

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

**This meeting
may be filmed.***



**Central
Bedfordshire**

please ask for Leslie Manning
direct line 0300 300 5132
date 29 October 2015

NOTICE OF MEETING

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date & Time

Monday, 9 November 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

Venue at

Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

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

Elected Members (voting)

Cllrs C Hegley (Chairman), Mrs A L Dodwell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Barker,
N B Costin, Mrs S A Goodchild, T Stock, M A G Versallion and B Wells

[Named Substitutes:

Cllrs: D Bowater, I Dalgarno, Mrs J Freeman and K Janes]

Officers (voting)

Director of Children's Services

Director of Social Care, Health and Housing (or the Head of Housing Services
or their representative if the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing is
unable to attend)

Head of Leisure Services (or their representative if the Head of Leisure
Services is unable to attend)

Carers (non-voting)

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

***Please note that phones or other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming.**

The use of arising images or recordings is not under the Council's control.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

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 21 September 2015 (copy attached).

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest.

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

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

Reports

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
5.	Interim Report - Virtual School for Looked After Children To consider a report which provides information on the role of the Virtual School and the unvalidated outcomes for Central Bedfordshire Looked After Children in the Academic Year 2014/15 and the steps being taken in the Academic Year 2015/16 to raise the levels of achievement and progress for all Looked After Children.	* 27 - 46
6.	Agency Report Quarter 2 - Fostering 1 July - 30 September 2015 To consider a report outlining the activity in the Fostering Service from July to September 2015.	* 47 - 68
7.	Six Monthly Report in Respect of the Adoption Service - 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015 To consider a report outlining the activity in the Adoption Service from April to September 2015.	* 69 - 86

8. **Work Programme**

* 87 - 96

To consider the Panel's work programme and the Looked after Children and Young People's Participation Forward Plan 2015 - 2016.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 21 September 2015

PRESENT

Elected Members (voting)

Cllrs C Hegley (Chairman)
Mrs A Barker
N B Costin
Mrs S A Goodchild
T Stock
M A G Versallion
B Wells

Carers (non-voting)

Mrs H Philips MBE

Apologies for Absence: Mrs J Dickinson, Head of Leisure and Libraries
Cllr Mrs A L Dodwell, Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing
Mrs S Harrison, Director of Children's Services
Mrs J Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Officers in Attendance:	Mr G Jones	– Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
	Mr L Manning	– Committee Services Officer
	Mrs M Short	– Participation Officer
	Mr E Wong	– Head of Corporate Parenting

Others in Attendance: Children in Care Council Representatives

Ms T McDonald	Designated Nurse for Looked After Children, NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
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CPP/15/9. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 6 July 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CPP/15/10. **Members' Interests**

None.

CPP/15/11. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman reported that she had attended the recent Celebration of Fostering event and commented on the vibrant, lively atmosphere that she had experienced there. The Chairman stated she had been able to speak to various foster carers at the event including one who had fostered 100 children over a 25 year period. She thanked the officers for organising the event.

The Chairman advised the meeting of her attendance at meetings of the Central Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Children's Trust Board. She then referred to the training which had taken place in the past with regard to the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Council's role as a corporate parent and suggested that it was appropriate that further training be arranged given that there were a number of new councillors following the elections in May. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations undertook to organise this training.

CPP/15/12. Children in Care Council - Presentation

The Panel received a presentation from two Children in Care Council (CiCC) representatives which updated the meeting on the following matters:

- The CiCC (attendance at meetings and support activities)
- Children's Commissioner
- Young Voices Review Consultation
- University of Bedfordshire Sowing the Seeds and Aim for Uni Days
- Summer Activities
- Frontline Social Work Training
- Future Work.

A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

A Member stated that she would like to see the events, such as those set out under Summer Activities in the presentation, dated in future so that the Panel knew when they took place. She then sought a gender and age breakdown of the CiCC membership and the numbers involved, especially regarding those who regularly supported the CiCC. The Member sought confirmation that the experience gained by the older members, such as those representatives who attended the Panel meetings, would be passed on to the younger members of the CiCC. In response a CiCC representative explained that the same CiCC members usually attended the Panel's meetings because others were attending school or had other matters to deal with.

The Chairman suggested that a calendar of CiCC events could be of assistance to the Panel so that Members were aware of what was happening. In response the Assistant Director Children's services Operations suggested including the CiCC Forward Plan with the Panel's work programme on future agendas for this purpose.

A foster carer suggested that calendars detailing forthcoming events should be purchased for all fostered children so that they could make their preferences known to their carers. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations welcomed this suggestion.

A Member expressed concern that some children were being called out of their classes for their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) reviews and asked that this practice be limited and, if possible, ended. Another Member referred to allowing a choice of venue for the child to pick from. He also felt that the Council was interrupting children's learning in apparent contradiction to its own stance of emphasising the importance of such time. The Member then queried whether children and young people were becoming involved in the CiCC, the attendance levels and whether they continued their involvement. In response to the latter query a CiCC representative explained the action taken to encourage interest in the CiCC including a recruitment day. The Participation Officer assured the meeting that there was a strong group of 8-15 year olds coming forward within the CiCC.

With regard to the matter of venue suitability for IRO reviews the Head of Corporate Parenting explained that there were a range of possible venues to choose from, including meeting at the child's home. He acknowledged the need to be more sensitive to the child's wishes and gave a commitment that such meetings would not take place during teaching time. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations added that there were 1600 IRO reviews a year and finding a suitable time and place for all parties involved was a challenge.

A CiCC representative reported on the My Care survey and the introduction of boxes on the survey form to allow respondents to write out their views and opinions in their own words. The representative stated that the response had not been particularly good but the boxes containing the children's views had provided valuable data.

The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations acknowledged that that it was time to refresh the CiCC representation and this issue should be examined by a working group. He added that the older representatives had grown to be young adults and ambassadors and, whilst forming the backbone of the CiCC, consideration needed to be given to their ongoing role. He indicated that it was also time to recognise their unpaid hard work. He offered to show a video to the Panel illustrating the work they had undertaken.

Members congratulated the CiCC for the high standard of work the body had carried out with the Council and the contribution it had made to the wellbeing of other Looked After Children.

A CiCC representative stated that she had seen the fostering service change for the better whilst another referred to the awards they had received for helping to train social workers, how much this had meant to them and how she wanted to continue working with the Council in the future. She stressed that both representatives had not undertaken the work for financial reasons. A Member referred to the leadership and teamwork qualities displayed by the CiCC representatives and queried how the Council supported them when they

applied for jobs. In response one of the representatives explained that she was able to use various officers as references.

Members acknowledged that the CiCC representatives were older, that they had made a positive impact on the Panel and that there was a desire to know more about the CiCC's meetings and work and to become more involved in this area. The Chairman confirmed this and added that there was a positive feeling amongst the Panel to move on and that the Council's officers could assist in the refresh of CiCC representation. She also commented on the need to inform and educate the remaining Members of the Council.

A Member referred to a previous meeting where some of those young people leaving foster care had spoken to the Panel about their experiences and issues and suggested that it would be useful if this exercise were repeated.

One of the CiCC representatives reported on her experience of other care councils across the country and the differences in how they worked. She stated that it had been useful to gain awareness of these differences.

The Participation Officer advised the Panel of a forthcoming conference in London on corporate parenting. She undertook to circulate details to Members so that they could consider whether they wished to attend or not.

RESOLVED

- 1 that activities outlined in future Children in Care Council (CiCC) presentations be dated so Members are aware of when they had occurred;**
- 2 that the CiCC forward plan be included with the Panel's work programme on future agendas;**
- 3 that a calendar of forthcoming events be presented to all Looked After Children so that they can make their preferences known to their carers;**
- 4 that a video of the CiCC's work be presented to a future meeting of the Panel;**
- 5 that a selection of foster care leavers be asked to attend a meeting of the Panel to describe their experiences in care and raise any issues they have;**
- 6 that the CiCC representation on the Panel be refreshed and a working group be formed for this purpose;**
- 7 that an update report regarding resolution 6 above be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.**

CPP/15/13. **Central Bedfordshire Council Looked After Children Annual Report - 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015**

The Panel considered a report from the Director of Nursing and Quality NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) which described the achievements, progress and challenges of the Looked After Children (LAC) health service in meeting the health needs of Central Bedfordshire's children and young people in care and care leavers during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children first referred to the high standard of work undertaken by her predecessor, the Council's Head of Corporate Parenting and the Children in Care Council (CiCC) all of which had contributed to the outcomes recorded. She then introduced the Annual Report which covered the following areas:

- National policy and legislation
- Local context
- Profile of Bedford LAC population
- Partnership working
- Health service structure for LAC and care leavers
- Child and adolescent mental health services
- Public/health/teenage pregnancy
- Central Bedfordshire Council joint strategic needs assessment teenage pregnancy report 2015
- Performance
- Quality and audits
- Bedfordshire clinical commissioning group
- Conclusion

The Designated Nurse worked through the report highlighting particular items of interest and responded to comments, queries and requests for clarification from Members.

With particular regard to 'Table 1: Profile of Central Bedfordshire Council's Looked After Children' the Designated Nurse undertook to examine a Member's comment that the figures provided appeared to be inaccurate.

Another Member expressed some concern at the quality and clarity of the data provided in the report and asked that a greater level of information be provided on what had actually been achieved. She also requested that, in future, Annual Reports be submitted to the within three months from the end of the period that was covered and then sought reassurance that health assessments were being provided for those Looked After Children with more complicated health needs. Another Member, whilst acknowledging the overall progress made, also commented that the report lacked the information which would have allowed the Panel to undertake a fuller evaluation of the health provision during the period covered by the report. He also commented that the report failed to recognise children's mental health as a priority. In response the Designated Nurse explained the process with regard to health assessment provision and

emphasised that the service was provided by a range of professionals not just by the NHS. Further, the data relating to this was sent to the Council which could organise additional or remedial action as it felt necessary. She also reassured the meeting that mental health was a priority and outlined current developments regarding provision in this area.

The Head of Corporate Parenting advised the meeting that all Looked After Children received two health assessments during a twelve month period and this figure was above the national average. Further, the emotional well being of the children was closely monitored.

The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations suggested that a 'deep dive' report on Looked After Children health care provision be produced with input from the Designated Nurse, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the CiCC to allow consideration of the varied underlying issues, including financial, to be carried out by the Panel.

The meeting discussed the need to ensure that Members were briefed on all issues relating to Looked After Children to ensure that they were able to fully respond if interviewed during Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspections. The meeting also acknowledged the need for all groups and individuals working with Looked After Children to recognise and take seriously mental and emotional health issues as was the need to ensure access by young people to mental health care. The Designated Nurse stated that there were already services in schools that might be able to provide assistance and that designated teachers were being trained to recognise those children experiencing mental and emotional problems.

The Designated Nurse acknowledged that the report focused on numerical information rather than the underlying 'story' but emphasised that the report content depended on data supplied by the Council.

NOTED

the Looked After Children Annual Health Report for 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

RESOLVED

that a 'deep dive' report on Looked After Children health care provision be submitted to a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel by no later than March 2016.

CPP/15/14. Quarter One Report on the Fostering Service

The Panel received a report by the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations which outlined activity in the Fostering Service during Quarter One (April to June 2015).

The report contained updates on various issues including the following:

- Recruitment of Foster Carers
- Assessments
- Referrals/Placements
- Training
- Ofsted Notifications
- Allegations
- Complaints
- Compliments
- Annual Budget
- Reporting to Members – Legal Requirements
- Risk Management
- Staffing
- Conclusion and Next Steps

The Head of Corporate Parenting stated that the report before Members was quantitative in its approach but that the Quarter Two report would be qualitative in its content. He then introduced the Quarter One report, drawing Members' attention to items of note. With regard to training, the Head of Corporate Parenting stated that action would be taken to ensure a greater awareness of mental and emotional health issues.

In response to Members' queries the Head of Corporate Parenting stated that funding for asylum seekers under the age of 18 was provided almost in full by the Home Office and he was confident this arrangement would continue. With regard to the increasing grant of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) the Head of Corporate Parenting explained that the increase was nationwide across all local authorities and brought with it associated budget pressures. The grant of SGOs by Central Bedfordshire was forecast to increase by 12 a year though he expected changes relating to the grant of SGOs to be introduced soon.

The Head of Corporate Parenting turned next to foster carers. He stated that many were mature and the Council therefore found it necessary to both replace those who retired and increase the number of in-house foster carers. He added that the next quarterly report would include a table which would provide a detailed breakdown of foster carer data.

The Head of Corporate Parenting explained that placement matching was based on the specific needs of the child and this would be made clear in future reports.

The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations provided additional information. He stated that the Government had recognised the challenges faced by local authorities regarding the increasing award of, and associated cost of, SGOs. In addition, whilst the London local authorities had prepared a framework for action regarding SGO use, they had not attempted to deal with the issue of payments to those granted SGOs to care for the children concerned.

With regard to young, unaccompanied asylum seekers the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations confirmed that there had been significant growth in the numbers. There were currently 18 under the age of 18 compared to nine last year and six the year before. The Council did recover its costs for those under 18 but the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers, many of whom were 15-16 and over, still placed a pressure on the fostering system itself. In addition the age assessment process required by the Government was costly.

Last, the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations stressed that action was being taken to maximise the use of foster carers.

In conclusion the Chairman stated that whilst the Panel acknowledged the positive direction of travel for the Fostering Service there were areas where Members would wish to receive additional information.

NOTED

the content of the Quarter One report on the Fostering Service for the period April to June 2015.

CPP/15/15. **Work Programme**

Members considered a report which set out the Panel's work programme for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

The meeting was aware that additional items had already been added to the work programme.

RESOLVED

that the proposed Corporate Parenting Panel work programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/16, as attached at Appendix A of the report of the Committee Services Manager and Committee Services Officer be approved subject to the following amendments:

- a that the reference to the Adoption Reform Grant 2015/16 for submission to the meeting on 18 January 2016 be deleted (LM);**
- b that a video presentation on the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) be made to the Panel (GJ);**
- c that foster care leavers be invited to attend a meeting of the Panel to describe their experiences in care and raise any issues (GJ);**
- d that an update on the refreshment of the CiCC representation on the Panel be submitted to the Panel on 9 November 2015 (GJ);**

- e that a 'deep dive' report on Looked After Children's health care provision be submitted to the Panel no later than March 2016 (GJ);**
- f that future Work Programmes include the CiCC Forward Plan (LM).**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.58 a.m.)

