

Central Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



please ask for Leslie Manning

direct line 0300 300 5132

date 3 May 2012

NOTICE OF MEETING

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date & Time

Monday, 14 May 2012 at 11.00 a.m.

Venue at

Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL:

Elected Members (voting)

CLlrs M A G Versallion (Chairman), A L Dodwell (Vice-Chairman),
Mrs A Barker, N B Costin, Mrs S A Goodchild, Mrs D B Gurney, N J Sheppard
and B Wells

[Named Substitutes:

P N Aldis, D Bowater, I A MacKilligan, B J Spurr and A M Turner]

Officers (voting)

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Carers (non-voting)

Only two of the four foster carers' co-opted representatives will be expected to attend at any one meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitute Members.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 5 March 2012 (copy attached).

3. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

4. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members declarations and the nature thereof in relation to:-

- (a) personal interests in any agenda item;
- (b) personal and prejudicial items in any agenda item.

Reports

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
5	Children in Care Council - Presentation To receive a presentation setting out the arrangements for the Looked After Children Awards 2012 and the Fun Day 2012.	* 9 - 16
6	Six Month Health Report: Health of Looked After Children To consider a report setting out the findings of the recent Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection of services for Looked After Children and the actions proposed to address any issues raised.	* 17 - 22

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 5 March 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CPP/11/31 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the Work Plan which had been circulated for information. He advised that the Work Plan would be formally considered at the next meeting of the Panel on 14 May 2012.

The Chairman referred to the OFSTED inspections for both safeguarding and Looked After Children which had recently taken place and thanked Members, foster carers and officers for their contribution towards the inspection process.

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the training sessions for Members on corporate parenting and informed the Panel that 34 Members had attended to date. He thanked those Members for doing so. The Chairman stated that a further session was scheduled for May and he asked Members to encourage any colleagues who had not already attended a training session to do so.

CPP/11/32 Members' Interests

(a) Personal Interests:-

Member	Item	Nature of Interest	Present or Absent during discussion
Cllr Mrs A Barker	5	Member of the British Horse Society	Present

(b) Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-

None.

CPP/11/33 Children in Care Council Annual Report for 2011/12

The Panel received the Children in Care Council Annual Report 2011/12 and the Looked After Children and Young People's Participation Work Programme 2011/12. In addition, and following an introduction by the Participation Officer, four members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) gave a presentation to the Panel. The members of the CiCC took turns to explain various aspects of the CiCC's work to date, its priorities for 2012/13, the Achievement Awards evening and activity based participation over the year.

On behalf of the Panel the Chairman thanked the CiCC members for their presentation. He then commented positively on the last Achievement Awards event and asked the CiCC members if they would wish to see any changes for the event in 2012. In response the CiCC members felt that the existing venue, timing and level of formality were suitable. They indicated that they did not wish to see a theme introduced. Following further discussion the Assistant Director (Acting) Children's Services Operations commented that the Awards

event was already regarded as an excellent evening and it was difficult to improve. The Chairman commented that he felt the best ideas on this matter would originate from the CiCC members and the Assistant Director (Acting) suggested that the CiCC consider the question further and bring any suggestions to the next Panel for consideration. The meeting concurred with this suggestion.

The Team Leader for Looked After Children informed the Panel that the next Achievement Awards event was scheduled to take place on 28 September between 6.00-9.00 p.m.

The Panel turned to consider the summer holiday funday, which members of the CiCC had begun to organise. Members noted that the funday was open to all children and young people receiving a service from Central Bedfordshire Council. The Chairman sought suggestions from the Panel on possible dates and venues and Members put forward both the Weatherley Centre in Biggleswade and the Marston Vale Forest Centre for consideration. The Assistant Director (Acting) undertook to examine their suitability as possible venues.

For Members' information the Participation Officer circulated guides which had been prepared in consultation with the CiCC. The guides covered such areas as health, education and accommodation and the Assistant Director (Acting) explained that all Looked After Children would receive copies of these documents.

On behalf of the Panel the Chairman then thanked the CiCC representatives for attending the meeting and for their efforts in producing the Looked After Children and Young People's Participation Work Programme

NOTED

- 1 the Children in Care Annual Report 2011/12;**
- 2 the Looked After Children and Young People's Participation Work Programme 2011/12;**
- 3 the presentation by the CiCC representatives.**

RESOLVED

that the CiCC report to the next meeting of the Panel setting out any proposals the representatives might have for the Annual Awards event and the summer funday.

(Note: The CiCC members left the meeting room at the conclusion of this item).

CPP/11/34 Looked After Children Placement Strategy

The Panel considered a report setting out the Looked After Children Placement Strategy for 2011/13. The meeting noted that the Strategy had been prepared

in response to requirements set out within the statutory guidance issued in 2010.

