

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** 3 March 2016

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Date & Time

**Monday, 14 March 2016 at 10.00 a.m.**

Venue at

**Room 15, 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 Assistant Director Housing Services or their representative if the Director is unable to attend)

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

#### **Carers (non-voting)**

Only four of the 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.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 18 January 2016 (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.	<b>Corporate Parenting Survey</b>  To consider a report by the Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel which sets out the results of a survey taken amongst Central Bedfordshire councillors on their role as corporate parents.	* 13 - 20
6.	<b>The Children in Care Council and Participation Annual Report 2015-2016</b>  To consider the content of the Children in Care Council's Annual Report for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 and agree a work plan for 2016-17.	* 21 - 38
7.	<b>Future Developments from the Annual Report 2014/15</b>  To consider an update on the NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's Looked After Children Annual Report for 2014/15.	* 39 - 44

8. **Virtual School Report** \* 45 - 68

To consider a report on the role of the Virtual School for Looked After Children, the educational outcomes for Looked After Children in the academic year 2014/15 and the measures taken in the current academic year 2015/16, in partnership with other agencies, to raise the achievement and progress of all Looked After Children.

9. **Fostering Agency Report Quarter 3 - 1 October-31 December 2015** \* 69 - 76

To consider a report outlining the activity in the Fostering Service from October to December 2015.

10. **Work Programme** \* 77 - 82

To consider the Panel's work programme.

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 18 January 2016

**PRESENT**

**Elected Members (voting)**

Cllrs C Hegley (Chairman)  
Mrs S A Goodchild  
T Stock  
M A G Versallion

**Officers (voting)**

Mrs S Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
Mrs J Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

**Carers (non-voting)**

Mr P Albone

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Mrs A Barker  
Mrs J Dickinson, Head of Leisure and Libraries  
Cllr Mrs A L Dodwell (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr D Thorne, Carer  
Cllr B Wells

Members in Attendance: Cllr F Firth

Officers in Attendance:	Mr N Costin	– Head of Housing Solutions
	Mr G Jones	– Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
	Mr L Manning	– Committee Services Officer
	Miss N Phillips	– Practice Manager - Adoption
	Ms M Short	– Participation Officer
	Mr E Wong	– Head of Corporate Parenting

Others in Attendance:

**CPP/15/23. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 9 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CPP/15/24. Members' Interests**

None.

**CPP/15/25. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman welcomed one of the Children in Care Council representatives to this, his first meeting of the Panel. She then advised that she had raised the matter of wider Member support for the Panel's work at a recent Members' briefing and, arising from this, welcomed Councillor Firth.

The Chairman advised the meeting that Hazel Phillips MBE, a long term foster carer and foster carer representative on the Panel, had recently retired from the role of carer and representative. On behalf of the Panel the Chairman extended her thanks to Mrs Phillips for both her lifetime work as a foster carer and for her contribution to, and support of, the Panel. She asked that Mrs Phillips be kept informed of local foster carer developments and that she be invited to attend future meetings of the Panel. The meeting noted that Mrs Phillips would continue to contribute to local foster care by providing advice and assistance.

The Chairman welcomed foster carer representative Pat Albone to his first meeting of the Panel.

The Chairman referred to the event entitled 'Corporate Parenting – Taking it to the Next Level' held in London last November and thanked Councillor Goodchild for attending the event with Children in Care Council representatives. She added that a second Member had been due to attend but he had withdrawn at the last moment and there had been insufficient time for her to arrange to attend in his place.

The Chairman next referred to a forthcoming workshop in February and she stated that she would encourage all members of the Council to attend (minutes CPP/15/26 and CPP/15/29 also refer).

Turning next to the Panel's work programme the Chairman referred to the 'spotlight reports' listed and how they were both an alternative means of presenting Looked After Children's and care leavers' experiences and provide an opportunity for Members to understand the challenges faced. She felt that the use of spotlight reports would encourage Members to attend meetings rather than rely on written reports for their information.

**CPP/15/26. Report on Refreshment of the Children in Care Council Representation on the Corporate Parenting Panel**

The Panel considered a report setting out the proposed development of the Children in Care Council (CiCC). The meeting noted that the CiCC was currently composed of eight young people of which four were able to attend Panel meetings and four were unable to do so because of college attendance or employment. The meeting also noted that the Young Voices Group was made up of children in care between the ages of 8-15. The young people attended activity based participation and took part in informal consultation and formal consultation days. None of the young people were able to attend the

Panel due to school, although other meetings had been arranged between them and Members. In addition some of the young people had been involved in meetings with the Children's Minister and Children's Commissioner in addition to the consultation on the Independent Review Officers.

It was now proposed that the Young Voices Group become the new CiCC. The current CiCC members would become Ambassadors with the role of supporting the younger group including representing them and being their voice at the Panel. The Ambassadors could also develop their own group as Leaving Care Young People. That group would focus on leaving care issues and invite other leaving care young people to attend.

The Panel noted that it was intended that the newly formed CiCC would meet during the school holidays to focus on the experience of being in care. The CiCC work plan could be developed with the Panel and any specific consultations required by the Panel could be included. Members of the Panel would be invited to attend the CiCC's meetings or specific consultation days could be arranged during the school holidays. The Panel noted that the Executive Member had already expressed an interest in holding an informal meeting of young people from the CiCC and elected Members.

Following an introduction by a CiCC representative full discussion took place on the proposed changes. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations emphasised that the Young Voices Group was highly active and experienced and this richness was not currently being represented at Panel meetings. The changes would also provide the opportunity for reports to be presented in alternative formats such as videos and he acknowledged that this needed to be considered further.

In view of the limitations placed on the younger Looked After Children by school attendance the Director of Children's Services proposed that Panel meetings start at 4.00 p.m. The Panel welcomed this proposal.

A CiCC representative then advised the Panel of a forthcoming workshop at Leighton Buzzard Youth Centre on 17 February 2016. She explained that the aim of the workshop was to enable the Young Voices Group to meet Members and for both groups to exchange ideas and discuss issues of mutual importance such as the Care Matters Pledge. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations also referred to the possible need to refresh the pledge for residential workers.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1 that the Young Voices Group become the new Children in Care Council;**
- 2 that the new CiCC be launched during the February half term;**
- 3 that the CiCC work plan be developed and Members be invited to attend and contribute;**

- 4 that the current members of the CiCC become Ambassadors with the role of attending the Corporate Parenting Panel and representing the views of Looked After Children;
- 5 that the feasibility of starting meetings of the Panel at 4.00 p.m. be examined;
- 6 that the Chairman of the Panel and the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations consider alternative means of presenting information to future meetings of the Panel;
- 7 that Members and officers be invited to attend the forthcoming Young Voices Group workshop.

#### CPP/15/27. Meeting the Housing and Support Needs of Vulnerable Young People

Members considered a report which provided an update to that submitted to the Panel on 13 October 2014 (minute CPP/14/24 refers). The original report had affirmed the housing service commitment to fulfilling the Council's responsibility as a corporate parent within the context of a strategic housing agenda.

The Head of Housing Solutions introduced the report and advised that significant changes had been made since the meeting in 2014. The Panel noted the action taken in three main areas, these being:

- Improving access to Council and housing association tenancies
- Improving access to specialist supported accommodation for vulnerable young people
- Improving operational collaboration.

Members were also advised of a number of proposed next steps albeit against the background of efficiencies and housing pressures, in particular a reduced number of social housing lettings.

The Chairman acknowledged the improvements which had been made but stated that, as this area of responsibility was still relatively new to her, she had still to understand what young people's views were on the issue of housing and what constituted appropriate housing for them.