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Appendix A

Children in Care Council



The CiCC



- We have supported interviews for a number of roles working with looked after children and care leavers these have included –
 - Independent Review Officers
 - Consultant Social Workers
 - Team manager for the Review Service
 - Youth Support Worker
 - Support Officer for the Virtual School
- A member of the CiCC has been attending the Looked After Children Health Improvement meeting and given feedback on services and where it could be improved.
- A member of the CiCC has also been attending the Foster Carer information evening to help support the recruitment of foster carers and was part of the panel to decide the winners of the foster carer awards.
- We have also met with Richard Carr, Sue Harrison and Gerard Jones to give feedback on the work we have completed.

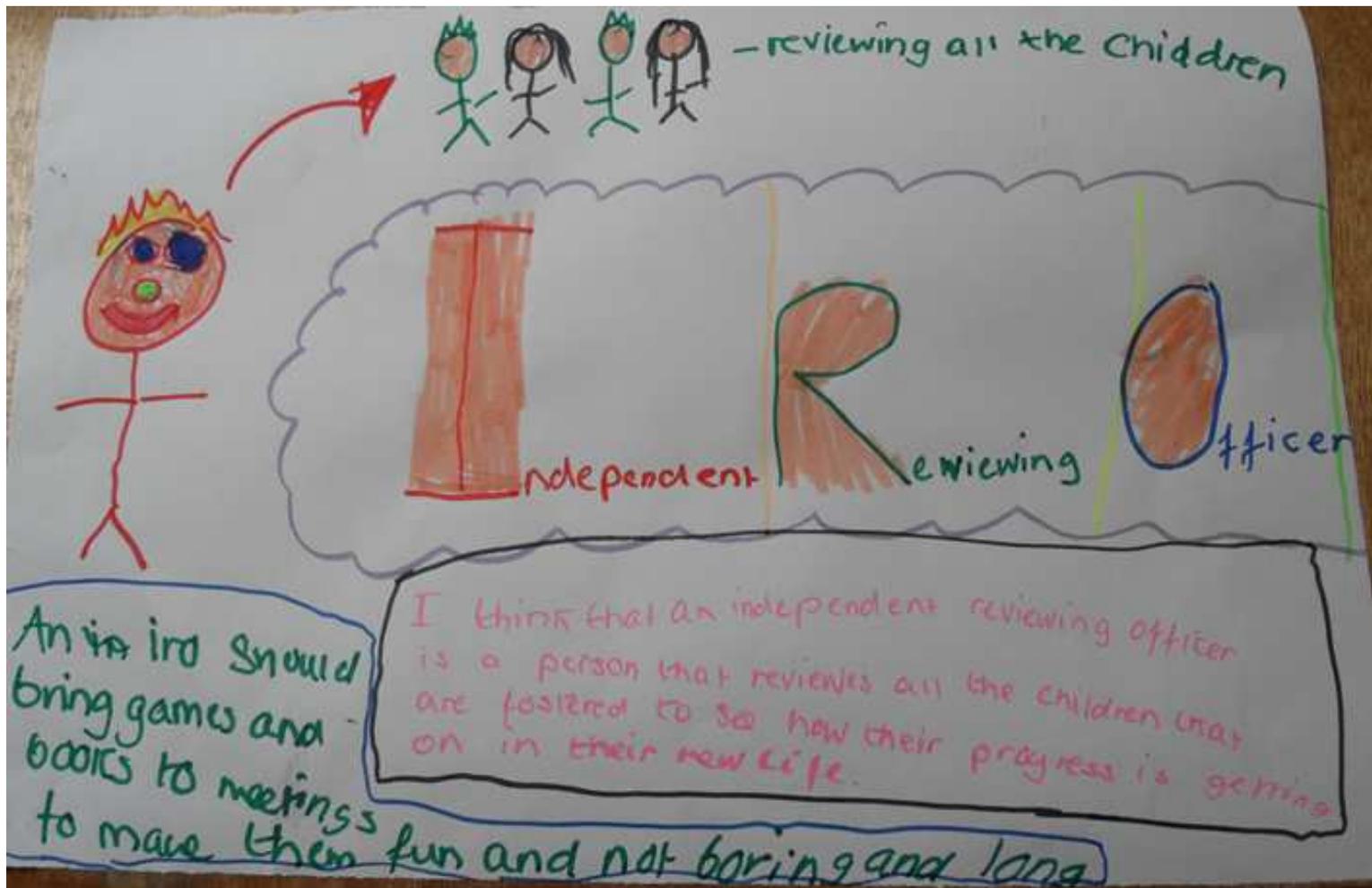
Children's Commissioner

Members of the CiCC have been part of the Young Experts Group for the Children's Commissioner and supported their work with the survey. Rebeka attended the launch of the report and was part of a panel debate with the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield and the Minister of State for Children and Families, Edward Timpson.



Young Voices Review Consultation

- The CiCC worked with the Conference and Review Service to develop a consultation day with looked after children.
- There were 9 young people who attended the day along with 2 peer mentors, 4 Independent Review Officers and the Participation Officer.
- The consultation was based around 2 questions – What makes a good IRO? & What makes a good review?



“I think that an Independent Reviewing Officer is a person that reviews all the children that are fostered to see how their progress is getting on in their life.” Emma aged 12

Young Voices Review Consultation

Feedback about the reviews included -

- Most felt they were too long – put a clock in the meeting to make them shorter
- Ask me who I want there
- Time of the review is important some young people want it in school time others don't. Some people hate being called out of lessons then having to explain why.
- Care plans some young people receive them and others don't.
- Some want their care plan to be more flexible
- Meetings to be more fun
- Bring food to the meetings mince pies at Christmas!
- Use of a move on sign if the meeting is too difficult/boring

The feedback has been given to the service to support the development of child friendly reviews.

University of Bedfordshire Sowing the Seeds and Aim for Uni Days.

- The University of Bedfordshire organised 2 activity days for the Young Voices group. The aim of the days were for young people to start thinking about their future aspirations.
- Young people created their own radio show which was aired on the University's radio station and were able to meet a number of students and ask questions about university.
- The young people then took part in a graduation ceremony.



Summer Activities

- This has been the biggest summer activity programme with 50 children and young people attending at least 1 day.
- There were 9 days of activities organised these included a pony day, a trip to Gulliver's, 2 leisure days which were organised by Central Bedfordshire Leisure Services and an ice skating trip.
- Feedback has been very positive from children attending the activities and foster carers stating that it has helped support placements over the summer holidays.



Summer Activities

Informal consultation took place during the activities topics included-

- the number of changes of social workers,
- the complaints and compliments process for children – this information has been passed onto the customer relations manager.
- Awards evening and future activity programme.

The information has been passed onto the relevant services and we hope to receive some feedback from this.

Frontline Social Work Training

- Central Bedfordshire's CiCC was invited to deliver training to the participants on the programme – this involved the workshop which was developed to create a social workers tool box.
- One member was also invited to the opening ceremony, to read one her poems this young person received really positive feedback.



Future Work

- The CiCC will be working on a Children's Survey which will go out to all children who have a social worker. We have discussed this with Richard Carr and Sue Harrison and also the LSCB Voice of the Child Sub Group.
- We are looking to redevelop the CiCC and looking at ways to encourage more young people to attend.
- We will be working with Commissioners looking at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- The Awards will take place on Friday and we hope to see you all there!

Thank you for listening.

Any Questions?

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

9 November 2015

INTERIM REPORT - VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Report of Sue Harrison, Director, Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers:

Helen Redding, Assistant Director, School Improvement
(helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Jackie Edwards, Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils
(jackie.edwards@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Purpose of this report:

This report provides information on the role of the Virtual School and the unvalidated outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) in Central Bedfordshire in the Academic Year 2014/15. The validated outcomes will be reported at Corporate Parenting Panel in March 2016. It also identifies the steps the Virtual School is taking in the current Academic Year 2015/16 in partnership with other agencies including schools and social care to raise the achievement and progress of all LAC.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to:

1. consider this report, the progress made to date, and comment on the steps identified to improve outcomes for LAC in Academic Year 2015/2016.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report is not scheduled to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny, as it is the responsibility of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Background

2. Councils work in a number of ways to drive improvement in the educational achievements of the children they look after. In Central

Bedfordshire this is managed through the work of the Virtual School for LAC.

3. The Virtual School must ensure that each child achieves optimum educational outcomes at each stage of his or her schooling. In order to achieve this the Virtual School:
 - a) Ensures that there is a system to regularly track, monitor and challenge the attendance, attainment and progress of LAC;
 - b) Ensures that each LAC has a robust and effective personal education plan (PEP);
 - c) Works with schools to improve overall attainment of LAC by challenging schools to improve the achievement and progress of individual children through good use of their resources;
 - d) Works with social workers to improve attendance, attainment and progress of LAC;
 - e) Ensures that LAC who are educated in schools outside of Central Bedfordshire Council receive the right support to achieve the best educational outcomes;
 - f) Manages the Pupil Premium funding allocated for LAC including monitoring the effective use and impact of this funding by schools and settings.
4. In September 2014 a permanent head of the Virtual School was appointed to drive improvement in the attainment of LAC in Central Bedfordshire. This includes working closely with schools and social care services to identify and intervene with those who are at risk of disengagement or under achievement.
5. The post holder became Head of Service Virtual School and Vulnerable Learners on 1 May 2015. In this new role there is an opportunity to create greater links between the Access and Inclusion team which works with schools to support pupils at risk of exclusion and those with poor attendance and the Virtual School. As a result of this a new post of Team Leader for the Virtual School has been created to maintain the progress made in championing the educational achievement of children looked after by Central Bedfordshire.
6. The Virtual School has pupils on its roll who are in the care of Central Bedfordshire Council and who are being educated in Central Bedfordshire schools or in schools in other authorities.
7. In addition, the Virtual School has pupils on its roll who are living within Central Bedfordshire and who attend Central Bedfordshire schools, but who are in the care of other councils.
8. It also works closely with Virtual School Heads from other Local Authorities who have LAC placed in Central Bedfordshire schools, and where Central Bedfordshire has LAC placed in their schools.

9. At October 2015 the total number of Central Bedfordshire pupils of statutory school age who are part of the Virtual School is 187 (Reception to Year 11). This does not include 56 Y12 and Y13 young people still in care who are being monitored by the Virtual School in partnership with the Youth Support Service.
10. There is a statutory requirement to monitor the progress of all LAC and to ensure that each child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP records children's previous educational experiences and attainment as well as setting targets for future achievement. The nominated social worker and the designated teacher are responsible for instigating the writing of the PEP. Completed PEPs are held by the Virtual School. Currently PEPs take place termly where appropriate to enable the Virtual School to closely monitor academic progress. This enables appropriate support and challenge with regard to ensuring pupils are making expected or better than expected progress. There is a quality assurance checklist for all PEPs which helps ensure that they are of a consistently high standard.
11. The PEPs now have two distinct elements. Section A is managed by social care and is updated by social workers prior to the meeting. Section B is managed and completed by the school and returned to the Virtual School. There has been some amendments to this section to reflect the new assessment processes in school. The Virtual School Educational Advisers continue to take a proactive role in managing the PEP meetings to ensure there is rigour and consistency in these meetings.
12. In April 2011 the Government introduced the Pupil Premium. The amount increased in April 2014 to £1900.
13. Through PEP reviews, schools are challenged to identify the impact of Pupil Premium funding on the achievements of LAC. Amendments to the PEP now include a question on how the school uses the Pupil Premium for eligible children and what the impact of this is on the pupil's progress. This enables the Virtual School to track its use and enables schools to demonstrate impact to governors and Ofsted.
14. After consultation with schools and other stakeholders it was agreed that the Virtual School would retain £400 from the £1900 allocated per pupil. The remaining £1500 is given termly to schools to support them in raising educational achievement.
15. There is now a clear application process for schools to request additional funding to support LAC at risk of disengagement or under-achievement. This allows significant additional support to be allocated to those pupils who need it. 1 example of how this funding was used alongside funding from social care to support a Y7 pupil at risk of permanent exclusion to access high quality 1:1 tuition while social care identified an appropriate placement for her.

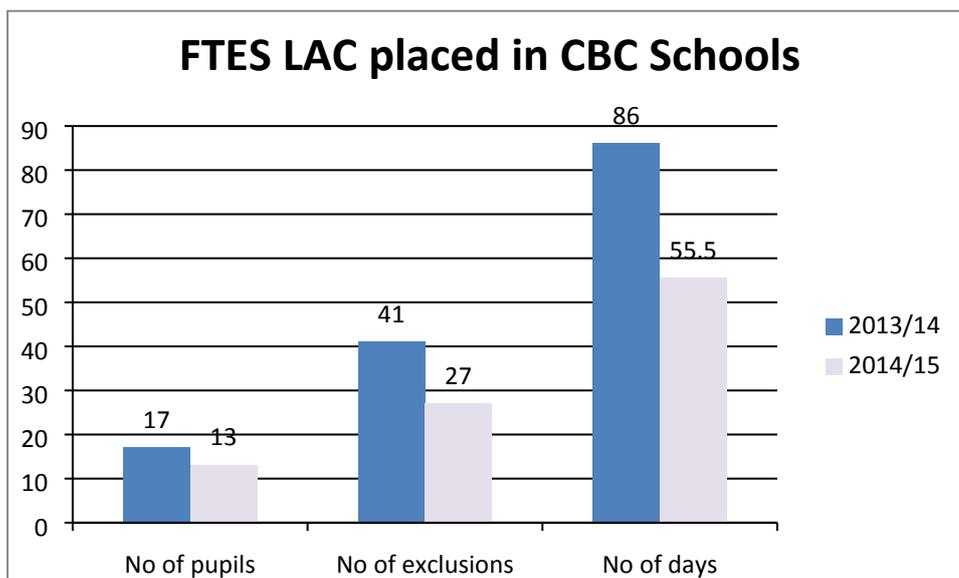
16. The Governing Body is now well established and has met on 3 occasions in the year 2014/15. It continues to be well attended and offer appropriate challenge as well as support. The current chair will remain in post for this academic year 2015/16.

Exclusions

17. There was 1 permanent exclusion during 2015/16 for serious misconduct. The Virtual School worked closely with other agencies including social care, providing 1:1 tuition while the transfer to the Academy of Central Bedfordshire (ACB) was arranged. The student is now making good progress at the ACB.

18. Whenever there is the threat of a permanent exclusion the Virtual School will contact the school to explore all the options available including a change of placement. Schools are actively discouraged from permanently excluding LAC, and all other options are explored.