The Strategy covered the following:

- Looked After Population Data and Trends
- Current Placement Provision
- Provision for Children on the Edge of Care
- Adoption and Permanence
- Principles of Good Placements
- Assessing Demand
- Planning for Change

The Head of Adoption and Fostering stated that the document had been prepared in the autumn of 2011 and it was expected that it would be updated on an annual basis. She then worked through the Strategy introducing various matters for Members' attention. The Head of Adoption and Fostering referred to the need to remodel types of placements in order to meet need and referred the meeting to the Placement Strategy Action Plan, attached as an appendix to the Strategy document, which set out proposals to achieve this.

A Member commented on the absence of 'as of' dating within the document which made it difficult to know what period the data covered or to carry out any meaningful comparison. Further, the document itself lacked a general publication date. In response the Head of Adoption and Fostering explained how the data in the Strategy had been collected.

The Member also sought information on the provision of hostel accommodation for 16-17 year olds. The Head of Adoption and Fostering stated that hostel accommodation was available within Central Bedfordshire at Sandy and in neighbouring Bedford and Luton if required. However, from the autumn of 2012, it was intended to expand the range of suitable accommodation within Central Bedfordshire. The Head of Adoption and Fostering added that those persons placed in hostels were usually those who were homeless after the age of 16. It was unusual to use hostel accommodation for Looked After Children unless absolutely necessary but, if it was, it would be accompanied by a package of supporting measures.

A Member sought clarification on the use of secure accommodation by Central Bedfordshire Council for one young person for part of the year. In response the Assistant Director (Acting) explained that this arose from a court order issued for the young person's own safety. Secure accommodation in Essex had been used as it was one of the nearest of the type. The Assistant Director (Acting) added that the time spent by the young person in secure accommodation had been the absolute minimum required and a package of support measures had been put in place to assist with rehabilitation.

In response to a member's query as to why Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) children were over represented within the numbers of Looked After Children in comparison with the general population, the Assistant Director (Acting) explained that this could be due to there sometimes being a larger number of

children in BME families. However, she stressed that the percentage of BME children was at the same level as that experienced under the legacy authority (Bedfordshire County Council). She also emphasised that officers challenged themselves on their response to ensure BME children did not become looked after as a result of unconscious stereotyping or a lack of culturally appropriate support. The Head of Adoption and Fostering explained that the largest percentage was formed by Gypsy and Traveller children who, whilst white, had strong cultural differences.

In response to a query from the Chairman on the recording of LAC numbers the Assistant Director (Acting) explained that the collection of this data was a national requirement. She added that it was also embedded in the Directorate's working practices.

Last, the meeting noted that whilst the Adoption and Fostering Service was a shared service with Bedford Borough Council the latter had its own placement strategy.

RESOLVED

- 1 that the Looked After Children Placement Strategy be amended to include the publication date and one, consistent 'as of' date throughout which referred to the most up to date data available;**
- 2 that the amended Strategy be referred to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration and comment.**

CPP/11/35 Quarter Three Report on the Fostering Service - October to December 2011

The Panel considered a report that outlined activity in the Adoption Agency over the Quarter Three period covering October to December 2011 and provided comparative data for Quarters One and Two.

The Head of Adoption and Fostering introduced the report, drawing Members' attention to various points of interest. With regard to the lower number of enquiries on becoming a foster carer from members of the public she explained that this had been due to the low number of face to face recruitment events held during the Quarter and that action would be taken to ensure that the number of such events was increased to optimise enquiries.

The Head of Adoption and Fostering referred to a foster carer recruitment event which had taken place at the Samuel Whitbread Upper School new intake evening. She explained that the event had not generated many enquiries because parents were focused on the needs of their own children. The Head of Adoption and Fostering stated, however, that positive links had been established with Samuel Whitbread and with other upper schools in Central Bedfordshire, all of whom would be willing to host recruitment events at more suitable times in the future.

Members' attention was drawn to the rise in the number of children living with family or friends who were considered, by law, to be looked after. The Head of Adoption and Fostering commented on the demand this development placed on resources due to the requirement to assess the often complex arrangements that were required and contribute to any associated court proceedings.

The Panel discussed the measures taken to recruit foster carers. The possibility of including a recruitment event within the summer funday was suggested. Members were aware of both the advantages and disadvantages that could arise so the Assistant Director (Acting) Children's Services Operations undertook to examine the matter further before any action was taken. During further discussion the Head of Adoption and Fostering advised the meeting of the development of a web strategy, including the use of Facebook and online advertising, to encourage foster carer recruitment. She stressed that thought was constantly being given to devising new ways to aid such recruitment.