The Head of Housing Solutions stated that housing provision for Care Leavers varied. Further the type of housing available in the future was likely to be affected by the impact of welfare reforms and it was possible that shared housing for young people, using the Amicus Housing Trust model, might be developed for Care Leavers. He stressed, however, that there was no standard housing provision for Care Leavers and what was considered appropriate was determined by individual need/suitability. The Head of Corporate Parenting also emphasised the importance of welfare reform impact given that Care Leavers were often dependant on housing benefit. He added that whilst Care Leavers often wanted self contained accommodation some

were not ready to take on this responsibility. He added that identifying the funding stream for post 18 Care Leavers could also be challenging.

In response to a Member's query both the Head of Corporate Parenting and the Head of Housing Solutions explained that joint working between colleagues across Directorates took place on the assessment of Care Leavers housing type suitability. The Head of Housing Solutions stressed that landlords wanted assurance that an individual tenancy was sustainable and needed confidence that a young person was able to take on this responsibility.

A Member sought information on the numbers of those young people leaving care, what accommodation they were being provided with and whether it was approved by the Council. She also asked how the safeguarding element was accessed, especially if a young person was being housed as the result of an emergency. The Member expressed concern that some Care Leavers would not be able to cope in such situations. The Assistant Director of Children's Services Operations acknowledged the need to bring forward detail and experience on these issues for the Panel to consider. He acknowledged that some individuals had experienced difficulties regarding accommodation and he undertook to provide a 'spotlight report' on this issue.

The Director of Children's Services stressed the importance of joint working. She also referred to the advantages of 18 year old Care Leavers staying with their former carers so that they continued to receive support.

A Member queried what happened to those young people who were parents when they reached 18. In reply the Head of Corporate Parenting stated that there were a number of young mothers and their needs were prioritised. However, there was no significant challenge regarding accommodation for this group. The Chairman then sought the views of the CiCC representatives on this point. In response a CiCC representative set out her experiences of living in different accommodation following the breakdown of her foster placement. She added that when she became pregnant at 17 she received full support and was in excellent accommodation. She offered to prepare a note of her experience for Members.

In response to a Member's question regarding the funding of young unaccompanied asylum seekers the Head of Corporate Parenting explained that this was dependant on the young person's immigration status when they turned 18. For most the Home Office would have made the decision that they could stay indefinitely so funding would be made available. For the minority, who had exhausted their right of appeal and were not able to stay, there was no recourse to government funds but the Council had a statutory responsibility to care for them until they were 21 (or 25 if in education) or until they were deported. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations added that the Council paid the care costs in full so they represented a budgetary pressure.

Turning to Care Leavers and the risk of a breakdown in accommodation provision the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations referred to the government's 'Staying Put' guidance which set out the arrangements for Care Leavers of 18 and over to continue living with their former foster carers and

how this had some government financial support. He stressed that it was in the best interests of Care Leavers to remain and mature within a family context for as long as they were able to. The Assistant Director added that the level of care for Care Leavers in independent accommodation was very low in comparison.

#### **NOTED**

**the progress made since October 2014 towards an improved day to day experience of housing and support services by Care Leavers and towards improved access to supported accommodation for those Care Leavers that are not ready for independent accommodation at the age of 18.**

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1 that a 'Spotlight Report', providing examples of young people in different types of accommodation situations and what their experiences and outcomes were, be submitted to the Panel;**
- 2 that the 'Next Steps' in meeting the housing needs and support for young people, as set out within the report, be approved;**
- 3 that statistical information be provided on the number of young people, how they move on and what type of housing offers they receive;**
- 4 that, given the perceived demand for foyer type accommodation, information be supplied on what is currently available within Central Bedfordshire and what the aspiration is for future provision.**

#### **CPP/15/28. Report on Adoption Support Fund**

The Panel considered a report which set out the remit for the Adoption Support Fund and explained how the Council was making use of the Fund. The meeting noted that the Fund was provided through the Department for Education to extend adoptive families access to therapy. Following the assessment of a family's needs a council could apply to the Adoption Support Fund for funding. Each application was considered on a case by case basis. If the funding was approved then the therapy could be provided by a council's adoption support service, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), other public sector services or by an independent sector provider. The meeting noted that on 1 May 2015 the sum of £19.3m was made available nationally to fund the first year.

The Panel noted that the Fund arose out of recognition that many adopted children had experienced difficult and traumatic care before being placed for adoption. This could prevent them from settling into their new home and could create difficulties at particular stages such as adolescence. The aim of the therapy provided through the Fund therefore was to achieve positive outcomes for the child and adoptive family.

Members also noted that, as of 30 November 2015, Central Bedfordshire Council was offering intensive adoption support to seventeen families with a total of twenty children. Six of these families had been identified as requiring a therapeutic service or assessment and applications to the Fund had been completed and agreed. These families were currently receiving therapeutic services from external providers from the independent sector. A further four families had been assessed as requiring a therapeutic intervention and applications to the Fund were in the process of being completed.

In response to a question by the Chairman the Head of Corporate Parenting stated that, before the Adoption Support Fund was introduced, funding for such care had to be found by individual local authorities. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations added that it was unusual for the government to fund individual care packages but the Fund, together with the forthcoming regionalisation of the adoption service to improve efficiency, formed part of the government's national strategy to encourage adoption. The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations explained that the government favoured greater emphasis on a family environment and a belief in the primacy of adoption as a means of achieving this for children in the care system. He added that a report on the impact of the government's policies, including the changes to the family court system, would be submitted to the Panel.

The Director of Children's Services stated that the provision of the Adoption Support Fund for those involved in the adoption process had raised expectations considerably but if it were to be withdrawn then it generate a significant budgetary pressure.

In response to a Member's query the Adoption Practice Manager stated that the government had made the sum of £10m available for the Fund's second year.

#### **NOTED**

**the report on the remit of the Adoption Support Fund and how Central Bedfordshire Council was making use of it.**

#### **RESOLVED**

**that a report on the impact of the government's policies towards the adoption process, including the changes to the family court system, be submitted to the Panel.**

#### CPP/15/29. **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 (minutes CPP/15/27 and CPP/15/28 above refer).

The Director of Social Care, Health and Housing queried how it would be possible to capture the wider Council role as a corporate parent. A Member commented on the difficulty which arose because responsibility for Council services for Looked After Children was spread across a range of stakeholders. He stated that, in order to create a regular, comprehensive viewpoint some form of co-ordination was necessary.

A Member referred to the forthcoming workshop on 17 February (minute CPP/15/26 above also refers) as a means to help establish what Looked After Children wanted and emphasised the need to listen to Looked After Children to gain this knowledge. She also felt that all Members should be encouraged to attend the workshop.

In response to a Member's query the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations commented that the Panel functioned well, enjoyed good attendance and considered a range of report topics. However, whilst the February workshop would provide an opportunity to consider and refresh certain matters he was uncertain as to whether there was a wider area of support for the Panel's work beyond that of its membership.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1 that a proposal on how to co-ordinate information relating to the Council's role as corporate parent be submitted to the Panel for consideration;**
- 2 that officers be invited to attend the CiCC workshop on 17 February 2016.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.40 a.m.)