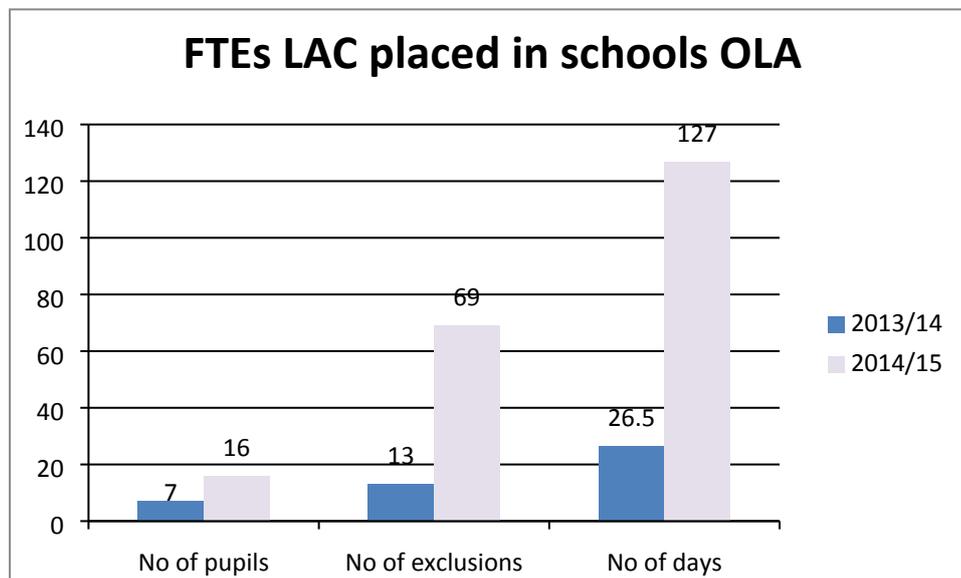
19. In the academic year 2013/14 there were a total of 86 days lost as a result of fixed term exclusions of LAC from Central Bedfordshire schools. In 2014/15 this reduced to 55.5 days. This reflects the effective cross agency working to reduce the need to exclude.



20. In the academic year 2013/14, there was a total of 26.5 days lost as a result of fixed term exclusions of LAC placed in schools and settings outside of Central Bedfordshire (including therapeutic care homes with onsite educational provision). In 2014/15 this increased to 127 days.

21. 5 young people (all male) contributed to 53 days of this figure. In most cases these are our children/young people with the most complex needs, some with several placement breakdowns over a relatively short period of time.

22. There has been considerable multi-agency working and investment to engage these young people into education or training. This remains a priority for the Virtual School and partners.



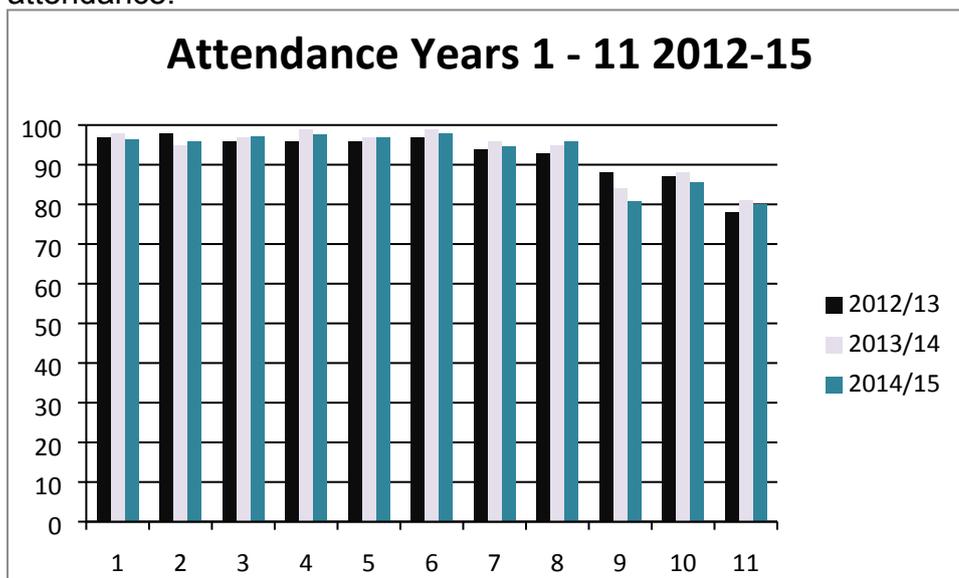
23. The Virtual School is immediately informed by the Inclusion Officer when an exclusion of a LAC occurs from a schools in Central Bedfordshire. The school is immediately contacted by the Education Adviser to discuss day 1 provision and plan a re-integration meeting to prevent repeat exclusions.

Attendance

24. The contract to monitor attendance is now with Looked After Call as a result of a competitive re-commissioning process in August 2015. This continues to be used in an effective way to monitor and challenge the absence of LAC.
25. Looked After Call contacts all schools where there is a pupil of statutory school age both in and outside of Central Bedfordshire. If a pupil is absent the carer and/or social worker is contacted to ascertain the reason for absence.
26. This system ensures rigorous procedures are in place for safeguarding, as well as accountability for absence from school. It enables the Virtual School to generate attendance data which can be regularly interrogated and shared, and appropriate actions identified immediately to support pupils' improved attendance.
27. The Virtual School and Social Care Managers receive daily updates regarding pupils who have had periods of absence of more than 3 days. This is followed up by the Education Adviser in discussion with the Social Worker. If there is no acceptable reason for absence a multi-professional meeting is called.

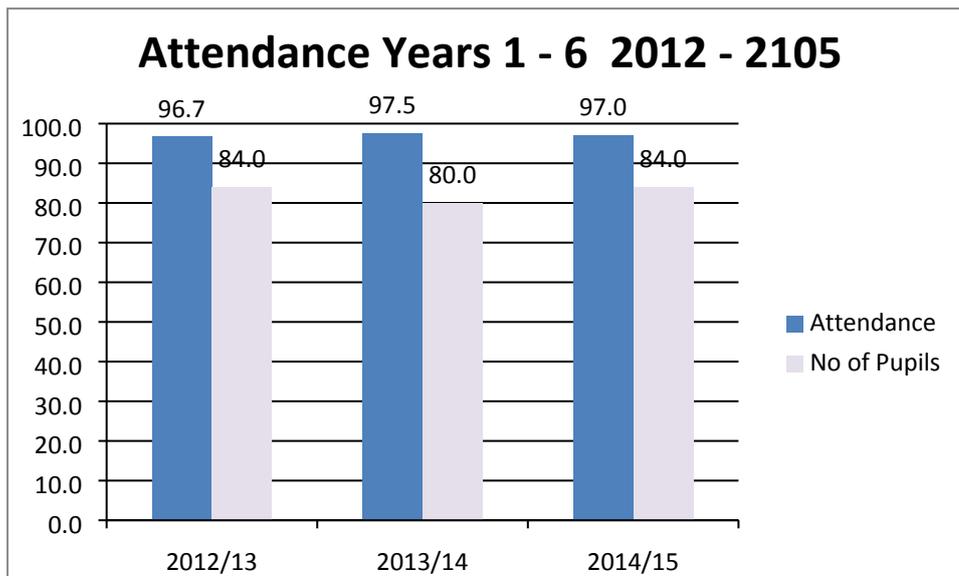
28. Although overall attendance in 2014/15 has fallen, the majority of pupils' attendance is over 95% (106 of 174) with 19 pupils with 100% attendance.

29. The following table illustrates the overall attendance data over 3 years. Attendance in Years 9, 10, and 11 still remains the key challenge and therefore key priority. Please note that with small cohorts in some years that 1 or 2 pupils will have a significant impact upon whole school year attendance.

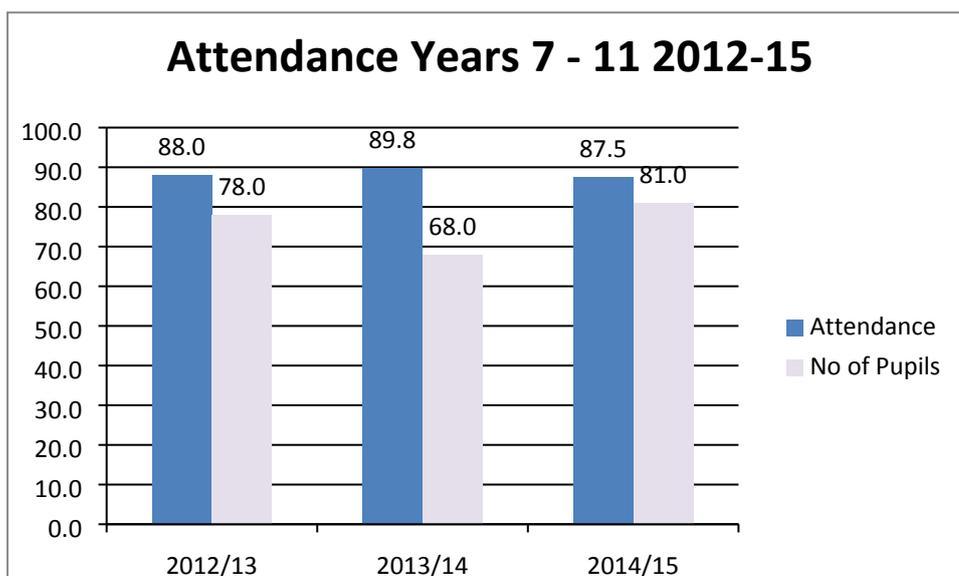


30. The Virtual School is working with schools and young people to re-engage them in learning. Individual tutors are commissioned where needed to ensure access to learning if a pupil is not attending school. The Virtual School now has a Personal Adviser who works directly with these young people at risk of dis-engaging from learning.

31. The following table demonstrates that in the primary year groups overall attendance has reduced by 0.8%. This has been influenced by a number of children undergoing statutory assessment resulting in new schools being identified when their additional needs have been identified. As yet whole school data to compare attendance of LAC against non-LAC is not available.



32. The following table demonstrates that in the secondary year groups, overall attendance has reduced by 2.3%. This has been influenced by a group of pupils (4 in Y9, 4 in Y10, 5 in Y11) who have had placement breakdowns or have absconded.



33. Attendance can be low where pupils have moved placement or have spent some time waiting for a school place in other authorities, or where they have had periods on part-time timetables. Currently all pupils where attendance has been identified as a concern are being closely monitored by both the Virtual School and Social Care.

34. If appropriate a part-time timetable may be agreed if it is in the best interest of the child. However it is closely monitored by the Virtual School and only seen as a short term arrangement.

35. Care Planning Guidance and Regulations (2010) suggest that unless it is an emergency, students in Key Stage 4 should not move care placement

unless a school placement is available. There were 3 Year 11 pupils, 5 Year 10 pupils and 4 Year 9 pupils who moved placement in the academic year 2014/15. This was as a result of either an irretrievable placement breakdown or concerns about the young person's safety.

36. The Virtual School worked closely with social care to minimise the disruption to the young person's learning for example supporting access to an Alternative Provider for a young person who moved to Leicester. However a placement breakdown that results in a school move often impacts temporarily on school attendance.
37. The Virtual School works in partnership with social care colleagues to commission care placements which can maintain school placements whenever possible.

Pupils' Achievement

38. Progress and achievement data is collected using the PEP process on a termly basis. The Virtual School now analyses the data and works with schools to identify appropriate next steps.
39. The national data for the children looked after continuously for 12 months during the year ending 31 March 2015 will be available in December 2015 to allow for national comparisons and will be reported in the March report.

Provisional Key Stage 1 results

40. The following data is for **all** pupils looked after by Central Bedfordshire, **not only those who have been LAC for over 12 months**.
- a) 19 pupils were LAC in July 2015, 1 (6%) of whom has a statement/EHCP of SEND.
 - b) 11 pupils were educated in Central Bedfordshire schools, 8 pupils in schools in other Local Authorities (OLA).
 - c) Of these 19 pupils, we have school reported data for all pupils in Central Bedfordshire schools but await data for 1 pupil educated OLA.
 - d) Of the 18 pupils, we have data which indicates that 17 out of 18 (**94%**) achieved the expected level or above (level 2) in reading, 14 out of 18 (**78%**) in writing, and 17 out of 18 (**94%**) in maths.
 - e) Of these 18 pupils 11 out of 18 (**71%**) achieved level 2 or above in all three subject areas.
 - f) Of the 11 pupils educated in Central Bedfordshire, 10 pupils (**91%**) achieved the expected level or above in reading, 10 pupil (**91%**) in writing and 10 pupils (**91%**) in mathematics.
 - g) Of the 7 pupils educated OLA where we have the data, 7 pupils (**100%**) achieved level 2 in reading, 5 pupils (**71%**) in writing and 7 pupils (**100%**) in mathematics.
41. The following data is for pupils looked after by Central Bedfordshire **who have been LAC for over 12 months (this is the national measure)**. We

are still awaiting school level data from 1 child educated outside of Central Bedfordshire

- a) 10 pupils were LAC in July 2015 for whom we have data, 1 (6%) of whom has a statement/EHCP of SEND.
- b) 5 are in CBC schools, 5 are in schools OLA
- c) Of the 5 pupils attending CBC schools 4 pupils (80%) achieved level 2 or above in reading, 4 pupils (80%) in writing and 4 pupils (80%) in maths.
- d) 3 out of the 5 pupils (60%) achieved level 4 in all three areas
- e) Of the 5 pupils attending schools OLA, all 5 pupils (100%) achieved level 2 or above in reading, 4 out of 5 (80%) in writing and all 5 pupils in maths (100%).
- f) 4 out of 5 (80%) pupils attending schools OLA achieved level 2 or above in all three subject areas

Provisional Key Stage 2 results

42. The following data is for **all** pupils looked after by Central Bedfordshire, **not only those who have been LAC for over 12 months**. One school with 1 pupil with a statement of SEND has had their data suppressed. One pupil was educated in Wales and made good progress. This data refers to 18 pupils.

- a. 9 pupils were educated in Central Bedfordshire schools, 9 pupils in schools in other LAs
- b. 7 pupils out of 20 (40%) have identified SEND, 4 pupils out of 20 (20%) have statements
- c. Of the 18 pupils we have data for, 14 pupils (78%) including one with a statement) achieved level 4 or above in **reading** with 6 pupils achieving level 5 (33%)
- d. 11 out of 11 pupils (100%) without an identified SEND achieved level 4 or above in **reading**.
- e. 7 pupils out of 18 (39%) made **3 levels of progress** between KS1 and KS2 in **reading**.
- f. Of the 18 pupils we have data for, 12 pupils (66%) achieved level 4 and above in **writing**
- g. 10 out of 11 pupils (91%) without an identified SEND achieved level 4 or above in **writing**
- h. 3 pupils out of 18 (17%) made **3 levels of progress** between KS1 and KS2 in **writing**
- i. Of the 18 pupils we have data for, 12 pupils (66%) including 1 with a statement achieved level 4 or above in **maths** with 1 pupil achieving level 5 and 1 pupil achieving level 6.
- j. 9 out of 11 pupils (82%) without an identified SEND achieved level 4 or above in **maths**

- k. 3 pupils out of 18 (**17%**) made **3 levels of progress** and **1 pupils made 4 levels of progress** between KS1 and KS2 in **maths**
 - l. 11 out of 18 (**62%**) achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths.
 - m. 9 out of 11 pupils (**82%**) without an identified SEND achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths.
43. The following data is for **16** pupils looked after by Central Bedfordshire, **who have been LAC for over 12 months**.
- a. Of the 16 pupils who have been in care more than 12 months 13 out of 16 (**81%**) achieved level 4 or above in reading, 11 out of 16 (**69%**) in writing and 11 out of 16 (**69%**) maths.
 - b. 10 out of 16 (**62%**) achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths.

