be other teams within the Council and that it needed careful consideration. There was also the view that it needed a whole partnership response with partners such as health and the Police to also consider doing the same for it to have a really meaningful impact.*

- Updates from other Council Teams and other Representatives

*The Panel received an update from the Engagement and Partnerships Team in relation to Area Board youth initiatives relating to children looked after and/or care experienced young people for 2023-24 and it was noted that there were 21 projects with at least 52 young people involved.*

*The quarterly newsletter from the Care Leaver Covenant was also noted by the Panel.*

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 28 January 2025 and Children's Select will receive an update at their meeting on 11 March 2025.