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Monday, 14 March 2016

---

**Corporate Parenting Survey**

Report of Vice-Chairman to the Corporate Parenting Panel

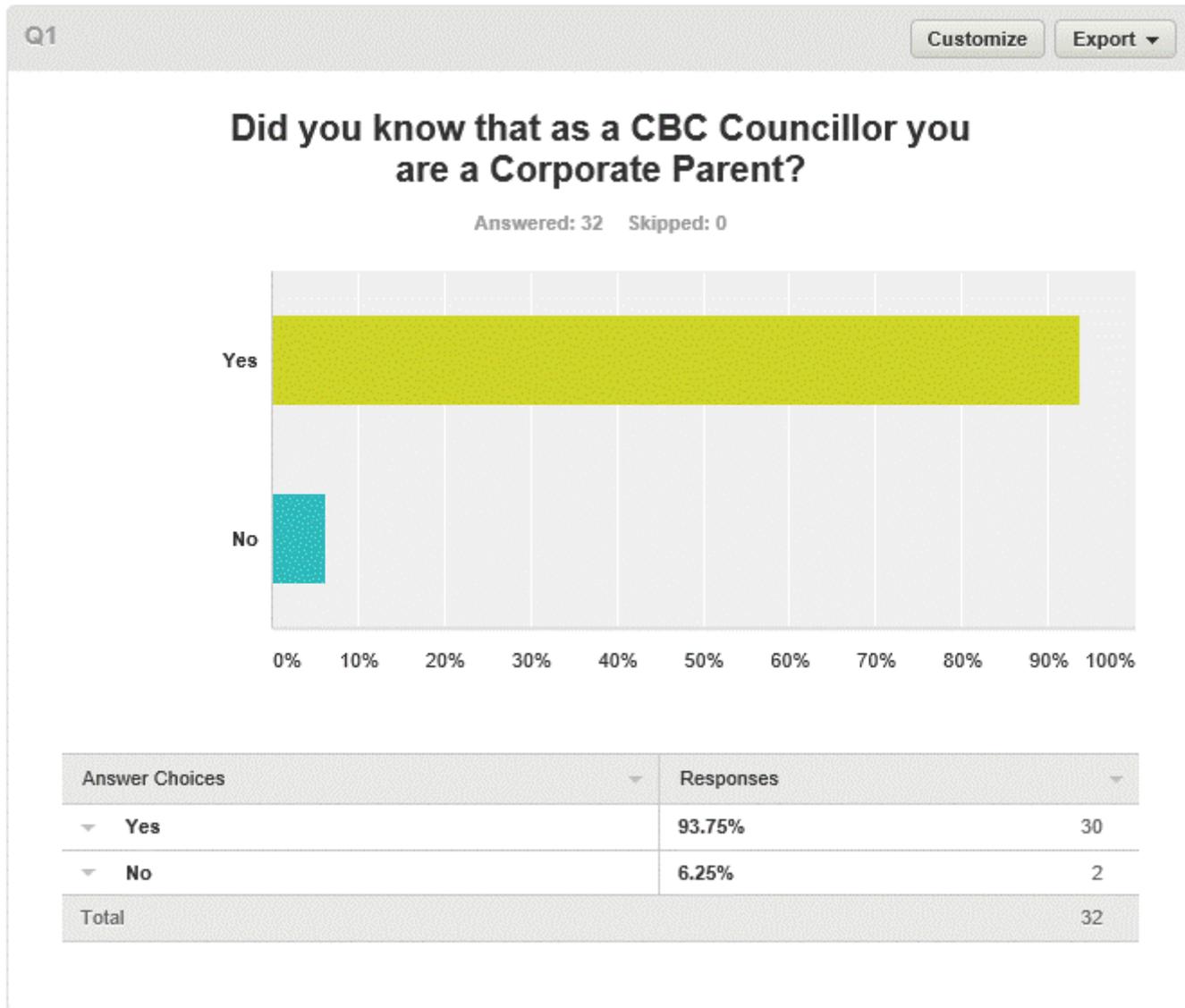
**Purpose of this report**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel of the outcome of a survey taken amongst Central Bedfordshire councillors on corporate parenting.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Panel considers the responses set out below.

1. Nearly all those Members responding to the survey were aware that they were corporate parents and had a good idea of what 'corporate parenting' meant.
2. Amongst the suggestions to improve Members' understanding of their role as corporate parents were written briefings, case studies and presentations by social workers.



That I have an overriding responsibility for the safety of our children

2/28/2016 5:00 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Looking out for the best interests of CBC's looked after children, as if they were my own children.

2/24/2016 10:58 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Everyone needs to be aware of the care and safety of our children and we should do all we can towards achieving that goal for all children.

2/24/2016 9:05 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Collective responsibility for under-18s who are wards of the Council, i.e. removed from families for safeguarding reasons, before being re-homed.

2/24/2016 12:41 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

We are collectively responsible for the welfare, upbringing and safeguarding of young children in our care.

2/23/2016 7:34 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I have a responsibility to ensure that children in the Council's care are looked after to a defined minimum standard

2/23/2016 7:29 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I am responsible for the welfare, education and future settlement in the community of looked after children

2/23/2016 5:40 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

It means that all Councillors have a joint responsibility for looked after children, and I believe, a responsibility to report any cases of vulnerable children of which we may become aware.

2/22/2016 11:27 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Not been fully made aware of what this really means

2/22/2016 10:21 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

As a councillor I would hold a responsibility for looked after children

2/22/2016 9:32 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Responsibility and liability to ensure looked after children are given the best possible environment and opportunities for life.

2/22/2016 9:00 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

For any child in the care of CBC, I have similar responsibility as a 'parent' as I had for my own children until they reached the age where they could, both legally and morally, be perceived to hold full personal responsibility for all of their own actions and care.

2/22/2016 3:16 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Attending meetings Bringing influence to help looked after children Steering council policy to be an Excellent Corporate Parent in what it does

2/19/2016 6:21 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I am the CBC representative for the Governing Body of the Virtual School for Looked After Children so I'm aware from this aspect.

2/15/2016 12:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

That we collectively have parental responsibility for children in care of the council

2/13/2016 7:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The more honest answer to Q1 would be "vaguely aware" but I lack a full understanding of the term.

2/11/2016 1:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

That I am responsible for the care and safety of such children that are under CBC Management.

2/10/2016 7:57 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I am responsible for children taken into care by CBC and placed with foster parents or even placed with adoptive parents

2/10/2016 5:22 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

That, collectively, councillors are legally, as well as humanly, responsible for the well-being of all children in our care.

2/10/2016 4:05 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Making sure that the looked after children that the council cares for have the same parenting as you would give normal children at home with parents. The children are not deprived and the carers have support too.

2/10/2016 2:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

That we have total responsibility for the parenting of the child up to its 18th birthday

2/10/2016 9:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Not entirely sure - presume it means 'collective responsibility' under the law...

2/10/2016 9:28 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Ultimate responsibility as a councillor for looked after children (officers as well!)

2/9/2016 11:42 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I am a responsible person regarding looked-after children, so their safety, wellbeing, education, guidance etc should be as if they were my own children, with all that entails.

2/9/2016 9:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I have a responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing for all children within the authority

2/9/2016 9:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

A collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by the Council and young people who have left care. It is a statutory function of the Council.

2/9/2016 8:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We need to keep abreast of developments, attend training sessions, be aware at all times

2/9/2016 8:47 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Not really sure?

2/9/2016 8:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q3 Export ▾

## What would help you to understand your role as a Corporate Parent?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 4

Perhaps a summary sheet of rules/guidelines

2/28/2016 5:00 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Case studies, stories, and best practice examples.

2/24/2016 10:58 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

A briefing as in item 6

2/24/2016 9:05 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Have already been briefed/trained, but maybe more wouldn't hurt

2/24/2016 12:41 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Updates and briefings where there are concerns.

2/23/2016 7:34 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I have already received training

2/23/2016 7:29 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Further training sessions from Social Workers

2/23/2016 5:40 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

It would certainly be useful to have further guidance on how to handle cases should they arise.

2/22/2016 11:27 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Being told !

2/22/2016 10:21 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Perhaps a briefing on our responsibilities and the councils with regular feedback on our progress of this responsibility

2/22/2016 9:32 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Ongoing refresher training

2/22/2016 9:00 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The correct answer to Q2!

2/22/2016 3:16 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Attend briefings Hear the voice of the looked after child Have an understanding of what is entailed, clear objectives, and expectations

2/19/2016 6:21 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

A broad outline at a presentation.