The meeting noted the legal protection available to Adoption Agency foster carers.

In response to a Member's query on the increase in Looked After Children over the last Quarter the Assistant Director (Acting) explained that there were several reasons why this had occurred including the arrival of unaccompanied asylum seeker children and the increase in children living with family or friends who were technically 'fostered'. She emphasised that the increase in Looked After Children numbers reflected a national trend although the numbers in Central Bedfordshire were significantly below the national average. The Head of Adoption and Fostering stated that an evaluation of local data revealed that as many children returned to their homes as came into care.

In response to a query by the Chairman the Head of Adoption and Fostering stated that the biggest challenge to be faced over the next 12 months was ensuring that the demand for placements could be met.

Consideration was given to the impact, if any, on the treatment of Looked After Children as a result of schools converting to academies.

NOTED

the Quarter Three report on the Adoption Service for the period October to December 2011.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.30 p.m. and concluded at 3.48 p.m.)



The Children in Care Council



AWARDS 2012

- The awards evening will take place on Friday 28th September in the Council Chambers at Priory House.
- Nominations cards will be sent out to foster carers, social workers, residential staff and designated teachers.
- All young people who are nominated for an award will be sent an invitation to the event.
- There will be a number of awards for specific categories including the Young Person of the Year Award.

AWARDS 2012

- Members of the CiCC will discuss and organise the decorations, food and entertainment.
- The agenda for the evening will be agreed nearer to the time. All young people will receive a framed certificate and voucher and the overall winners will receive a trophy. A photographer will be present to take photos which will be sent to young people after the event.
- Members of the CiCC have discussed the presentation of awards with Richard and Edwina and members of the CiCC would like to be part of the presentation.

AWARDS 2012

- There will be a Talent and Achievement Wall where young people will be encouraged to bring items to put onto the wall or complete the Talent and Achievement forms to display.

FUN DAY 2012

- Members of the CiCC have been discussing the fun day and have booked the Weatherly Centre for the event on Thursday 9th August from 11am – 4pm.
- The day will be open to all young people receiving a service from Central Bedfordshire, this will include, children in care, care leavers and children who have an allocated social worker.
- Teams from Children's services will be asked to support the day by running different stalls / activities.
- Other agencies offering young people a service will also be invited. For example NYAS, NHS, Care First and St Christopher's.

FUN DAY 2012

- Activities will include:-
 - Face Painting
 - T shirt painting
 - Treasure Hunt
 - Olympic Themed Games
- Members of the CiCC have expressed an interest in raising money for a local charity through a raffle.
- There will also be opportunity for consultation using different methods of gathering views.

ANY QUESTIONS?

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Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel
Date: 14 May 2012
Subject: Six month health report: Health of Looked After Children
Report of: NHS Bedfordshire
Summary: The report sets out the findings of the recent Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection of services for Looked After Children and the actions proposed to address them.

Advising Officer: Anne Murray, Director of Nursing and Quality
Contact Officer: Cass Golumbina, Interim Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
 Emma de Zoete, Consultant in Public Health
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council and NHS Bedfordshire

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The report relates to the following Council priorities:

- Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people
- Promoting healthier lifestyles

Financial:

1. NHS Bedfordshire Looked After Children's health services are currently funded from the NHS Bedfordshire commissioning budget. Any additional resource implications will be identified as part of the development of the post inspection action plan.

Legal:

2. The Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children is carried out under the Children Act 2004.

Risk Management:

3. Failure to deliver effective health services that support looked after children will negatively impact on their health and wellbeing.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. Not Applicable. All staffing issues are NHS related.

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. It is important that the health needs of Looked After Children, who are a vulnerable group, are met.

Public Health

6. This is a key Public Health priority, as agreed through the Central Bedfordshire shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.

Community Safety:

7. Not Applicable.

Sustainability:

8. Not Applicable.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to:

- **Comment on the information within the report.**
- **Note the action to be taken to address the issues raised in the report.**

Background

10. The Children Act 2004 requires Ofsted to provide an evaluation of the contribution made by relevant services in the local area to towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. This report looks at the specific contribution of Health Services to the health and wellbeing of looked after children.

11. The Council has a lead role in providing services for children, and works with its partners, other agencies and the private and voluntary sectors to improve outcomes for children and young people. The inspection was carried out between 20 February and 2 March 2012. The report was published on 10 April 2012. This report focuses on the inspection findings on the health of looked after children, rather than all health work undertaken in the last six months.