Provisional Key Stage 4 Results 2014/15

44. There were 15 students LAC by CBC in July 2015. **This data is for the 13 out of the 15 students who have been in care for more than 12 months on 31st March 2015.** This does not include Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC) who arrived after May 2015 (see post-16 section)

Please note these results are subject to confirmation and as such may change

- a. 10 out of the 13 students have an identified SEND including 7 with statements
- b. Of the 6 students without a statement all students were entered for GCSEs and 5 achieved the following grades:
 - 5 students achieved the equivalent of 5 A*- Gs
- c. Of the 7 students with a statement
 - 1 student achieved 5 A* - D including English and maths
 - 2 students made expected progress
 - 1 student achieved FS Maths Level 1, FS English Comprehension Level 1 and Level 2, FS English Written Level 1 and level 2, Functional Skills ICT Level 1 plus a range of vocational qualifications
 - 1 student achieved no accredited qualifications

Pupils not entered for GCSE.

45. 2 students were not entered for any accredited qualifications as they have complex needs being addressed by social care.

Year 12 and 13

46. There are currently 22 Y12 students being supported by the Youth Support Service (YSS) and Virtual School
- 18 attend a school or college
 - 2 NEET
 - 2 Other
47. There are currently 34 Y13 students being supported by the YSS and Virtual School.
- 19 attend a school or college
 - 7 attend training providers
 - 1 with CBC
 - 5 NEET
 - 1 Volunteering
 - 1 Other
48. All the above students have an identified Personal Adviser who works directly with the young person helping them overcome barriers to accessing employment and training for example transport problems, access to IT, 1 to 1 tuition.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)

49. Since March 2014 33 UASC were taken into care by CBC and were identified between the ages of 15 and 17 at time of entry.
50. The following outcomes have been achieved by some very effective partnership work between the Virtual School, YSS and Social Care.
51. Currently all of those UASC have accessed tuition to learn English or there are plans in place for them to do so.
52. There is clear evidence of students progress quickly through levels to allow them to access college places. This is due to some outstanding work by YSS Personal Advisers acting as an advocate for students with colleges.
53. Currently there are:
- 5 Y11 – 2 have started school, 3 who recently arrived social workers are currently identifying and applying for school places through the admission process
 - 11 Y12 – 7 are attending college on Entry Level 1 or above courses, 5 recently arrived and will be starting a programme of learning English as an additional language by the end of November
 - 12 Y13 – 11 are attending college on Entry Level 1 or above
 - 5 Y14 – 5 are attending college on Entry Level 1 or above

Summary of strengths

54. Key Strengths:

- Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 continues to improve
- Number of days lost to fixed term exclusions from pupils placed in CBC schools continue to drop
- All pupils now placed in good or better non-residential schools when moving schools.
- Early identification and support for schools to access statutory assessment for KS1 children
- Effective partnership working with the Youth Support Service and Social Care to engage 15 – 19 year old Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC) in education
- Maintaining the most vulnerable learners engaged in learning while appropriate placements are found
- Partnership working with other VSHs to prevent the exclusions of LAC placed in CBC schools from other LAs
- Partnership working with schools in and out of LA to prevent the permanent exclusion of young people.

Council Priorities

55. The report supports two of the priorities in Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan: 'Improve educational attainment' and 'protect the vulnerable', and also Central Bedfordshire's Medium Term Plan: Delivering your priorities – Our Plan for Central Bedfordshire 2012-2016 within the specific priority of Improved Educational Attainment.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

56. The Council has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children it looks after regardless of where they live. In Central Bedfordshire, this duty is delivered through the work of the Virtual School for LAC in partnership with schools and other services.
57. The governing bodies of all maintained schools are required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 to appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children who are on the school roll.

58. The Virtual School Head became a statutory post in June 2014.

Financial Implications

59. The Virtual School is fully funded through the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) High Needs Block. It also holds the retained element of the Pupil

Premium as agreed by schools which is allocated for individual pupils according to their particular needs

Equalities Implications

60. As Corporate Parents our aim is that Looked After Children have the same life opportunities as all children

Key areas for development

61. Key issues/areas for Development (See Appendix A for detail)

- Attendance of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11
- KS4 attainment.
- School placements for children/young people with statements/EHCPs placed out of CBC.
- Reduce the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions of pupils placed in schools outside of CBC.

Appendices

Appendix A – Virtual School Development Plan 2015-16

Background Papers

None

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Overall Aim:

Through shared responsibility, accountability and effective communication among services LAC make expected progress both in their academic achievement and personal development

Key Strengths:

- Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 continues to improve
- Number of days lost to fixed term exclusions from pupils placed in CBC schools continue to drop
- All pupils now placed in good or better non-residential schools when moving schools.
- Early identification and support for schools to access statutory assessment for KS1 children
- Effective partnership working with the Youth Support Service and Social Care to engage 15 – 19 year old Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC) in education
- Maintaining the most vulnerable learners engaged in learning while appropriate placements are found
- Partnership working with other VSHs to prevent the exclusions of LAC placed in CBC schools from other LAs
- Partnership working with schools in and out of LA to prevent the permanent exclusion of young people.

Areas for Development

- Attendance of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11
- KS4 attainment.
- School placements for children/young people with statements/EHCPs placed out of CBC.
- Reduce the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions of pupils placed in schools outside of CBC.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL (VS) DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015/16

Objectives	Strategies	Lead Person	By when?	Outcomes	Update Autumn 2015
<p>1 Ensuring that Looked After Children attend school well, in line with their peers. This will be achieved through:</p>	<p>i. The systematic monitoring of attendance data provided by Looked After Call for each pupil, with actions identified to support improved attendance.</p>	<p>JE Court & Permanency Team Schools and settings</p>	<p>July 2016</p>	<p>Improve the overall attendance of years 9, 10 and 11 by 5%</p> <p>Close the gap between secondary attendance and the national average for all schools by 2%</p> <p>Sustain the improvement in primary attendance above the national average for all primary schools to at least 1.5%</p>	
<p>2 Reduce the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions in out of local authority schools</p>	<p>i. Daily notification from Looked After Call of exclusions of all pupils ii. Team Leader Virtual Leader liaises with Education Adviser arranges to visit school to consider alternatives to exclusion iii. School offered additional pupil premium to support the pupil iv. Head of Service Virtual School will work closely with VSHs in other LAS to identify other</p>	<p>Court & Permanency Team</p>		<p>Days lost to FTE reduce by 5% in CBC schools.</p> <p>Days lost to FTE reduce by 40% in schools OLA</p> <p>Permanent exclusions occur only in exceptional circumstances. VSH works with any school considering a PE.</p>	

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL (VS) DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015/16

	educational provision where appropriate				
3 Ensuring that Looked After Children are placed promptly in schools when moving council areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Social Care Team managers to consult with the Virtual School re school changes for a planned placement move ii. When emergency placements take place the Virtual School will work with social workers in identifying 1:1 tuition until a school place can be secured. iii. The Virtual School liaises with other LAs to ensure that the child/young person accesses appropriate educational provision in a timely manner iv. The Team Leader Virtual School works closely with social care and the Assessment & Monitoring Team (SEND) when a child with a statement requires a new school v. Transition PEP meetings take place where appropriate. 	Schools/ Settings	March 2014	<p>All new school placements are in good or better schools as judged by Ofsted.</p> <p>LAC placed in 80% schools judged good or better by July 2016</p> <p>No child/young person who is required to move school is out of education for more than ten days. (this includes children/young people who are moved to potential adoptive parents)</p> <p>Any child with a statement/EHCP who requires a place in a special school OLA is allocated a place within six weeks of application.</p>	

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL (VS) DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015/16

<p>4 Strengthening the school's abilities to meet the needs of Looked After Children. This will be achieved through:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The challenge provided by Virtual School staff at termly PEP reviews; ii. The challenge provided through the Head of Service Virtual School and the Governing Body iii. Continue to review the use of pupil premium 	<p>Education Advisers/ Team Leader VS</p> <p>Court & Permanency Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Schools can clearly evidence to effective use of Pupil Premium linked to improved educational outcomes.</p> <p>Schools/settings have access to qualified 1:1 tutors</p> <p>Virtual School has a list of preferred 1:1 tutors.</p>	
<p>5 Further improving the quality of the PEP process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Quality assuring Section B of the PEP documentation ii. PEP meetings take in place has agreed with all relevant parties invited and attending iii. Virtual School are contacted immediately a school age child is taken into care to arrange a PEP meeting iv. Sharing good practice through subsequent PEP reviews and network meetings 	<p>Team Leader Virtual School</p> <p>VS Education Advisers</p> <p>Intake & Assessment Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>PEP meetings are offered termly for all LAC from Reception to Year 11.</p> <p>100% of pupils have at least two PEP meetings a year</p> <p>90% of pupils have at least three PEP meetings a year</p> <p>PEP meeting for pupils recently taken into care are arranged within ten days of this occurring</p>	

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL (VS) DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015/16

6 Ensuring that schools intervene promptly and effectively if a Looked After Child falls behind their target trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Challenging the designated teacher regarding use of Pupil Premium and other funding to ensure that each pupil is keeping up with or exceeding their expected level of progress; ii. Keeping a Virtual School database that monitors each looked after child's progress and ensures intervention if a child is falling behind their expected rate of progress iii. Identifying Y10 and Y11 students at risk of disengagement or under-achievement and offering additional support to school and carers. 	<p>Team Leader Virtual School</p> <p>VS Education Advisers</p>	Ongoing	<p>All KS1 & KS2 pupils make at least expected progress from baseline and are in line with national averages for LAC.</p> <p>All Y11s are entered for accredited qualifications in English & mathematics.</p> <p>20% Y11s achieve 5A* - C including English and mathematics.</p> <p>70% Y11s with a statement/EHCP achieve the equivalent 5A* - G at GCSE.</p>	
7 Ensuring robust monitoring and tracking of all 16-21 (or 25) year old young people, and making sure they access further education, training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Monthly meetings to discuss 14 – 19 year old students and identify appropriate intervention for including accessing additional funding. ii. YSS/Virtual School Personal Adviser works directly with targeted Y9, Y10, Y11 to 	Virtual School/YSS/ Court & Permanency Team	Sept 2016	80% current Y12 and 13s who are LAC remain in education, training or employment.	

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL (VS) DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015/16

<p>and employment and are in suitable accommodation by contributing to the Support for Success Panel. Continue the support for UASCs to maintain them in education or training</p>	<p>advise and support pathway choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. YSS share the Personal Action Plans agreed with students with the Virtual School iv. PEPs offered to post-16 students v. Continue to fund the language tuition and application to college on completion of this tuition 				
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DRAFT

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

9 November 2015

**AGENCY REPORT QUARTER 2 – FOSTERING 1 JULY – 30
SEPTEMBER 2015**

Report of Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services

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Advising Officers: Gerard Jones, Assistant Director of Children's Services

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1. Fostering Services Regulations 2000 require the Fostering Agency to monitor and control the activities of the Fostering Service and ensure quality performance. Quarterly reports are presented to elected members in order to outline the activities in the Fostering Service so that members can monitor and feedback on the quality and performance of the service.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the Agency Report Quarter 2 – Fostering and agree Appendix A: Statement of Purpose 2015.

Issues

1. The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require the Local Authority Fostering Service to report to Members at 3 monthly intervals. This will be achieved by presentation of quarterly reports.
2. This is the second quarterly report (1 July – 30 September) for the financial year 2015/2016.

Recruitment of Foster Carers

3. During July, August and September, a variety of recruitment activities/events took place in line with the Fostering Services recruitment strategy.

4. As a result of reviewing the Fostering Recruitment Strategy we have cut back on the level of outreach work undertaken as these activities are resource intensive and although they are good at promoting fostering in general they have not generated the level of referrals expected. In July and September we held drop in sessions and 2 information evenings for people interested in learning more about fostering. No outreach work took place in August as this is generally a quiet month for recruitment activity/responses.
5. In relation to advertising, an advert was placed in Kids Talk magazine focusing on recruiting carers who could take sibling groups. Adverts and posters were put up in G.P. surgeries across the Central Bedfordshire area. A window display was designed for a Dunstable showcase window and fostering adverts on till receipts at Argos started. A newspaper advert was placed in Beds on Sunday trying to recruit more carers. Posters regarding sibling groups and older children were sent to G.P.'s and dental surgeries across the CBC area. An advert provided for digital monitors was also set up for G.P and dental surgeries. An advert was placed in the Times and Citizen advertising fostering in general as well as promoting a forthcoming information evening. An article was published in Luton News regarding the 'Celebration of Fostering' event that took place focusing on a foster carer who received an award. In her regular CBC blog the Director of Children's Services also mentioned the 'Celebration of Fostering' event.
6. Online posts on Facebook have been promoted throughout this quarter either advertising forthcoming Information Evenings/Events, promoting the need to recruit foster care from the general public or posting a questions and answer session. A rotating advert about Fostering was introduced to CBC's website homepage. A Net Native digital campaign using Facebook was also promoted. (Two of the foster carers who also received awards at the 'Celebration of Fostering' event also had their photos and interviews placed on the Beds on Sunday's webpage and Facebook page).
7. As a result of the recruitment drive during this period we received a total of 26 enquiries (although 30 less than in the last quarter, enquiries generally fall during this period due to it being the holiday season). There were 13 in July, 3 in August and 10 in September. There were 18 Initial Visits during this period, 12 in July, 4 in August and 2 in September. There were 8 application forms received during this period. 1 for July, 3 for August and 4 for September (this is the same number as the previous quarter).

Assessments

8. As of the 30 September 2015 there were 19 assessments in progress, 10 for career carers, 2 Regulation 24 (temporary family and friends carers), 3 full family and friends/connected persons carers and 4 Special Guardianship Order assessments.
9. During this quarter 6 fostering households were approved, 2 of these were as Family and Friend Carers, the other 4 were approved as career carers and their approvals were as follows –
 - 1 male child 5-18 (5-16 at time of placement) for short term or long term care
 - 2 children age 0-18 (0-8 at start of placement) either gender, short term long term or respite
 - 2 children age 0-18, either gender, short term, long term, emergency and respite
 - 1 child age 0-5 either gender, short term and respite
 - 1 child, (2 if siblings and can share the same room) age 5-12, either gender, short term long term and respite.
10. As of the 30 September 2015 the Fostering Agency had a total of 103 fostering households (compared to 105 at the end of March 2015). 77 of these carers were career carers (which is the same as at the end of March 2015) and 26 Family and Friends/Regulation 24 (compared to 28 at the end of March 2015).
11. As at 30 September 2015 there were 129 Special Guardianship Orders in place (compared to 114 at the end of March 2015). The majority of the SGO's granted were to Family and Friends/foster carers so the children they cared for were no longer classed as looked after.