2/15/2016 12:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Clear statement of responsibilities

2/13/2016 7:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

A briefing session and short notes to keep / refer to

2/11/2016 1:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Always being reminded of changes as soon as possible. Instant updates if there is an issue.

2/10/2016 7:57 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Attending Corporate Parenting committees

2/10/2016 5:22 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

A presentation!

2/10/2016 4:05 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Nothing as I have been involved with this for many years

2/10/2016 2:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

the number of foster parents currently available. Annual budget. The achievements of the child. The number of children in care, and the trends.

2/10/2016 9:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

an explanation as to the law, process, risks, opportunities...

2/10/2016 9:28 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I understand?

2/9/2016 11:42 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Regular updates as regards any legislative changes, effect of Council policies etc

2/9/2016 9:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Serving on a committee with more focus on children's issues

2/9/2016 9:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I thoroughly understand the role of a Corporate Parent through training I have received and as a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

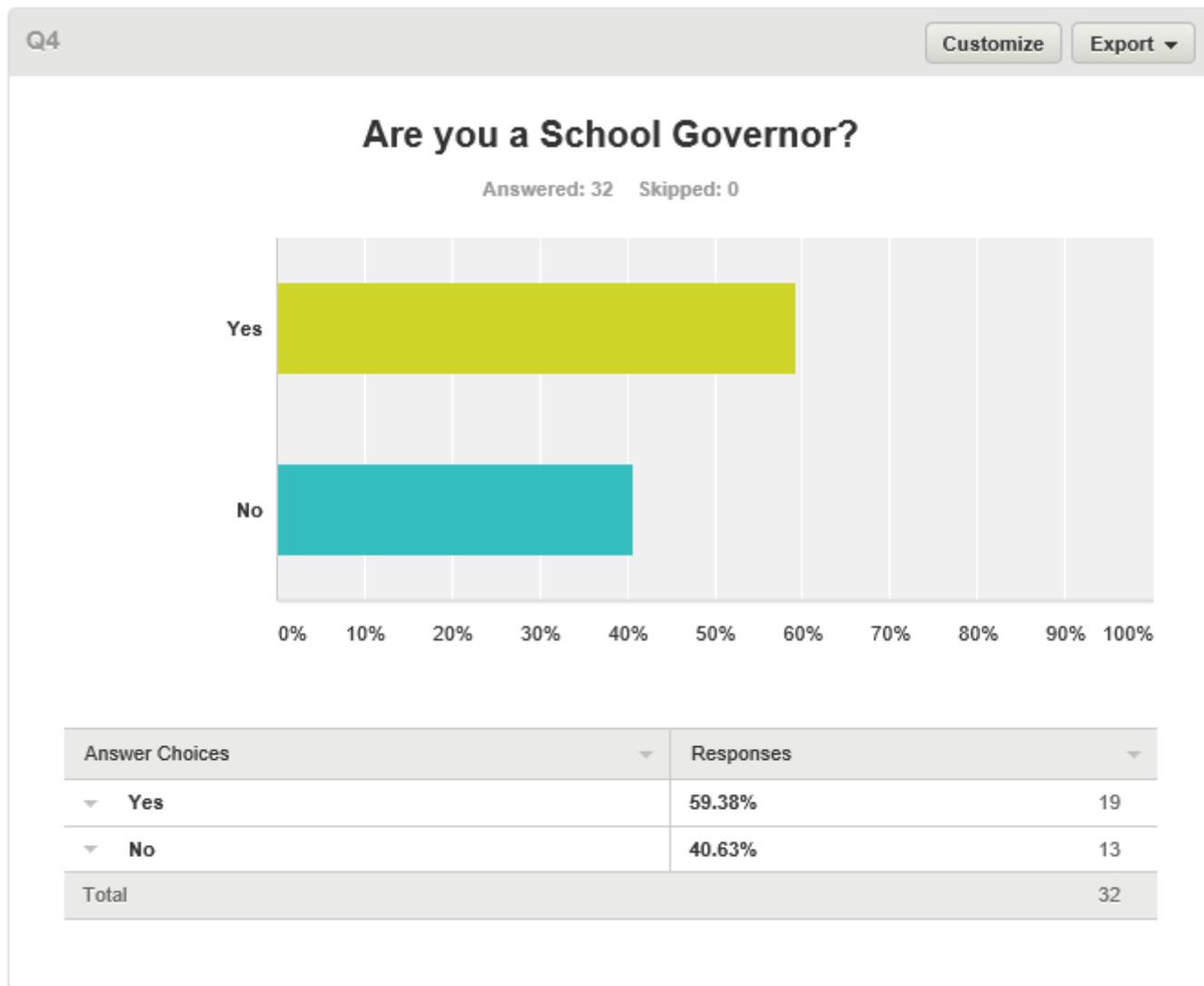
2/9/2016 8:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

more useful training. The last session we had was fairly boring with lots of statistics thrown at us and no paper work to take away to study at leisure

2/9/2016 8:47 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

?

2/9/2016 8:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)



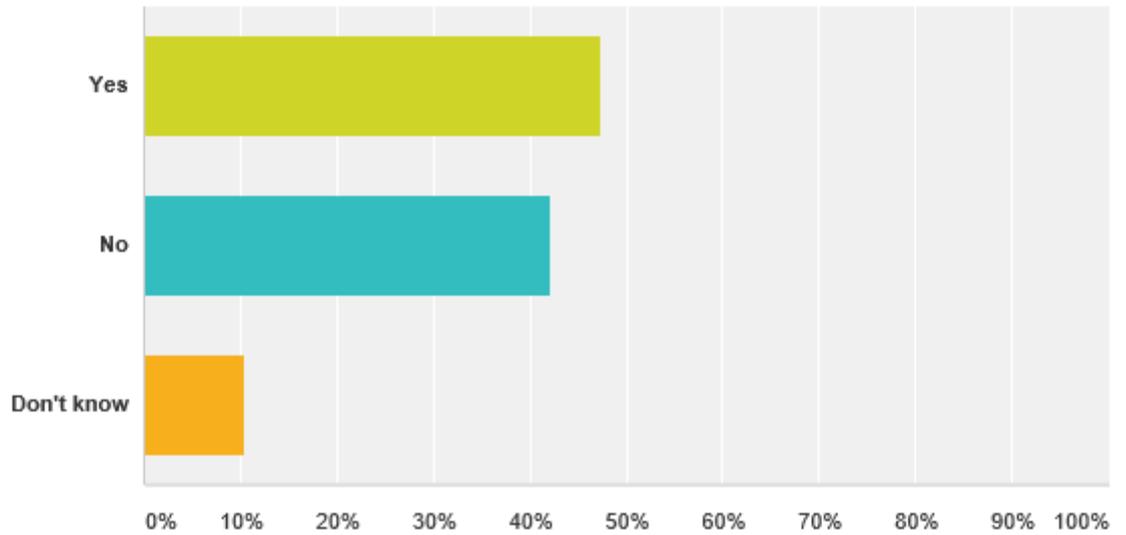
Q5

Customize

Export ▾

**If 'yes', do you have any looked after children (i.e. children in the care of CBC, either with foster families or in residential settings) in your School?**

Answered: 19 Skipped: 13



Answer Choices	Responses
▾ Yes	47.37% 9
▾ No	42.11% 8
▾ Don't know	10.53% 2
Total	19