Health Outcomes for Looked After Children

12. Ofsted judged that Health outcomes for looked after children are poor and that outcomes to enable looked after children to be healthy are inadequate.
13. Ofsted found that health outcomes for looked after children in Central Bedfordshire had declined over the 12 months preceding December 2011, compared to the East of England and England averages. Health assessment rates were low at 73%. Immunisation rates were low at 52%, lower than the general population rates for non looked after children in the area, which are between 77% and 89%. In 2010/11 87.3% looked after children received dental checks.

Alongside the decline in health outcomes the report highlighted a number of specific weaknesses including:

- Health agency awareness of their responsibilities towards looked after children.
- Access to health information by looked after children.
- No specific health service for care leavers or health after care service.
- The content and quality of health files.
- No permanent designated doctor or nurse for looked after children in place.

Improvement Planning

14. Ofsted concluded that health services face significant challenges in ensuring that the health needs of looked after children are addressed. Ofsted highlighted some issues which should be addressed in the three to six months following the inspection and others which will take longer term planning and service redesign. For the longer term aspects, the Council and NHS Bedfordshire and Luton will be working with the Eastern Region on a peer support and challenge programme to ensure that action leads to sustainable improvement.
15. The following sets out the actions planned and taken to address:
 - a) the issues which Ofsted requires to be addressed in the 3-6 months following inspection (stage 1),
 - b) the longer term planning (stage 2).

16. **Stage 1 action: in the 3-6 months following the inspection**

Ofsted areas for improvement	Action taken
Ensure all LAC have prompt access to appropriate health services which promote good outcomes for them.	Funding for a Designated LAC Nurse, a Designated LAC Doctor, two additional LAC nurses and 0.5wte administrative support has been agreed for this year. This includes nurse capacity for a leaving care health service.
NHS Bedfordshire and Luton should ensure that all care leavers are enabled to access health services and receive a copy of their health histories to ensure they are able to make future life choices	<p>An interim designated nurse is now in place and the permanent position will be advertised week commencing 30th April.</p> <p>An interim Designated Doctor appointment is being worked on and a Designated Doctor should be in post shortly.</p> <p>An interim Leaving Care Nurse has been appointed to improve the Leaving Care Service and a consultation is underway with CICC (Children in Care Council) and the Social Care Leaving Team to shape the Leaving Care Services.</p>
NHS Bedfordshire and Luton should ensure that all looked after children and young people have access to age appropriate health education and promotion information.	<p>An age appropriate health promotion information pack for LAC has been developed, printed and is being distributed at all initial and review health assessments.</p> <p>Core training for foster carers is now in place for the rest of the year and includes Public Health input on health promotion.</p>
NHS Bedfordshire and Luton and Central Bedfordshire Council should ensure that the strength and difficulties questionnaire outcomes are reviewed as part of the emotional health and well-being assessment during review assessments.	BAAF Carers paperwork is being introduced to assess the emotional health and wellbeing of looked after children and young people.
NHS Bedfordshire and Luton must ensure that all GPs and independent health contractors are aware of their statutory responsibility to looked after children.	We are working with Clinical Commissioning Group to put together a plan to address this issue with GPs and Dentists.

Stage 1 actions also identified a number of actions for Social Care to improve health outcomes. These include ensuring that case planning is of a consistently high standards and that case records support good quality practice across the partnership. Other issues identified were reducing delays in getting signed consent, and improving information sharing when children move placement.

17. We will know if the service has improved by looking at:
- Performance management information including (health assessments on time, immunisation and dental checks up to date).
 - An audit of initial and review assessment files by the Designated Doctor and Nurse, including monitoring if health plans are implemented.

Early performance management information already indicates an improvement since 2011 in immunisation rates, with health assessment and dental check rates just below the 2010/11 levels. The percentage of Looked After Children with up to date immunisations rose from 51% in 2010/11 to an approximate figure of 83% for 2011/12.

Stage 2: Longer term service redesign

18. The Council and NHS Bedfordshire and Luton will be working with the Eastern Region on a peer support and challenge programme to ensure that action leads to sustainable improvement.

However, there are a number of themes which have emerged in the inspection which will need to be addressed in the redesign. These include:

- Ensuring that the LAC health team is optimally located to work in partnership.
- Ensuring that there is a choice of venue and appointment times for older looked after children and that the review assessment addresses relevant issues for this group.
- Having clear commissioning arrangements for health assessments for all children placed out of county.
- A clear strategy for developing the designated Doctors of the future, and additional expertise amongst GPs.

Conclusion and next steps

19. A full action plan is being put together to address all the issues raised in the inspection. A paper on the health of Looked After Children will be going to the Central Bedfordshire shadow Health and Wellbeing Board on 29 May 2012. The next health report to the Corporate Parenting Panel in November will give a full update on progress.

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