Referrals/Placement

12. During July, August and September 39 new fostering placements were made; 5 in July, 17 were in August and 17 were in September. This is an increase of 8 new placements compared to the last quarter. Out of the 39 new placements, 20 were placed in house. 12 out of the 19 young people placed in IFA placements were asylum seeking children. 1 child was placed with their mother in a parent and baby placement, 1 young person had challenging behaviour and there were no in house carers available to meet his needs. 3 young people were placed in residential care, 1 young person was placed into secure accommodation, the remaining 1 young person was placed in a semi independent living arrangements.

Training

13. July and August are not good months to arrange training due to this being the holiday period; however during this quarter 9 internal training courses still took place. Courses included; an introduction to theraplay, safer caring, 2 x childcare emergency first aid, Fostering Changes (promoting placement stability), contact and working with birth parents, Tax talk for foster carers, supporting the health needs of Looked After Children and the preparation to foster training. Carers also accessed the shared training programs provided by Early Years and LSCB, these included; understanding sexual abuse and the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.

14. As of the 30 September there were 70 fostering households that had completed their mandatory Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD's); 27 households were yet to complete their portfolios but still had time to address within the required timescales. 2 households were overdue in completing the TSD Standards and were outside the required timescale. Social workers and the Recruitment and Training Officer were providing additional support to help these carers achieve these standards.

Ofsted Notifications

15. Whenever a significant event happens, i.e. a child goes missing from placement or a serious incident/accident occurs the agency have to report these to Ofsted. During this period there were no notifications.

Allegations

16. During this period there was 1 allegation made in July regarding a fostering household but it was in relation to their adopted child, this was discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (L.A.D.O.) and referred to access and referral team but no further action was taken. It later transpired to be a malicious allegation.

Complaints

17. There were no complaints made against the Fostering Service during this period.

Compliments

18. During this period 3 written compliments were received about the fostering service (2 in July and 1 in September). 2 of these compliments were from foster carers feeding back on how much they had enjoyed a social evening the fostering team put on, the other compliment was in

relation to an assessing social worker who was complimented by the Fostering Panel on the quality of the assessment she presented. Several compliments were also received from foster carers, a Councillor and other staff in relation to the Celebration of Fostering event, many people stated that it was an enjoyable and well organised event.

Annual Budget

19. For the financial year 2015/2016 Adoption and Fostering Service within Children's Services has a combined annual budget of £3,670, 855. It is a joint budget as there are still areas between the teams that are linked i.e. panels; training and recruitment costs.

Reporting to Members – Legal Requirements

20. Regulations, associated Statutory Guidance and National Minimum Standards outline the requirement to report to Members on the management and outcome of the Services, in order that they can satisfy themselves that the Services are effective and achieving good outcome for children.

Risk Management

21. Regulatory Risks: Failure to report to Members would be a breach of National Minimum Standards.

Staffing

22. The Fostering Service is part of the Corporate Parenting Service and the Head of Service has overall management responsibility for Fostering. Under the Head of Service is the Practice Manager Fostering who is also the registered manager for Fostering. This person monitors and manages the activities of the fostering agency. She supervises 2 team managers who have day to day responsibility for management of the 2 fostering teams. Currently there are 14.3 full time equivalent Social Workers with the Service, 1.5 full time equivalent Social Work Assistants, 1 full time Marketing Recruitment Officer, 1 full time Training Co-ordinator, a part time panel adviser and 2 panel secretaries supporting the Service in relation to recruitment, training, panel and placements, 2 full time Administrators also support the two Fostering Teams.

Equality/Human Rights

23. Fostering Services provided to Looked After Children affects all sectors of communities.

Council Priorities

24. Central Bedfordshire Council's medium term plan priority C Promote Health and Wellbeing.
The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014; Priority 2 Protecting children and keeping them safe.
Fostering is a statutory service for Looked After Children.

Corporate Implications

25. Legal, Financial and Equalities implications are not required for this report.

Legal Implications

26. This is a quarterly report to provide information, as a result there are no legal implications arising out of this report.

Financial Implications

27. This is a quarterly report to provide information, as a result there are no financial implications arising out of this report.

Equalities Implications

28. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Conclusion and next Steps

29. In this quarter the Service has continued to focus on meeting its recruitment target which is to recruit 15 career carers in this financial year. 5 career carers have already been approved and there are a further 10 assessments in progress. If all assessments progress to panel and are recommended for approval then by the end of March 2015 we will have met the target. We will then continue to recruit as many additional carers as we can as each placement provides the opportunity for a local child in care to enjoy a placement close to home at a reduced cost to the Council compared to purchased foster care from the private and independent sector.

30. The percentage of children placed in house continues to rise. At the end of September 2015 56% of our children were placed in house compared to I.F.A.'s, this compares to 54% at the end of March 2015 and 46% at the end of March 2014. With the increase in number of in house placements the Service is able to provide the prediction is that this figure will increase year on year until the Service reaches a level of being able to provide 70 to 80% of fostering placements in house.
31. During this quarter there have been no notifications or complaints and only 1 allegation. This was to do with a foster carer care of an adopted child and was found to be malicious. This low level of activity gives an indication that foster carers have been provided with the relevant supervision, support and training to help ensure that children's needs are appropriately met.
32. In conclusion this has been a busy and productive quarter for the Fostering Service, we are on course to meet our recruitment targets and are continuing to provide a quality service and meet Ofsted requirements.

Appendices

Appendix A – Fostering Service - Statement of Purpose – Fostering 1 April 2015

Background Papers

None

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Central Bedfordshire Council
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX A



Fostering Service

Statement of purpose

1 April 2015

Statement of Purpose – Central Bedfordshire Fostering Teams

This Statement of Purpose arises from Regulation 3 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and Standard 16 of the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
 2. Status and Constitution
 3. Aims and Objectives
 4. Management and Staff Structure
 5. Services Provided by the Fostering Teams
 6. Profile of Foster Carers
 7. Profile of Children Placed in Foster Care
 8. Complaints
 9. Allegations
 10. Procedures / Processes for Recruiting, Approving, Training, Supporting and Reviewing Foster Carers
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 13. The Registration Authority
 14. Contacts
- Appendix A: Structure of the Service

1. Introduction

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the Fostering Regulations 2011, issued by the Secretary of State under section 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, govern the work of fostering service providers throughout England.

Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002 require a fostering agency to produce a Statement of Purpose which contains a range of detailed information as set out in Standard 1.4. This Statement of Purpose has been prepared in accordance with these arrangements.

The National Minimum Standards (1.3) also requires the registered provider (in the case of a local authority, the elected members) to formally approve the Statement of Purpose of the Fostering Service. The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually but may be amended at any time, in the light of major legislative or policy changes. This review will be carried out by the Head of Corporate Parenting Service and Managers in the Fostering Teams. Any changes to the document will be formally approved by elected members and will be notified to the Regulatory Authority within 28 days. This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually.

This Statement of Purpose is available to children and young people in care, their parents, all prospective/foster carers and anyone working for the purpose of the Fostering Service and is available on the Council website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

A Children's guide is available to all children in care, when placed, who are of sufficient understanding to be able to benefit from the information contained in the guide. A copy of the Children's guide is also given to all foster carers. The guide sets out to explain what foster care is, it includes a summary of what the Fostering Teams set out to do for children, how a child can secure access to an Independent Advocate and how to complain.

2. Status and Constitution

Central Bedfordshire Council's Fostering Teams are part of the Corporate Parenting Service within Children's Services and comply with its policies and procedures. Policies and procedures specific to fostering comply with the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011 and the Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations: Volume 4:Fostering Services. Procedures cover the recruitment, training, approval, support and review of foster carers and the operation of the Fostering Panel. All policies/procedures are accessible to foster carers and staff via Tri-ex and accurately reflect the Statement of Purpose.

<http://centralbedfordshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com>

Aims and Objectives

Our primary aim is to give children and young people the opportunity to achieve their full potential and to live fulfilling lives in the community.

- To do everything possible to ensure safe, stable and consistent placements, free from disruption where children and young peoples needs are understood and met
- To ensure that the ethnic origin, cultural background, religious heritage and language of children are fully recognised, valued and promoted
- To recruit foster carers from a wide range of backgrounds in order to provide appropriate placements for children and young people
- To provide support services that promote and enable the retention of foster carers
- A commitment to the ongoing training and development of Central Bedfordshire foster carers

To ensure that the workforce of managers, practitioners and support staff are appropriately qualified and registered with their professional regulatory councils, as well as being supported in continuous professional development

3. Management and Staff Structure

The ultimate responsibility for the Fostering Teams rests with Elected Members.

The Assistant Director then gives strategic leadership to Children's Services.

The Head of Corporate Parenting Service co-ordinates the activities of the Fostering Teams along with the Adoption Team and Children in Care Teams, and promotes partnership working across Children's Services and partner agencies

The Practice Manager for Fostering is the registered manager in accordance with Care Standards legislation and provides operational management, quality assurance, performance and budget management and co-ordinates the work of the two Fostering Teams. In addition to supervising the work of the Fostering Team Managers, the Practice Manager supervises/manages the work of the Recruitment and Training Officer, Recruitment and Training Business Support Officer as well as the Panel Advisers for the Fostering and Permanence Panel. The Practice Manager also reports to senior managers on service activities and issues of concern.

Team Managers are responsible for the day to day management of Social Workers recruiting, assessing and supervising foster carers, matching of children to available carers, dealing with complaints and representations and producing activity reports and statistical returns.

Both Team Managers provide regular supervision to their respective team of Social Workers/Social Work Assistant. As part of the Corporate Parenting Service they work closely with the Recruitment and Training Officer and other teams within the Corporate Parenting Service as well as liaising with the Children with Disabilities Team/Early Intervention Teams and partner agencies.

The Practice/Team Managers and all social workers are professionally qualified and registered with HCPC. Many have post qualifying specialist awards and experience related to working with children and young people in foster care. Staff participate in an annual Personal Development Review (Your Year) and Central Bedfordshire Council's Learning and Development Team provides bespoke training that meets the identified training needs of staff as well as providing more general corporate training. In addition to the Social Workers and Social Work Assistant the team is supported by two FTE administrative staff who are supervised by the team managers. A part time clinical psychologist has been in post since April 2015 and has provided supportive consultations to carers, LAC social workers and supervising social workers. This person has access to external clinical supervision as well as organisational line management from the Practice Manager. A structure of the service is attached in Appendix A.

5. Services provided by the Fostering Team

In line with the Fostering Teams aims and objectives, a range of services are provided to children, young people and foster carers.

Services provided include:

Short term placements

Central Bedfordshire Fostering Teams provide placements for children from 0-18 years, to meet the needs of both emergency and planned admissions following referrals from Early Intervention or Children in Care Teams. Short term placements may last from a few days, up to two years and may be used to work towards a child's return home or to complete care proceedings and put in plans for permanence. Foster carers receive an allowance to cover the cost of caring for children in their care as well as a fee. The fee carers receive depends on which tier they are on and this is determined by length of service and whether they have completed their Training, Support and Development Standards (T.S.D.'s).

Respite Placements

Respite foster carers are approved foster carers who choose to offer placements on a very time-limited basis only. This may be through choice or because of limitations in their availability. Most respite carers have full or part-time jobs.

Respite carers offer placements to parents or carers of children living in the community where their assessed needs indicate a benefit from respite care away from their family. This may be to relieve family stress, or to do some direct work with a challenging young person.

Respite carers also offer respite care to children cared for by other foster carers.

Family Link Placements

The Family Link Scheme provides short breaks for children with a disability with matched carers who are identified as able to meet their needs. Children are provided with care for various amounts of time from day care to overnights or week long periods. They receive general and specific information and training regarding their role as a family link carer in one to one sessions and workshops. They are provided with specific information about the disability of the child they are linked to. Opportunities to gain experience through visits to other services for disabled children's departments are offered where appropriate.

Guidance from relevant health professionals is offered in relation to specific health needs of the child e.g. specialised nurses and occupational therapists.

Family Link carers are matched to a specific child or children and planning meetings are held with the parents to make all the arrangements for the nature of the short break e.g. whether day care, or overnight, and to share information about the child's needs.

Short breaks may be offered for up to 75 days per year, but the normal maximum does not exceed 48 days. Typically, the scheme offers one weekend a month, day care and additional sessions during the long summer months.

The Service also has a number of self employed Family Link Plus carers who are available full time to care for up to 7 children on a rota basis; these carers receive an enhanced fee to care for these children.

Youth Care Placements

Youth Care foster carers provide specialist placements for 10-18 year olds who may have complex needs and are difficult to place. As well as receiving an enhanced fee to general foster carers they receive specialist and more frequent supervision, support groups and other support services.

Staying Put Placements

Staying Put Placements enable Care Leavers aged 18 and above to remain living with their Former Foster Carers until they are prepared for adulthood. It allows them to experience a transition akin to their peers, avoids social exclusion and helps to avert subsequent housing and tenancy breakdowns. Carers will still remain as foster carers if they are caring for other looked after children, if not, although they will no longer need to be approved as foster carers key standards will continue to govern the expectations of the Staying Put arrangement. Fostering allowances cease in these arrangements and payments to the former foster carers will be made under the Staying Put Scheme.

Family and Friends Care (Connected Persons) Placements

It is an underlying principle that children should be enabled to live within their families unless this is not consistent with their welfare. Children's Services, therefore, work to maintain children within their own family, and facilitate services to support such arrangements, whenever this is consistent with the child's safety and wellbeing. When children cannot live within their immediate family and the Local Authority is considering the need to look after the child, social workers will make strenuous efforts to identify potential carers within the child's network of family or friends who are able and willing to care for the child, whether this be in an emergency situation or in a planned way.

Although the assessment process and timescales are different for family and friends carers (connected persons) these carers still receive similar levels of support to general carers albeit more specialist.

In addition to the services outlined above the Fostering Teams also provide the following services:

Recruitment, assessment, approval, on-going training, supervision and review of foster carers

- A matching/placement service for the social work teams in Central Bedfordshire Council.
- Local Support Groups for foster carers.
- Support Groups/events for foster carers' children.
- Annual Celebration of Fostering event and other social events.
- Mentoring Scheme for newly approved foster carers or those requiring additional support e.g. following an allegation.
- 'Talk time' forum – an opportunity for foster carers to meet with senior managers regarding fostering issues.
- An Out-of-Hours Telephone Support Service for foster carers.
- An Advice Service to colleagues, other professionals and members of the public on fostering issues.
- Assessment and post support service to Special Guardianship Order carers (S.G.O.'s).