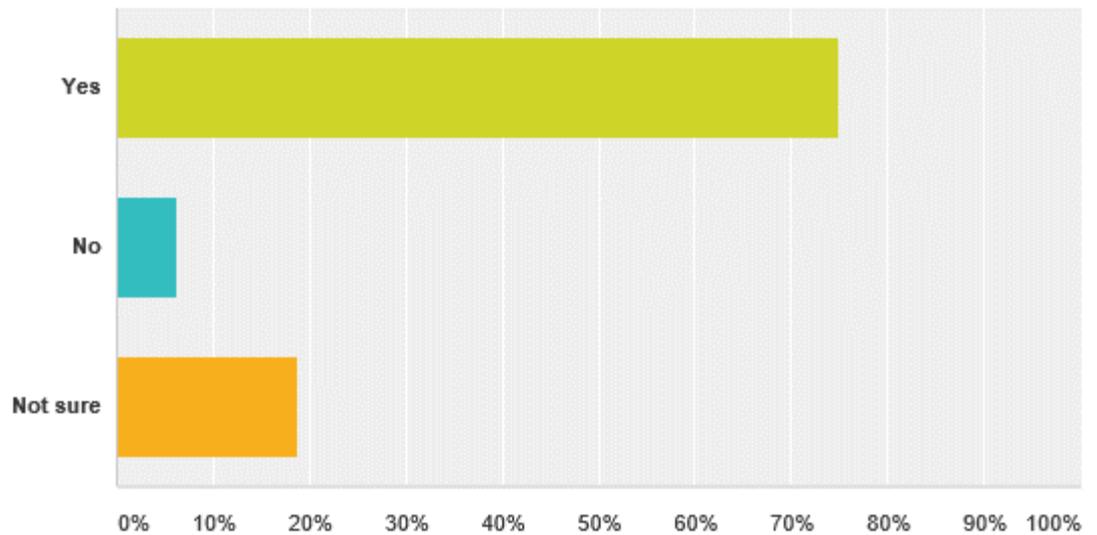
Q6

Customize

Export ▾

**We are hoping to hold a Member Briefing on Corporate Parenting, for you to meet some looked after children, foster carers and social workers – would this be helpful; to meet people involved in the services to make it more real?**

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	75.00% 24
No	6.25% 2
Not sure	18.75% 6

This page is intentionally left blank

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

14 March 2016

---

**The Children in Care Council and Participation Annual Report  
2015-2016**

Report of Sue Harrison Director of Childrens Services  
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Gerard Jones, Assistant Director of Children's Services  
(gerard.jones@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk);

Marie Short, Participation Worker, Professional Standards  
(marie.short@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

---

**Purpose of this report**

To update members on the activities of Children in Care Council  
Participation as detailed in the Children in Care Council and Participation  
Annual Report (Appendix A)

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the content of the Children in Care Council's Annual Report  
01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 and agree work plan for 2016/  
2017.

**Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations**

1. This report is not planned to go to Overview and Scrutiny, the report is  
for Corporate Parenting Panel.

**Issues**

2. Report attached.

**Options for consideration**

3. None

**Reason/s for decision**

4. To ensure there is an effective Children in Care Council and Participation work plan, to ensure the voice of children in care, and their needs and wishes, are effectively communicated to elected members.

**Council Priorities**

5. Promote health and well-being and protect the vulnerable; improve educational attainment.

**Corporate Implications**

6. Not applicable

**Legal Implications**

7. Not applicable

**Financial and Risk Implications**

8. None

**Equalities Implications**

9. The Children in Care Council is open to all young people who are in care. Young people who have additional needs will be supported to participate.

**Implications for Work Programming**

10. Not applicable.

**Conclusion and next Steps**

11. The Children in Care Council and Participation Officer will work to the agreed plan and continue to update the Corporate Parenting Panel on the progress.

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Children in Care Council and Participation Annual Report  
Appendix B – ASYE Training Programme  
Appendix C – Work Plan 2016 – 2017

**Background Papers**

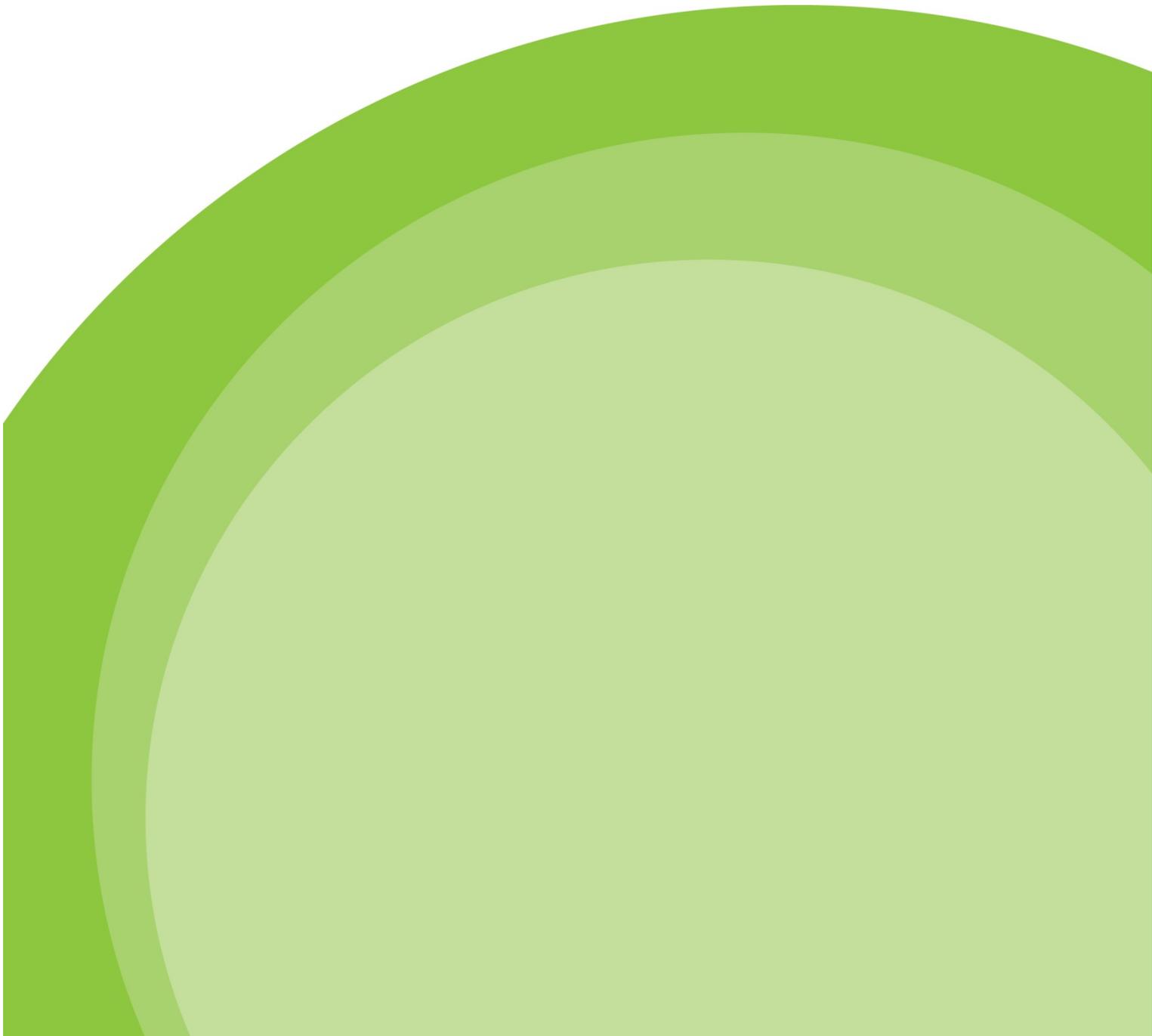
None

**Appendix A**

**Central Bedfordshire Council**  
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



**Children in Care Council and  
Participation 2015 - 2016**  
Annual Report



**Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the following report is to summarise and evaluate the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Participation Officer during 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

**Children in Care Council Achievements**

Members of the CiCC were asked to list their achievements these included -

**Meeting with the Children’s Minister**

Members of our CiCC attended a meeting with the Children’s Minister Edward Timpson and the Children’s Commissioner. Two young people attended the meeting and took part in discussions about people who have stuck with them and what it is like to be looked after in Central Bedfordshire Council. The young people received a letter from the minister thanking them for attending and sharing their personal experiences.

**Corporate Parenting Taking it to the Next Level**

Two members of the CiCC attended this event with Cllr Goodchild and it was a good opportunity for our CiCC to showcase our achievements. Young people spoke about how proud they were to represent Central Bedfordshire Council as it demonstrated that we are doing well as a CiCC. Other CiCC’s commented and praised us on the relationship we have with the University of Bedfordshire and wanted more information to share with their local universities. ‘We were able to listen to other children in care councils and it was interesting to hear some of the things that they do to support their young people but it was good to see that we do pretty much the same plus more which was something to be proud of. We also came away from the day ready to re design our pledge which was a huge positive as it’s now underway.’

**CiCC Member**

**‘Taking it to the next level’ corporate parent/CiCC Action plan**

Name of Local Authority/council: *central Bedfordshire*

Today’s Date: *21/11/15*

Action	By whom	By when
<i>1 making sure every young person gets the opportunity to complete life story work + future planning.</i>	<i>CiCC CPP</i>	<i>ASAP! for</i>
<i>2 Re-develop/launch the pledge with a focus on aspiration and education.</i>	<i>CiCC CPP</i>	<i>6 months.</i>
<i>3 continue the work and further opportunities with the university and local colleges. (recreational activities)</i>	<i>CiCC CPP</i>	<i>continuous</i>

 Write out again below. Tear off and keep one half and pass the other to event staff

### **Meetings with the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel**

One member of the Young Voices Group met with Councillor Hegley and shared her journey of care after she was awarded the Young Person of the Year award at the Annual Awards evening for looked after children and care leavers. The young person wrote an article for her school newsletter which she agreed to be shared with Councillors and senior managers.

### **Children's Commissioner Participation Group**

Members of our CiCC have continued to support the participation group for the Children's Commissioner; the young people have shared their experiences. One young person attended the launch of the Children's Commissioner Report, presented information and took part in a live question panel with MPs, other care leavers and the Children's Minister. The young person was also invited to attend an event during Care Leavers Week to share her experiences.

### **The Frontline Programme**

CiCC members were asked to attend the Frontline Training Programme which is a fast track social work qualification. The young people organised training for 128 social work students, they developed a workshop where participants create a 'social workers toolbox': 12 of our young people attended this. One young person was invited to attend the opening ceremony and read one of her poems to 220 guests; this was also mentioned by Edward Timpson in his opening speech to the participants. Four young people then returned to the training and supported the academic tutors in delivering another activity for direct work with young people.

'We are always grateful to have input on our training from young people and have been particularly humbled by those who choose to share personal experiences, such as one care leaver reading out a moving poem she had written. We are looking forward to this summer and further opportunities to deliver our programme in partnership with the CiCC. Thank you to all of those who contributed.'

**Jo Williams, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, University of Bedfordshire**

### **Training Days for Assisted and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE)**

CiCC members have worked with the practise educator to develop a training programme for newly qualified social workers, this has been developed through personal experiences of our young people and looks at communication, games and activities to use with young people and the social workers tool box. Feedback from participants was very positive and social workers shared that the training made them think about their communication and using more creative ways to work with young people.

**See Appendix 2 for detailed Training Programme.**

### **Working with Children's Commissioning Service**

CiCC members were invited to attend a consultation event on the Supervised Contact provider; Swanstaff. The young people gave their honest views on what is good about the service and what could be improved. Young people talked about having a fish tank in the centre, this feedback has been shared with Swanstaff and they are keen to implement this along with areas for improvement.

One member attended a Provider Forum Event which was arranged between Commissioning and the Voluntary Organisations for Children, Young People and

Families. 'It generated conversation amongst the groups around young people being involved in services and having their voice heard about the service. What was interesting is that a few of the providers did admit that although their organisations spoke about young peoples' involvement, the same organisations did feel that it was possibly only lip service. Emily being there really proved that a YPs voice is well worth listening to!' **Jill Clarke, Children's Services Commissioning Manager.**

### **Staff conference**

The CiCC was invited to be part of the staff conferences which were organised for all workers within Children's Services.

'This was a really good event for members to be involved with. We had one member who designed all the posters and information to go on our board for the show and another member who stood at the board on each of the four days and answered any questions people had. One member was invited by Sue Harrison to make a speech about people that have made a difference in her life. This was a really good chance for our CiCC members to promote what we do to other workers across Childrens Services.' **CiCC Member.**

### **Meetings with Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Director**

CiCC members have attended meetings with Richard Carr and Sue Harrison and discussed the CiCC work plan and the Children's Survey. This was a good opportunity to feedback information on the services young people receive. The group then worked to develop the survey which is currently being distributed. The Young Voices group met with Richard Carr and Gerard Jones and played a game of Jenga. The game was created by one of the workers within the Corporate Parenting Service and a good example of the ways in which social workers need to be creative in the way they communicate with young people. This enabled the young people to find out about Richard and Gerard and for them to find out about the young people. The young voices group then gave feedback on what was good in Central Bedfordshire and what needed to be improved.

### **Corporate Parents as Mentors**

Members of the CiCC have met with senior managers to get support for college work and a 'mentoring' relationship has started to develop. This is a good example of our young people being supported by their Corporate Parents and something the young people would like to further develop for Looked After Children.

### **The Awards**

The Annual Awards evening took place on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015 in the Council Chamber at Priory House; there were over 100 young people who attended the event to receive their award which was presented by Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care & Housing.

'The Awards was a real success, many new and old faces attending and receiving awards for brilliant successes they have had over the year. Lots of fun activities for the guests to take part in such as RC car racing, photo booth, face painting and tattooing and we had two beautiful steam engines for people to see by the entrance.'

**CiCC Member.**

**The University of Bedfordshire**

The University of Bedfordshire has continued to support our Looked After Children and Care Leavers through their Access Partnership Team. The team organised two days where the young people were able to engage in fun activities whilst thinking about their future aspirations, the young people recorded a radio show and took part in a graduation ceremony. Workers from the Virtual School attended the days and supported the young people which also meant the information could be shared during the Personal Education Plan meeting.

**The Children in Care Council**

The membership of both the Children in Care Council and the Young Voices Group is continuously changing; this could depend on a number of factors, for example some young people may choose to not be involved due to their personal situations. Where possible we try to continue the engagement of young people using different forms of engagement. This could be 1:1 work or specific pieces of consultation work where appropriate.

There are currently 14 young people who are participating in CiCC work, these young people have taken part in informal consultation. Discussions have taken place with regards to the meeting arrangements which, due to their personal commitments, hasn't allowed the young people to meet in a formal meeting. The young people have met as a group during events for example at the Frontline training where they have discussed their priorities.

	Number	Looked After	Leaving Care
Female	8	1	7
Male	6	1	5

The Young Voices Group for looked after children between the ages of 8 – 15 years, continues to develop with around 33 young people attending the most recent event.

	8 -12 year olds	12 – 16 year olds
Female	9	10
Male	8	6

The feedback from the event was very positive, with young people stating that it was good to see their workers during a fun activity and that they would like to have more of these events with their workers. A number of CiCC representatives also attended to support the younger looked after children during the event and we also completed some of the Children's Survey as a pilot.

'I know the kids really enjoyed it! I loved it also and it was really good to be able to spend time with the children like that, rather than sitting with them in a living room!!!'

**Emma Cox, Social Worker.**

Newsletters from members of the CiCC along with Sue Harrison's blog continues to be sent out to all of our looked after children, these are also uploaded onto the website for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Members of the CiCC continue to attend all Corporate Parenting Panel meetings and contribute to discussions, sharing experiences and attend the panel to present information on their work plan three times per year.