6. Profile of Foster Carers

On 31 March 2015 the Fostering Teams had 105 fostering households which included 7 Family Link households, 6 specific respite households, 6 Youth Care households and 28 Family and Friends households, the remaining 58 households were carers offering a mixture of short term/long term and emergency care. Of the 105 households this equated to 192 foster carers. Out of the 192 foster carers 169 described their ethnicity as White/British, 2 as White/Irish, 1 as White/European, 5 as White/Other, 4 as Black/Caribbean, 5 as Black/African, 3 as Asian/Indian, 1 as Mixed/Black, 1 as White/Black and 1 as Other.

7. Profile of Children Placed in Foster Care

On 31 March 2015, there were 106 children placed with Central Bedfordshire foster carers. The Family Link Scheme was providing short breaks for 10 children with disabilities with 4 children and 1 adult being linked to the salaried family link fee based carers. There were 8 children placed in Youth Care placements.

In terms of ethnicity of the children placed 78 were described as White/British, 4 as White/European, 1 as White/Traveller, 1 as White/Black Caribbean, 1 as White/Asian, 2 as White/Other, 1 as Asian, 3 as Asian/British, 3 as Asian/Pakistani, 1 as British/Black Caribbean, 4 as Black/African, 1 as Black/British, 1 as Eritrean, 1 as Iranian, 2 as Kurdish

and 2 as Mixed race.

Complaints

The Fostering Team uses the Children's Services Complaints Policy and Procedure for dealing with and monitoring complaints by foster carers, birth parents and relatives, staff and other parties with a relevant interest about the way fostering services are provided.

Complaints and their outcomes are recorded by the Customer Relations Department of the Council, but a central record is also kept within the Fostering Team. This is for statistical purposes and to enable the Team to respond and learn from complaints made.

Complaints by children are dealt with under the Children's Services Children Act Complaints Procedure, which means a shorter time for responding to children's complaints and the provision of independent advocacy for complainants.

The Complaints Procedure has several stages: Stage 1 applies to local resolution but if this is not achieved, there are two more stages. Information on these further stages is available from the Fostering Service or from Central Bedfordshire's Customer Relations Department.

Complaints against Foster Carers

Complaints about foster carers are also subject to the Children's Services Complaints Procedure. All foster carers, subject to any complaint, are offered independent support from The Fostering Network's Advice and Mediation Service.

Between 1 April 2014 and the 31 March 2015 there were 6 complaints made about the Fostering Team (2 from a birth parent/family member, 3 from existing foster carers and 1 from a prospective foster carer. Out of these complaints the overall outcomes were that 2 complaints were upheld and 4 were partially upheld.

8. Allegations against Foster Carers

Allegations against foster carers are dealt with in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures for managing allegations and concerns about Foster Carers. All foster carers, subject to any allegation, are offered independent support from the Fostering Network's Advise and Mediation Service.

Between 1 April 2014 and the 31 March 2015 there were 4 allegations of misconduct made against foster carers. One Section 47 enquiry was made in May 2014 regarding C.B.C. Family and Friends Foster Carers living in Wales in relation to 2 children aged 7 and 6. The concerns were in relation to emotional and physical abuse. The children were removed and the outcome of the Section 47 enquiry was that the allegations were substantiated and the foster carer's approval was terminated. The 3 other allegations made were referred to the L.A.D.O (Local Authority Designated Officer) but did not reach the threshold for investigation.

9. Procedures/Processes for Recruiting, Approving, Training, Supporting and Reviewing Foster Carers

The Fostering Teams have procedures which cover:

- Fostering and Permanence Panel
- Persons Disqualified from Fostering
- Assessment and Approval of Foster Carers
- Exemptions and Extensions/Variations to Foster Carers Approval
- Supervision and Support to Foster Carers
- Review and Terminations of Approvals of Foster Carers
- Allegations against Foster Carers

Recruitment and Marketing

Recruitment and marketing activities have taken place throughout the year and have included adverts/stories in the press, use of on-line recruitment/marketing and face-to-face recruitment events.

The Teams have a Marketing, Recruitment and Retention Strategy which informs the recruitment and marketing activities within the teams and is overseen by the Practice Manager.

Foster Carer Assessment and Approval

Prospective foster carers are assessed in line with the two Stage Assessment Process which includes attending the 'Skills to Foster' preparation training. Assessments are undertaken by fostering social workers and a written report, using the BAAF Form F, is then presented to the Fostering & Permanence Panel for a recommendation about approval. The Panel deals with all short term, respite and permanent fostering including Family and Friends (Connected Persons) assessments. Prospective foster carers are encouraged to attend the Panel when their application is being discussed. It is the aim of the Fostering Teams to complete this process for each applicant within twenty weeks of application.

The Fostering and Permanence Panel

Central Bedfordshire Fostering Teams are compliant with the Fostering Service Regulations 2011. According to these regulations, all fostering services have to set up a Fostering Panel to carry out the following duties:

- To consider applications and to recommend whether or not applicants are suitable to be approved as foster carers.
- Recommend the terms on which fostering approval is to be given (i.e. the number of children/young people, types of placements).
- Consider foster carer annual reviews: The first review of newly approved foster carers will be presented to the panel and any subsequent reviews referred to it by the fostering team.
- To give advice and make recommendations regarding any other matter referred to them by the fostering team.
- To oversee the conduct of assessments carried out by the fostering team.

Ongoing Support and Training

Following approval, all foster carers are allocated a supervising social worker from one of the Fostering Teams, who has supervision with the carer every six weeks (this may be less if the carers provide infrequent respite or do not have any children in placement). Out-of-hours telephone support is also available to all foster carers. The Teams have quarterly Foster Carer Forums ('Talk Time'), where foster carers have the opportunity to meet and exchange views with senior managers. In addition, the Fostering Teams provide periodic social events for foster carers and their children, and recognises the dedication and commitment of their foster carers with an annual 'Celebration of Fostering' event. Ongoing training is provided by the Fostering Teams, either directly or by encouraging foster carers to attend courses provided by Children's Services.

New carers are offered induction training and a professional mentoring scheme, whereby they receive additional support and guidance from an experienced foster carer. This support is also offered to experienced carers when they need additional support, for example, if an allegation has been made against them.

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) also pay for all in house foster carers to have individual membership with Fostering Network, allowing them access to an unlimited and extensive range of independent support services.

Foster carers are currently provided with Max cards which provide discounts on a range of attractions and family friendly activities both nationally and locally.

Foster carers have access to the Foster Carers Handbook which contains useful information for foster carers in relation to fostering issues

Foster carers are required to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards (T.S.D.'s) within the first 12 months of being approved. The Fostering Teams provide the necessary support to foster carers (via regular workshops and meetings with supervising social workers) to meet the T.S.D. standards and complete their portfolios.

The Fostering Teams arrange various monthly support groups for foster carers and regular events for the children of foster carers.

Foster carers also run their own Foster Care Association which is supported by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Reviewing the Approval of Foster Carers

The approval status of all foster carers is reviewed annually or whenever there is a change of circumstances or concern about the standard of care. First Annual Reviews and those where there is a change in carers' terms of approval or where there have been a complaint or allegation are presented to the Fostering and Permanence Panel for consideration. Foster carers are invited and encouraged to attend Panel for their Review.

All other Reviews are presented to the Practice Manager of the Fostering Teams for a decision about ongoing approval.

The foster carer review officer sits within the Professional Standards Service providing independent scrutiny and challenge to the service.

Appeals against Refusal or Termination of Approval

Prospective foster carers whose application to foster is not approved by the Decision Maker following Panel, or existing foster carers who have their approval withdrawn, or amended following a Review, have the right to appeal against such decisions. The Fostering Teams leaflet for carers and prospective carers attending Panel, explains the Appeal and Independent Review Mechanism process. Applicants can ask Panel to reconsider their case or alternatively can ask for an independent review from the national Independent Review Mechanism.

Connected Persons (Family & Friends carers)

The Fostering Teams also assess, approve and support Connected Persons in line with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2013. The Fostering & Permanence Panel recommends suitability following the Temporary Approval assessment as well as the full (Connected Persons) fostering assessment. Once a Connected Person has been approved as a Foster Carer, they receive a similar level of support and supervision as mainstream foster carers although more specialist.

10. Other Relevant Procedures

The Fostering Teams also have a range of procedures including:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- Safer Care
- The Establishment, Function and Operation of the Fostering Panel
- Fostering Allowances
- Confidentiality and Security of Information
- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety

In addition, there are a number of policies used across all Children's Services as well as Local Children's Safeguarding Board Policies. All these policies are accessed by staff and foster carers at <http://centralbedfordshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/>

11. Quality Monitoring

The quality of all work produced by the Fostering Teams is monitored at all levels. Staff receive regular supervision where their work is discussed and cases monitored. Manager's quality assure all assessments/reviews/reports that have to be presented to panel or court. In addition, the Panel Professional Adviser, the Fostering and Permanence Panel and the A.D.M. provide a quality assurance role for all cases that are presented to panel. Regular peer and external audits of foster carers' files are undertaken. Feedback from various parties is also provided as part of the Foster Carer Review process, from Child Care Reviews and via the complaints/comments/ compliments process. The Registered Manager for the Fostering Agency (Practice Manager) completes a monthly monitoring check (highlight report), which includes collating notifications, concerns and complaints and sampling records.

12. The Registration Authority

The Regulatory Authority is:

Ofsted
Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M12 WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231
E-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Fostering Teams are subject to regular inspection and inspection reports are available from the Fostering Teams or on www.ofsted.org.uk

13. Contacts

For more information about Fostering in Central Bedfordshire please contact:

Fostering Team
Corporate Parenting Service
Central Bedfordshire Council
Unit 16 Stephenson Court
Fraser Road
Priory Business Court
Bedford MK44 3WJ

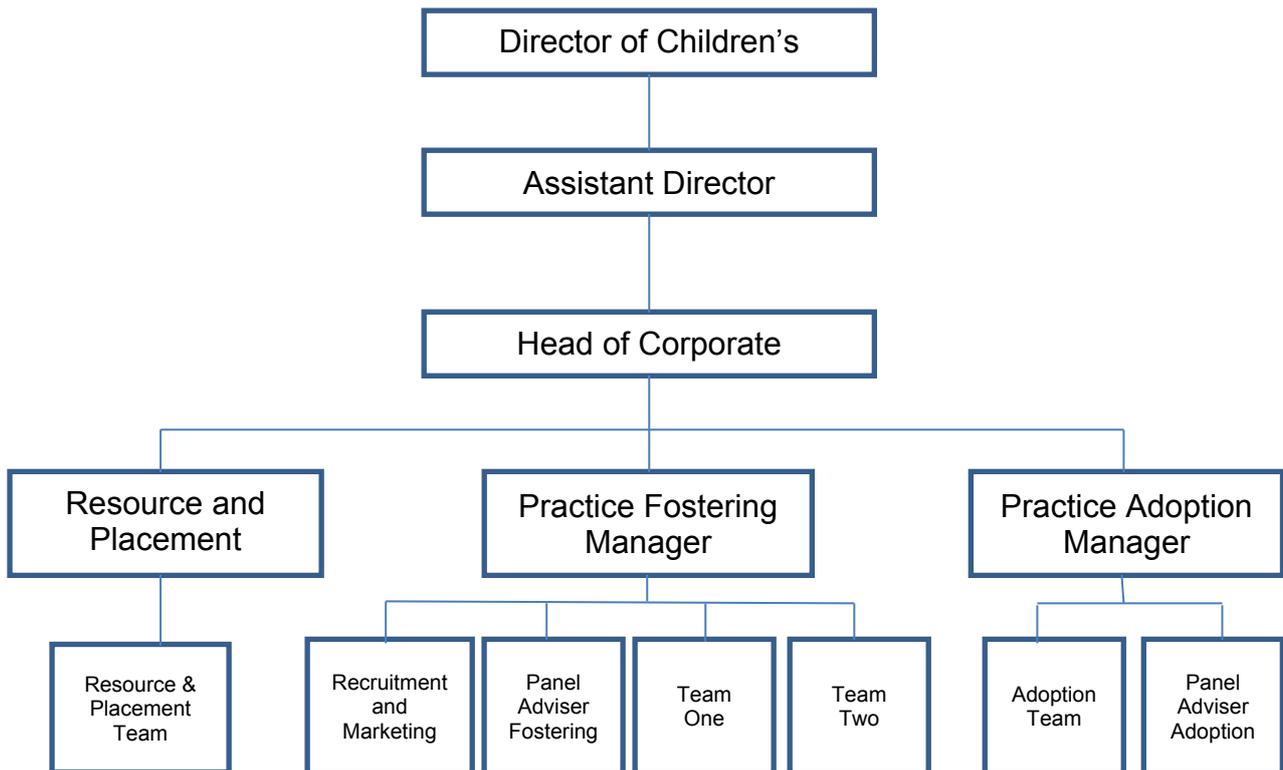
Tel: 0300 300 8090

For copies of the Children's Guide, the Complaints Procedure or further copies of this Statement of Purpose, please contact one of the Fostering Teams on the contact details above.

If you would like further information or wish to comment on this Statement of Purpose, please do not hesitate to contact the Fostering Teams, in writing or on the phone using the contact information outlined above. Your interest and comments are welcome.

This document can be supplied in large print and in other languages.

Appendix A – Structure of the Service





Fostering Service Statement of Purpose

April 2015

Approved:

Signed.....

Susan Harrison

Director of Children's Services

Dated.....

Signed.....

Cllr Carole Hegley

Executive Member for Children's Services

Dated.....

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

9 November 2015

**SIX MONTHLY REPORT IN RESPECT OF THE ADOPTION
SERVICE - 1 APRIL 2015 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

Report of Sue Harrison, Director, Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers:

Gerard Jones, Assistant Director, Children's Services Operations
(Gerard.Jones@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) and

Edward Wong, Head of Corporate Parenting Service
(Edward.Wong@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

The report outlines the activity that the Adoption Service undertaken throughout April to September 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to:

1. Comment on the content of the report
2. Agree Statement of Purpose

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. The Annual Report of the Adoption Service is considered in the Autumn of each year by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Issues

Background

2. The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated Relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require Local Authority Adoption Agencies to report to Members at six monthly intervals. This will be achieved by presentation of a six monthly update to the Corporate Parenting Panel and a full year Annual Report to this Panel and the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year.

3. The Adoption Service has been a single agency service since 1 January 2014 following the disaggregation from Bedford Borough Council. The Adoption Panel remains a shared service between Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough, hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. The annual and six monthly reports contain information activity in respect of Central Bedfordshire only.
4. This report covers activity in the period 1 April to 1 September 2015. A copy of Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose is attached at Appendix A.

Recruitment of Adopters

5. The national Adoption Reform agenda has led to significant changes in process which have continued to be implemented this period. Information Evenings continue to be held on a monthly basis. We have introduced an online enquiry form on the Central Bedfordshire website and maintain a presence on a social media site.
6. Enquiries can be received via telephone, email or online enquiry.
7. We have had 37 enquiries in this period and 9 households attended adoption information evenings. 7 of those households attended a subsequent in-depth interview to explore adoption further with an adoption Social Worker and returned a Registration of Interest form. As of 30 September 2015, 10 households were in stage one of the process and 20 in stage two.
8. 5 new adoptive households completed their assessment and were approved to adopt. We expect to see an increase in rate of assessments being approved to adopt in the next period due to the number of assessments currently taking place. The target for this year is 20 households approved to adopt so given the numbers of applicants in Stage One and Two we envisage exceeding this target.

Adoption Planning and Placements for Children

9. The total number of family finding cases referred in this period was 24. This is a similar number to last year which suggests that more detailed scrutiny of Care Plans for children continues to take place within the Corporate Parenting Service to ensure that all other permanence options are fully considered before a plan for adoption is presented.
10. Since an earlier change to Adoption Regulations in 2011, most cases where adoption is the plan for a child are no longer presented to the Adoption Panel. (There are a few exceptions such as relinquished children). There were no cases of 'adoption as the plan' presented to the Adoption Panel in this period. The Agency Decision Maker (the Assistant Director, Operations, Gerard Jones) considered 24 cases of which 'adoption was proposed as the plan for a child in care. Of these cases 4 plans were subsequently rescinded and in a further 8 cases additional information was sought before a decision was made.

11. 6 children were placed with adopters during the period. This took the total number of children placed with adopters and awaiting adoption order to 18 children. (This comprises 13 adoption households, given that some are siblings in same placement). We also support 3 households of approved Central Bedfordshire adopters who have 6 children from other Local Authorities in placement. We have 1 child placed in a Foster for Adoption placement. As at 30 September 2015 there had been 7 adoption orders granted.
12. The cohort of 6 children placed in this period included 1 male and 5 female. All were single placements and aged under 3 years old.

Adoption Scorecard

13. There are a small cohort of children who we have been family finding for an extended period of time which will mean that the presented match will be outside of National Minimum Standards. This will have an impact on the Adoption scorecard for this Agency.
14. The delay in family finding is due to these children having specific health needs and identifying a match that can meet these needs and the uncertainty in regard to future development.
15. We are also seeing an increase in birth parents responding to adoption applications which results in some delay of the granting of the Adoption Order. This means that children remain being looked after for a longer period of time.

Adoption Support

16. The Adoption Support Fund (ASF) was introduced in May 2015. This provides funding for some adoption support services. Six applications to the ASF have been completed and agreed. A further 4 applications have been identified and will be completed. In addition, the team currently provides direct adoption support to 14 children.
17. Those families where Adoption Support Funding has been agreed are currently receiving Therapeutic services commissioned by the Agency.
18. Of the 6 children placed in this period no specific adoption support was highlighted as being required beyond universal health services. None met the criteria for an adoption allowance.
19. In this period the Agency is family finding for 10 children who are likely to require Adoption Support including an adoption allowance where placements for adoption are likely to be completed in the next period.
20. This cohort of 10 children includes 3 siblings groups and 4 single children with additional health needs or disability.

21. Support has also been offered by the service through 'Letterbox' arrangements (sometimes referred to as indirect contact) which is identified as part of the permanence planning arrangements for each individual child. This arrangement seeks to ensure a secure and consistent record of contact between birth family and adoptive family. This often includes letters, occasional photographs and other information that is often of high significance to the adoptee later in life.
22. The Agency continues to manage annual post adoption contact arrangements for over 100 children.

Adult Adoption Work

23. At the end of September we were supporting 20 adult adoptees to trace records or for intermediary services to facilitate contact with birth family members

Key Events

24. This period has continued to implement the changes in Adoption Legislation, Regulations and Guidance. The Adoption Reform agenda is continuing to support Adoption activity and supporting adoption families. We have seen the introduction of the Adoption Leadership Board and Regional Adoption Boards. The emergence of new delivery models for adoption, the growth consortia and regional collaboration and, nationally, a large increase in the number of adopters approved.
25. The slowdown in children coming into care identifies that children who are 'harder to place' are still waiting longer.
26. In July 2015, the Department for Education launched the initiative known as the Regionalisation of Adoption Agency. Central Bedfordshire Council responded to this initiative by joining the partnership that Coram was leading. Details about the development of this initiative will be provided in the next 6-monthly report.
27. The Adoption Panel has continued to remain a shared service hosted by Central Bedfordshire.

Council Priorities

- Central Bedfordshire Council's Medium Term Plan Priority C - Promote Health and Well-being and Protect the Vulnerable
- Value – results focussed – we will focus on the outcomes that make a difference to people's lives.
- Adoption is a key statutory service to Looked After Children.

Corporate Implications

Risk Management

28. Regulatory Risks: Failure to report to Members would be a breach of National Minimum Standard.

Legal Implications

29. Adoption Regulations, associated Statutory Guidance and National Minimum Standards outline the requirement to report to Members on the management and outcomes of the Adoption Agency, in order that they can satisfy themselves that the services are effective and achieving good outcomes for children.

Financial Implications

30. Adoption and Fostering within Children's Services has an annual budget of £3,670,855 including costs of other Adoption Agency placements and provision on behalf of Bedford Borough Council under the Shared Adoption Panel.

31. In this period the Government has provided additional funds under the adoption reform for Adoption Support and interagency costs. These are applied for on a case by case basis.

Equalities Implications

32. Adoption services provided to Looked after Children affects all sectors of communities.

Appendices

Appendix A – Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose 1 April 2015

Background Papers

None

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Appendix A

**Adoption Agency
Statement of Purpose
1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016**



Statement of Purpose
Central Bedfordshire Council - Adoption Agency

This Statement of Purpose has been produced in accordance with the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003, and the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2011, Standard 18.

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1. Background / Context / Status of the Adoption Service

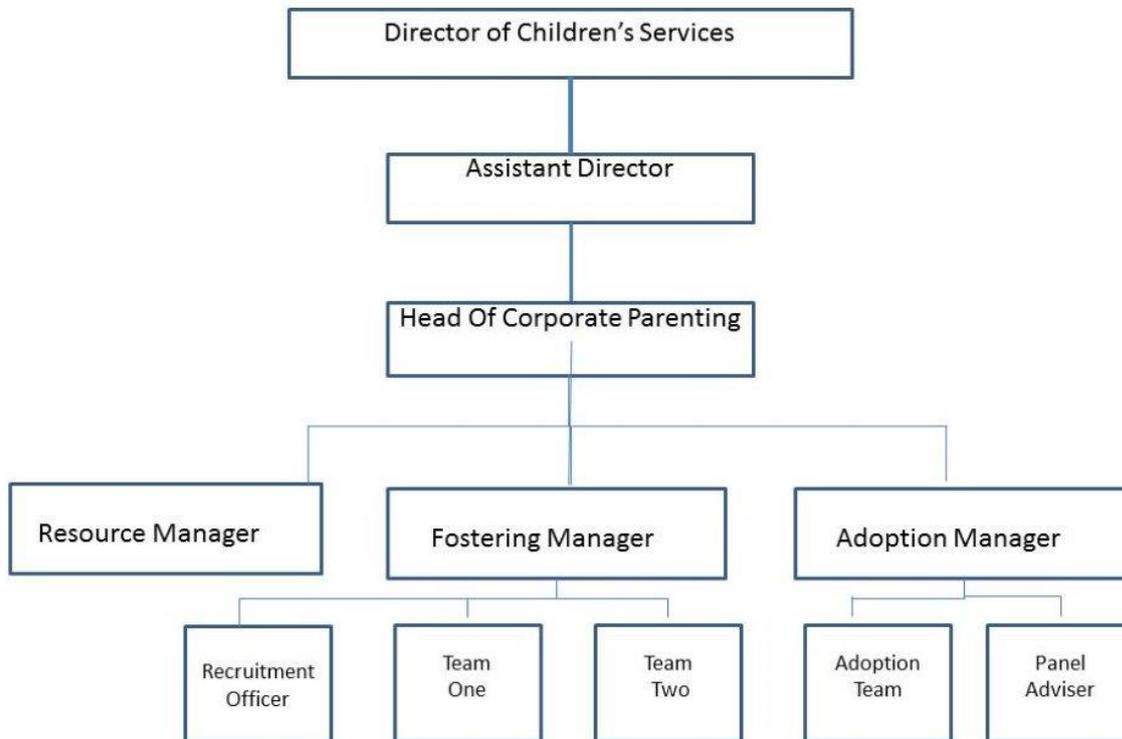
The Adoption Service is an integral part of the Corporate Parenting Service in Central Bedfordshire Council. The Adoption Service is based at Stephenson Court, Priory Business Park, Bedford.

2. Aims and Objectives

The Adoption Service recognises the life long nature of adoption and aims:-

- To provide a high quality adoption and permanence service for the residents of Central Bedfordshire.
- To provide a suitable and timely adoptive placement for every child with a plan for adoption.
- To ensure that recruitment of adopters is targeted to meet the needs of children from Central Bedfordshire and nationally.
- To recruit a range of prospective adopters able to meet the diverse needs of children.
- To ensure safe, stable and consistent care for every child placed for adoption.
- To ensure that the ethnic origin, cultural background, religious heritage, language and identity of children are fully recognised and valued.
- To provide support services that ensure successful outcomes for children placed for adoption.
- To ensure that adoptive families are enabled to meet the health and education needs of children placed with them.
- To provide a range of support services for adopted adults.
- To offer timely information, advice and counselling to members of the public enquiring about adoption.
- To ensure support is provided for the birth relatives of the children who are placed for adoption by Central Bedfordshire Council.
- To ensure that, at all times, the Adoption Service complies with legislation and policy requirements which affect its activity.

3. Management and Organisational Structure



Ultimate responsibility for the Adoption Service rests with the Elected Members. The Adoption Service forms part of Central Bedfordshire Council's Children's Services for which the Director of Children's Services is responsible. The Assistant Director has overall management responsibility for the Adoption Service. Operational managerial responsibility sits with the Head of Corporate Parenting. The Practice Manager for the Adoption Team supervises the adoption social workers and the Agency Advisor for adoption. The Resources Team, which is managed by the Head of Corporate Parenting, supports the adoption service in relation to recruitment of adopters, publicity and communications.

4. Services Provided by Central Bedfordshire Adoption Service

The Adoption Service provides the following services:

- Providing advice to those enquiring about adoption.
- Recruitment, assessment, approval and ongoing training and support of prospective adopters.

- Support for families who have adopted and for adopted children, through assessment of adoption support needs and provision of services. These services may include financial assistance, education support and a wide range of social work and therapeutic services.
- Training opportunities for all adopters..
- Assistance to access birth records and counselling for adult adoptees.
- Intermediary services for adults adopted through the former Bedfordshire County Council and for adopted adults living in Central Bedfordshire.
- Support to birth relatives of Central Bedfordshire children with a plan for adoption.
- A contact support service for all parties involved in ongoing contact for all adopted children.
- A permanence planning, matching and family finding service for Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Social Care Teams.
- Access to counselling services for birth family members.

5. Procedures

a) Recruitment, Preparation, Assessment and Support to Prospective Adopters

Central Bedfordshire Council has detailed policies and procedures for the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approval of prospective adopters. The following is a summary of the recruitment, assessment and approval process in Central Bedfordshire. This follows the new two stage adopter recruitment and approval process as introduced by the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 and Statutory Adoption Guidance 2013 which came into force in July 2013, as part of the Government's Adoption Reform.

- Enquirers can telephone the Service on 0300 300 8090 or email interest via the website and will be passed to the Adoption Duty Worker. At this stage, the Adoption Duty Worker will gather basic information about the enquirers and answer initial questions about adoption.
- Prospective adopters contacting the Service are provided with written information about adoption within five working days. They are given the opportunity to meet with a social worker and attend an Information Session and provided with an Information Pack.
- If the enquirer submits a Registration of Interest Form, this is passed to the Adoption Manager, who will consider whether or not to accept the Registration of Interest. Unless there is any obvious reason known as to why the Registration of Interest should not be accepted, the Manager will give permission to progress the enquiry to Stage One.
- The prospective adopter(s) are invited to a meeting with a member of the Adoption Team to complete a Stage One Plan (Agreement), detailing what will be expected of them and the Agency, at this stage.
- The applicant should use this time to explore the extent of their interest in and capacity for adoption, including considering Fostering for Adoption placements,

whilst the Agency carries out Statutory Checks, in accordance with the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005.

- These Checks include:
 1. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS)
 2. Six written personal references of whom at least three are visited.
 3. Employment references.
 4. Local Authority checks.
 5. Medical checks.
- In addition, DBS Checks are taken up on any other person in the prospective adopter's household aged 18 and over.
- Central Bedfordshire Council will offer support to prospective adopters during Stage One as appropriate, the process being monitored by a co-ordinator within the team.
- Towards the end of Stage One, prospective adopters are offered an interview in order to ascertain whether they wish to move on to Stage Two and if so, whether the Agency wishes to accept their application.
- Following the end of the Stage One Interview, social workers will discuss with the Adoption Manager whether the Agency feels able to accept an application from the prospective adopters at this time. This will be based on their potential ability to meet the needs of children requiring an adoptive family.
- Should the Adoption Manager decide that a prospective adopter is not suitable to adopt, either during Stage One or at the end of Stage One, they will provide the prospective adopter with a written explanation of the reasons.
- If the Adoption Manager decides that the prospective adopters can proceed to Stage Two, the case will be allocated to a Social Worker who will meet with them. A Stage Two Plan (Agreement) will be completed and the Social Worker will carry out an adopter assessment (Prospective Adopter Reports). This should be completed and the decision as to the applicants' suitability be made within four months of the date of the Stage Two Plan.
- Applicants will be invited to attend Preparation Groups during the process of Stage two assessment.
- Once the assessment is completed this will be presented to the Adoption Panel for a recommendation. The recommendation is then presented to the Agency Decision Maker for a final decision on the applicants' suitability to adopt. Should the Agency Decision Maker be minded not to approve the application, prospective adopters can either make representations to the Service or to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).
- The Adoption Team demonstrates a positive and supportive approach towards applications to adopt from previous adopters and foster carers wishing to adopt a child in their care. These assessments will be fast tracked, with prospective adopters moving directly to Stage Two.
- Following approval, Central Bedfordshire Council will seek to place the right child with the prospective adopters as soon as possible; either children in the care of the

Council or nationally. This includes the active consideration of Fostering for Adoption placements alongside other adoptive placements in order to make the most suitable and timely placement for each child requiring adoption.