A report has been written and presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel with information on how the CiCC is going to be developed. The Young Voices Group will become the CiCC and the current CiCC members will become Ambassadors. Leaving care young people could then establish their own group to focus on leaving care services.

The CiCC members continue to support the Participation Officer on how the budget is spent and give good ideas on how best to use the money available.

### **Consultation Events**

The Young Voices along with members of the CiCC attended a consultation event with Independent Review Officers and worked together on 'what makes a good Looked After Children's Review'. Feedback from the event from both workers and young people has been very positive, one young person stating 'it was good to meet our IRO outside of the meetings we have and to go and do a fun activity with them.'  
**Young Voices member.**

Another young person said following the event 'my review was the best one I have ever had as I felt I now had a relationship with my Independent Review Officer and it wasn't just another professional at my review.'

Whilst taking part in the activity programme informal consultations took place on the Comments, Complaints and Compliments procedure and if young people knew how to make a complaint. This information was shared with the Customer Relations manager which will be used to develop the service.

Young people have been involved in the design of the CiCC website, [www.cbccicc.org.uk](http://www.cbccicc.org.uk) they have given feedback on the website and the information included.

Young people were also consulted on the awards evening, the summer activities programme and the Leaving Care Christmas Party.

Meetings with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children take place every 6 weeks with Leaving Care Team Manager and social workers. The purpose of the meetings is to raise awareness of entitlements, under the Leaving Care Act and moving into independent living, UK Laws, Culture, share information and discuss topics on what the young people like and don't like. Information is shared with the young people from the participation officer and any feedback shared with the service.

### **CiCC Involvement**

Members of the CiCC continue to be part of the information evenings and training for foster carers, where they create a house to represent what makes a good foster carer.

'I really enjoy doing the info evening for the fostering team, they always make me feel valued and I think it's nice for potential foster carers to hear a current foster carer's story and also a child that's been in the system.' **CiCC Member.**

One member of our CiCC has attended the Looked After Children's Health Improvement Meeting and shared her experiences. One of the main issues this young person wanted to raise was around the emotional and mental health support for children and young people and the transfer to adult mental health services. This young person also attended a meeting with the new service provider for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health service and was invited to sit on an interview panel for positions within this service.

The CiCC members have also worked with our Leisure Services and attended meetings to promote leisure for our looked after children, 3 activity days were arranged as part of the activity based participation during the school holidays where young people took part in fun activities at our leisure centres; this promoted the centers to our young people. The leisure services also arranged for our young people and their foster families free swimming passes during the school holidays.

Young people have been involved in the recruitment to a number of positions for Central Bedfordshire Council, including Independent Review Officers, the manager of the Conference and Review Service, Personal Advisers working with the Virtual School and the Youth Support Team and a LAC Support Officer for the Virtual School.

### **Activity Based Participation**

There have been a number of activity days during the year for looked after children. We have had 52 young people between the ages of 5 and 15 attend at least one of the activity days.

The activity days have also been well attended by social workers from the Corporate Parenting Team, which has been very positive for both young people and workers in developing relationships. We have also had some of the Independent Review Officers attending the activities and again this has supported the development of positive working relationships.

Feedback from young people has been positive and there has been a request for more of these days to be organised throughout the summer holidays. One foster carer stated 'It has really helped the placement as we were struggling with the 3 siblings during the holidays.'

### **Future Priorities**

The CiCC have discussed the need to change and develop. A plan was put together to make the Young Voices Group the new CiCC, the current members of the CiCC will then become ambassadors and support the younger members. A new group for the leaving care young people could then be established to focus on leaving care.

From the consultation events and attending the Corporate Parenting Event the future priorities for members of the CiCC are –

- Life Story work for all and to have a focus on future planning
- The Pledge and Monitoring the Pledge.
- Continuing the work with the University of Bedfordshire to offer opportunities to raise aspirations and explore options.
- The Children's Survey and the results from this.
- Corporate Parents as Mentors for Looked After Children.

The activity programme needs to be developed with input from the CiCC and Young Voices. More activities need to be arranged for the older young people and funding options are being explored.

The Awards evening has been provisionally booked for Friday 21st October 2016 in the Council Chamber; discussions need to take place with facilities to ensure the event can take place in the Chamber. Representatives from the CiCC along with Ambassadors will organise the event.

### **Challenges**

There have been a small number of new young people wanting to join the CiCC this could be due to personal situations, however there have not been any activity days for the over 16 young people which are a good way to engage with this age group. Young people have reported that taking part in an activity day allows them to meet other young people and the participation officer, which then helps young people with their confidence to attend a meeting.

Support for the activities and meetings can often be a challenge due to social workers not always having the time to support the activities.

Some of the needs of the young people have been a challenge and the high level of support some of the young people need to be able to participate in activities and meetings.

The leisure service have previously supported the activities for our young people and funded swimming passes for the summer holidays. Due to funding this may not be available this year and so could reduce the number of activity days available.

Children's participation work is prioritised by the department but financial pressures on Children's Services have lead to challenges. For example some young people need transport to attend events and in previous years flexibility with budgets has meant additional funding has been available. This will continue to be a challenge but the Director and Assistant Director are keen to ensure this work continues.

### **Conclusion**

Current Members of the CiCC continue to have strong links with the Corporate Parenting Panel and Senior Officers including the Chief Executive, the Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Director and have developed new relationships

with officers from health, education, learning and development and the commissioning service. This has helped with the promotion of the CiCC.

The CiCC continue to be involved in areas of work for Central Bedfordshire Council and gain valuable experience and skills in being part of this which has enabled young people to use the experience when applying for jobs or training. A work placement has been supported which both the local authority and the young person have benefited from.

The CiCC continues to develop and change and going forward the new CiCC made up of the young people aged 8 – 16 will be supported by the CiCC Ambassadors. This will ensure that the voice of both looked after children and care leavers are represented. There will be a plan to further develop the relationship between the CiCC members and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Young people involved in the work of the CiCC enjoy the activities and the opportunities it has provided; some of the younger members have attended meetings with the Children's Minister and the Children's Commissioner. Young people have been able to develop their own skills during the work with the CiCC and have used these experiences in looking for education, training or employment.

Young people who are part of the CiCC are valued members and are given positive feedback. The young people themselves report that they feel valued and enjoy being part of the CiCC using their own experiences to improve the services for other children and young people who are looked after by Central Bedfordshire Council.

One young person stated that 'The CiCC is important to me because it gives me so many opportunities to make a difference in young people's lives within the system. I also get to meet with other care experienced young people and we support each other. I get the opportunity to take part in fun activities being a peer mentor to the young children, which is something that I love doing! Having the choice to attend significant meetings and groups and be the voice.