- Adopters for whom a match has not been identified will be referred to the National Adoption Register.
- The Adoption Team aims to provide ongoing support to adoptive families, and an adoption support plan will be drawn up before placement which identifies the likely support needs of the placement. This is then reviewed prior to the Adoption Order being granted.
- Children in adoptive placements are reviewed by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Review helps identify when it is appropriate for an Adoption Order to be lodged by the applicants. In most cases, this would be decided by the time of the second Review. Adopters are supported by their Social Worker in making the application.

b) Adoption Support for adoptive parents and their children, adopted children and adults and birth relatives of adopted children and adults

Central Bedfordshire Council provides a range of ongoing support to adoptive families, including family events and activity groups for adopted young people. In line with legislation, adopters for whom we are the responsible Adoption Agency can ask for an assessment of their adoption support needs. The Adoption Support Services Advisor for Central Bedfordshire Council is Edward Wong and can be contacted on 0300 300 8090.

Central Bedfordshire Council provides a service to Adopted Adults and their Birth Relatives. Details of this service can be found on our website and in the Adoption Support Leaflet.

The Adoption Team ensures that all those seeking to adopt are fully informed as to their entitlements in regards to adoption support, from the very beginning of the assessment process.

6. Staffing

The current complement is:

- 1 Practice Manager (full time)
- 1 Senior Practitioner (1 full time equivalent)
- 4 Social Workers (3.5 Full time equivalent)
- 1 Social Work Assistants (1 full time equivalent)
- 1 Business Support Officer [full time]

The Manager and Social Workers are all professionally qualified with commensurate social work experience. All staff have a Personal Development Review (Your Year) and have an identified training plan from which training will be provided on a bespoke basis or from Central Bedfordshire's Learning and Development Programme.

The professionally qualified Social Work staff are supported by a Business Support Officer.

The Adoption Agency is supported by specialist staff who work across the Adoption and Fostering Service. These include a Recruitment and Marketing Officer and a Training

Coordinator, as well as a Professional Panel Adviser and Panel Secretaries who support the Adoption Panel and the Fostering Panel.

7. Adoption Panel

The Adoption Regulations require the Adoption Panel to consider the case of every child, prospective adopter, and proposed adoption placement referred to it by the adoption agency for consideration, prior to making its recommendation as to:

- a) Whether a prospective adopter is suitable to adopt a child.
- b) Whether a child should be placed for adoption with a particular prospective adopter.
- c) Whether on the information so far available a prospective adopter is unlikely to be suitable to adopt a child.
- d) Whether a prospective adopter, following review, is no longer suitable to adopt a child.

The Adoption Panel in Bedfordshire is a joint panel for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. It meets twice per month but can meet more frequently if need be. The Panel is chaired by an independent person who has considerable professional experience of adoption. The Agency Adviser and a Panel Secretary are in attendance but are non-voting members. Written legal advice is available to the panel from the Legal Adviser who on occasion may be present but is not a panel member.

Changes in Regulations which came into force from 1 September 2012 have meant that decisions about whether a child should be placed for adoption are now made by the Agency Decision Maker without recourse to the Panel. However, this only applies to cases where consent for adoption has not already been given by the child's parents.

Agency Decisions

Each council has a delegated senior manager to make decisions based on the Panel's recommendations. These decisions are made within seven working days of receiving the minutes of the Panel meeting.

8. Quality Monitoring

The quality of the work of the Adoption Service is monitored at all levels through staff supervision. In addition, the Agency Adviser provides scrutiny and feedback as does the Adoption Panel. Recruitment information is tracked through weekly management reports and management information is considered at fortnightly managers' meetings. Regular reports are provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel. Feedback from service users is sought at regular intervals e.g. after Information Evenings, Preparation Training, Panel, Adoption Order.

In addition the Service is subject to inspection by Ofsted.

9. Complaints

The Adoption Service uses the Children's Services Complaints Policy and Procedure, for dealing with and monitoring complaints by prospective adopters, adopters, birth relatives, staff and other parties with a relevant interest in the Adoption Service.

Complaints and their outcomes are recorded by the Customer Relations Department of Central Bedfordshire Council, but a central record is also kept within the Adoption Service. This is for statistical purposes and to enable the Service to respond and learn from complaints made. The Council is developing a database which will in future enable customers to make and track a complaint via the Council's website.

Complaints by children are dealt with under the Children's Services Complaints Procedure, which means a shorter time for responding to children's complaints and the provision of independent advocacy for complainants.

The Complaints Procedure has several stages: Stage 1 applies to local resolution but if this is not achieved, there are two more stages. Information on these further stages is available from the Adoption Service or from Central Bedfordshire's Customer Relations Department.

10. Allegations in respect of children placed for adoption

Allegations in respect of children placed for adoption are dealt with in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and Central Bedfordshire procedures for managing allegations regarding such children.

11. Reviewing the Statement of Purpose

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed annually, but may be amended at any time, in the light of major legislative or policy changes. This review will be carried out by the Head of Service of the Corporate Parenting Service and the Manager of the Adoption Service. Any changes to the document will be formally approved by the Director of Children's Services and the Executive Member for Children's Services and will be notified to the Registration Authority within 28 days.

This statement of purpose will next be reviewed in March 2016.

12. The Registration Authority

The Registration Authority is:

Ofsted
Royal Exchange Buildings
St. Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Tel: 08456 404045
E-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

13. Contacts

For more information about Adoption in Central Bedfordshire please contact:

Adoption Team
Corporate Parenting Service
Central Bedfordshire Council
Unit 16 Stephenson Court
Fraser Road
Priory Business Court
Bedford MK44 3WJ

Tel: 0300 300 8090

For copies of the Complaints Procedure or further copies of this Statement of Purpose, please contact the Adoption Service on the contact details above.

If you wish to comment on this Statement of Purpose, on the Adoption Service or make a complaint, please contact:

Head of Corporate Parenting Service, Adoption and Fostering Service, Unit 16 Stephenson Court, Fraser Road, Priory Business Park, Bedford, MK44 3WJ

This document can be made available in Large Print and other languages.



Approved:

Signed.....

Sue Harrison
Director of Children's Services

Dated.....

Signed.....

Cllr Carol Hegley
Executive Member for Children's Services

Dated.....

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Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

9 November 2015

WORK PROGRAMME

Advising Officers:

Mel Peaston, Committee Services Manager
(mel.peaston@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Leslie Manning, Committee Services Officer
(leslie.manning@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to assist the Corporate Parenting Panel in discharging its responsibilities by providing a proposed work programme for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel considers the proposed work programme attached at Appendix A and the Looked after Children and Young People's Participation Forward Plan 2015 – 2016 attached at Appendix B.

Background

1. To assist the Corporate Parenting Panel a work programme is attached at Appendix A to this report. The work programme contains the known agenda items that the Panel will need to consider.
2. Additional items will be identified as the municipal year progresses. The work programme is therefore subject to change.
3. In addition to the above, and as requested by Members, a copy of the Looked after Children and Young People's Participation Forward Plan 2015 – 2016 is attached at Appendix B.

Council Priorities

4. The activities of the Corporate Parenting Panel are crucial to ensuring that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent of Looked After Children.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

5. There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

6. There are no financial implications.

Equalities Implications

7. There are no equalities implications.

Conclusion and next Steps

8. This report will assist the Corporate Parenting Panel in discharging its responsibilities. Any amendments approved by the Panel will be incorporated in the work programme.

Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

Appendix B - Looked after Children and Young People's Participation Forward Plan 2015 - 2016

Background Papers

None

Appendix A

Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

2015/16 Municipal Year	
6 July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees and Allowances for Foster Carers (MG) • Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report 2014/15 (IW) • Fostering Agency Q4 Performance Report (AC) • Fostering Agency Annual Report 2014/15 (AC) • Adoption Agency Annual Report 2014/15 (NP) • Work Programme (LM)
21 September 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CiCC Presentation (MS) • LAC Annual (Health) Report (NHS – Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group) • Fostering Service Q1 Report (AC) • Work Programme (LM)
9 November 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Service Q2 Report (AC) • Adoption Agency Interim Report (NP) • Virtual School for LAC Interim Report (JE) • Work Programme (inc CiCC Forward Plan) (LM)
18 January 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Service Q3 Report (AC) • Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose, Fostering Agency Statement of Purpose (EW) • Adoption Fund (GJ) • Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme and LAC (CJ) • Refreshment of the CiCC Representation on the Panel – Update (GJ) • Corporate Parenting Operations Group - Improvement Plan Update (TK) • Work Programme (inc CiCC Forward Plan) (LM)
14 March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CiCC Annual Report 2015/16/Presentation (MS) • Virtual School for LAC Annual Report (JE) • Corporate Parenting Action Plan – Annual Review (GJ) • LAC Health Report – Six Monthly Update (NHS – Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group) • Work Programme (inc CiCC Forward Plan) (LM)
9 May 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme (inc CiCC Forward Plan) (LM)

Unscheduled reports:

- Update on accommodation provision for young persons (TK)
- Options for the funding of long term family care (GJ)
- Challenges experienced with the adoption process – discussion with carers (GJ)
- The appointment of a lay member/parent and the appointment of a substitute elected Member to the Joint Adoption Panel (author to be determined)

Appendix A

- Video presentation on the work of the CiCC (GJ)
- Foster care leavers be invited to attend and describe their experiences in care and raise any issues (GJ)
- Looked After Children's Health Care Provision 'Deep Dive' Report (by March 2016) (GJ)

Looked after Children and Young Peoples Participation Forward Plan 2015 - 2016

The active involvement of children and young people is a central commitment to the Children and Young People's Plan

Theme	Action Plan	Action by	Timescale	Benefits for young people
Children in Care Council and Participation Groups.	To work with managers and staff from Corporate Parenting Service to support the CiCC for Central Bedfordshire:	M Short (MS)	Ongoing – reviewed quarterly	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the CiCC Monthly Meetings where members work to complete tasks identified in the Children in Care Council Priorities. 	MS	Ongoing– reviewed quarterly	To have a voice in relation to the planning and delivery of services they receive. Feedback will influence and improve services to looked after children & care leavers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To organise and support activity based Participation Groups; one for over 16 year olds and one for young people between the ages of 8 and 15 years. 	MS	Ongoing– reviewed quarterly	To develop a sense of belonging and shared identity with others who have similar experiences.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support representatives of the CiCC to meet with workers and young people from the children with disabilities team to ensure their views are heard. 	MS	Ongoing– reviewed quarterly	To develop confidence & raise self esteem.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the work of the CiCC and recruit more young people to attend the CiCC meetings. 	MS	Ongoing– reviewed quarterly	To develop transferable and valuable life skills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with & support looked after children and young people in monitoring and reviewing the Pledge for Central Bedfordshire. • To support members of the Children in Care Council to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel and present updates and reports as requested. • To support members of the CiCC in meetings with the Chief Executive, Director of Children’s Services, Assistant Director and Head of Service. • To work with & support the young people involved in the participation groups to draw up agendas and work plans regarding participation and consultations. • To be actively engaged in planning future activity based participation events and the Annual Achievement Awards. • To explore with CiCC members their role in future Ofsted Inspections. 	<p>MS/Edward Wong (EW)</p> <p>MS/EW</p> <p>MS/Richard Carr (RCC)/Sue Harrison (SC)/Gerard Jones (GJ)</p> <p>MS</p> <p>MS/CiCC</p> <p>MS/EW/GJ</p>	<p>Ongoing– reviewed quarterly</p> <p>Ongoing– reviewed quarterly</p> <p>As and when required.</p> <p>Ongoing – reviewed quarterly</p>	<p>Be part of the planning and operational process.</p> <p>To engage with officers and elected members</p> <p>To develop a dialogue with officers that make decisions within the council, providing a voice for all looked after children and care leavers.</p> <p>To have a young person led participation group.</p> <p>CiCC members are aware of their role & participation in an Ofsted Inspection.</p>
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The Pledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review & update the looked after children & care leavers Pledge in consultation with all young people. 	MS/EW	May 2015	The Pledge has been endorsed by Corporate Parenting Panel & all young people and staff are aware.
Consultation/ Training/ Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To actively participate in consultation exercises across the service in line with local requirements, regional and National events. Support members of the CiCC to develop a survey to gain feedback on services. To support young people in delivering training for social workers and foster carers. To be part of the induction process for new workers starting with CBC. To support young people to be part of the recruitment process for social workers and foster carers for Central Bedfordshire Council. 	<p>MS/CiCC</p> <p>MS</p> <p>MS/GJ</p> <p>MS/GJ</p> <p>MS/GJ</p>	<p>Ongoing– reviewed quarterly</p> <p>Sept 2015</p> <p>When required</p> <p>Every 2 weeks</p>	<p>Oversight and responsibility for delivering services</p> <p>Employment and skill development opportunities for looked after children, building confidence & self esteem and positive contribution to their CV's.</p>
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support young people in producing a newsletter giving information about the CiCC and participation groups. 	MS	Every month	Keep LAC informed of events and current opportunities.

Leaving Care packs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a Leaving Care Information Pack/Passport to Independence. 	MS/EW	October 2015	To ensure that young people will have the appropriate information when they enter the care system.
Web-site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a web site for children and young people in care with which they are actively involved both in the production and ongoing maintenance. 	MS/GJ	April 2015	To better enable young people to have the lead in developing the site and improving their own IT skills. Improved participation and consultation through a user-friendly medium for young people.
Engagement in meetings/ networks/ raising participation in CiCC for all looked after children and care leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attend Regional Participation Leads meetings. To attend SMT to report on activity. Attend LAC Education working group. To attend joint meeting with looked after children, care leavers and Youth Support. Attend joint looked after children & care leaver team meetings and other service team meetings as appropriate. 	MS MS MS MS MS	Quarterly	Maintaining the profile of participation work.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend relevant external training courses on Participation. Explore opportunities for developing an in house course(s) for children 	MS MS	Ongoing – reviewed quarterly	External training to influence improved participation, better ways of engaging and improving service delivery Young people benefit from personal development which will improve the

	and young people in care.			quality of participation.
Policy ‘Our approach to Corporate Parenting in Central Bedfordshire Council 2014 – 2017’	Contribute to the implementation of Corporate Parenting Action Plan,	MS	Ongoing – reviewed quarterly	To review and monitor actions taken in consultation with Looked After Children & Care Leavers
Bi-Monthly Challenge Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up terms of reference. • Identify group of young people for panel – equal representation from looked after children & care leavers population. • Group of young people to discuss concerns/issues with the managers of the Corporate Parenting Service 	MS/CiCC MS/CiCC MS/CiCC	Through the course of the year.	Young people to influence policy and practice of the Corporate Parenting Service.

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