I never imagined all the important people I would meet! I feel proud to be part of the CiCC, it has helped me boost my confidence, learn to adapt in different situations, learn how to be professional and I've been lucky to take part in activities where we get results out of it. There's so many amazing experiences I can put on my CV and I use what I learn in the CiCC in my day to day life and also at college. It's changed me as a person; I have become more independent and have more self esteem. It's important for me to be part of the CiCC as it gives me something to look forward to that I'm passionate about'.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix B



ASYE Training Day



No.	Item	YP
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions to The CiCC</b>  <i>Good morning, my name is ..... and we are members of the Children in Care Council.</i></p> <p><i>The CiCC is a group of looked after children and care leavers who work together to consult with others about the service they receive and what improvements can be made to better support children and young people.</i></p> <p>Ice Breakers – String Facts</p>	<p>10.00am – 10.15am</p> <p>All</p> <p>Tasha</p>
2.	<p><b>Social Workers Tool Box?</b>            You will each be given a tool box to decorate and personalise. On the outside of the box we would like you to decorate the box to represent your personality and why you wanted to become a social worker. For example I enjoy working with children and young people, I have a good sense of humour.</p> <p>Inside the box we would like you to write the different tools you need to be a good social worker, we are here to help you decide what tools you might need.</p>	<p>10.15 am – 10.45am</p> <p>All</p>
3.	<p><b>Communication – Pairs</b>            Workers will be asked to work in pairs standing opposite each other person 1 will be asked to talk to person 2 about a subject e.g. a recent holiday.            Person 2 will be given instructions to act out either –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distracted and not listening</li> <li>2. Tired and in a rush</li> </ol> <p>Workers will then discuss how that the exercise made them feel and they will discuss what they have learnt and how this can be used in their own practice.</p> <p><b>Communication – Drawing</b>            Person 1 faces away from the picture and draws what Person 2 is describing on the board.</p>	<p>10.45am – 11.15pm</p> <p>Emily</p> <p>Tasha</p>
4.	<b>BREAK</b>	<p>11.15am – 11.30am</p>
5.	<b>Secret Circle</b>	<p>11.30am- 11.35am</p>

Appendix B

6.	<p><b>Young People and Meetings</b></p> <p>From work with the Participation groups for young people subject to CP plans and the CiCC. A script has been developed to use as a role play for a young persons review meeting.</p> <p>Workers will be asked to read the script.</p> <p>Workers will then be asked to think about the different stages of the meeting and think of ways to make the young person feel prepared and part of the meeting.</p>	11.35am – 11.50am	Emily
7.	<p><b>The Ball – The Voice of the Child</b></p> <p>Questions to be written on the ball to play catch</p> <p>Think of other activities you could use to enable you to hear the voice of the child. Board games, jenga etc.</p>	11.50pm- 12noon	Tasha
8.	<p><b>The CiCC &amp; Participation Events</b></p> <p>CiCC members to give some examples of what they have achieved over the last year.</p> <p>What are the benefits of Participation?</p> <p>How can Social Workers ensure that children and young people's wishes and feelings are heard and acted upon?</p> <p>Feedback from groups.</p> <p><i>Emily to give example of Pathway Plan.</i></p>	12noon – 12.30pm	All
9.	<p><b>The Pledge</b></p> <p>We need your help - the Pledge needs to be updated, the pledge is a number of statements made by Corporate Parents to our children and young people.</p> <p>In groups we would like you to think of yourselves as corporate parents and what you think we should pledge to our children and young people.</p>	12.30pm – 12.45pm	All
10.	<p><b>Feedback and Questions</b></p>	12.45pm – 1pm	

Appendix C

**Looked after Children and Young Peoples Participation Forward Plan 2016 - 2017**

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

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Benefits for young people</b>
<b>Children in Care Council and Participation Groups.</b>	1. To continue to support looked after children and care leavers to be part of the Children in Care Council and other participation groups.	M Short (MS)	Ongoing – reviewed quarterly	To have a voice in relation to the planning and delivery of services they receive and develop a sense of belonging and shared identity with others who have similar experiences.
	2. To work closely with managers and staff from the Corporate Parenting service to ensure the voices of looked after children are heard and acted upon.	MS/Edward Wong (EW)	Ongoing– reviewed quarterly	To develop confidence & raise self esteem, develop transferable and valuable life skills.
	3. To work with & support the young people involved in the participation groups to draw up agendas and work plans regarding participation and consultations.	MS/Gerard Jones (GJ)/Corporate Parenting Panel	Ongoing– reviewed quarterly	To develop a dialogue with officers that make decisions within the council, providing a voice for all looked after children and care leavers.
	4. To promote the work of the CiCC with senior managers and elected members.	MS/Richard Carr (RC) /Sue Harrison(SH)/GJ		To engage with officers and elected members and to develop a dialogue with officers who make decisions within the council.
	5. To support young people in producing a newsletter giving information about the CiCC and	MS/CiCC	Bi - monthly	To keep all looked after children and care leavers up to date with activities and events.

	participation groups.			
<b>CiCC Priorities</b>	To support the CiCC members with their priorities for the year.			
<b>The Pledge</b>	To update and redesign the Pledge to Looked After Children and Care leavers. To launch the Pledge and promote to young people in Central Bedfordshire To develop an audit tool to monitor the effectiveness of the Pledge.	MS/GJ/EW	October 2016	The Pledge has been endorsed by Corporate Parenting Panel & all young people and staff are aware.
<b>Life Story Work for All</b>	To support the CiCC in championing the initiative for all young people to have good quality life story work which is not a one off and continues until the young person leaves care (if the young person wants this).	MS/GJ/EW	March 2017	For young people to leave the care of Central Bedfordshire Council with a good understanding of their personal life story and journey of care.
<b>Partnership with the University of Bedfordshire</b>	To work with the Access & Outreach Team at the University of Bedfordshire and local colleges to enable opportunities for our young people to explore options for the future and raise aspirations.	MS/University of Bedfordshire	Ongoing – reviewed quarterly	To give young people the option to explore education, training and employment opportunities.
<b>Corporate Parents as Mentors</b>	Officers from the local authority to support and mentor named young people.	MS/GJ	September 2016	For young people to have the support of a mentor to help with school / college work or to explore future careers.
<b>Consultation</b>	To support young people in actively participating in consultation exercises across the service in line with local requirements and regional and National	MS/CiCC	Ongoing– reviewed quarterly	Oversight and responsibility for delivering services

	<p>events. Support members of the CiCC to work on the Children's Survey which will focus on specific areas.</p>	MS/CiCC		
<b>Recruitment and Training of CBC Staff</b>	<p>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	Ongoing	Employment and skill development opportunities for looked after children, building confidence & self esteem and positive contribution to their CV's.
<b>Website</b>	<p>To continue to update and develop the website with input from young people. Specific focus to be on leaving care information and entitlements.</p>	MS/GJ	Ongoing	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.
<b>Engagement in meetings/ networks</b>	<p>To attend Regional Participation Leads meetings. To attend SMT to report on activity. To attend the LSCB Voice of the Child Sub Group and support the work of the group. Attend joint looked after children &amp; care leaver team meetings and other service team meetings as appropriate.</p>	MS MS MS MS	Ongoing	To increase the profile of participation and share ideas with other participation colleagues.
<b>Training</b>	Attend relevant external training courses	MS	Ongoing –	External training to influence improved

	on Participation		reviewed quarterly	participation, better ways of engaging and improving service delivery.
--	------------------	--	--------------------	--

# Report for Central Bedfordshire Corporate Parenting Panel

---

**Report Subtitle:** Future Developments from the Annual Report 2014/15

**Report Author:** Teresa McDonald

**Author Job:** Title Designated Nurse for Looked After Children

**Date:** 14.02.16

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) commission South Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT) to deliver a service for Looked After Children in Bedfordshire.

A Designated Nurse for Looked Children sits within BCCG. The role of the Designated Professionals is to work in partnership with the provider, SEPT, to ensure that the health needs identified for looked after children and young people leaving care are met. This is achieved through monitoring performance data and quality, influencing contractual and commissioning arrangements.

The following report is an update of the Looked After Children's Annual Report 2014/15 which was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015. It will focus on the commitments made within the 2014/15 report providing a brief summary of the developments thus far. A more detailed annual report will be issued for 2015/16 in the early summer of this year.

The following commitments were made within the Annual Report 2014/15

1. To improve overall performance data to meet targets. To ensure Initial Health Assessments are completed within the statutory guidance, this and all data will be monitored within the LAC health group.

- a. The BCCG are working closely with the Local Authority and the LAC Health team within South Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT) to monitor the timeliness of Health assessments. The LAC strategic Board has requested that all partners provide data on a quarterly basis. The BCCG is in the process of developing a LAC dashboard to process this data. The dashboard will then inform the LAC board in regards to performance and highlight any issues that may need to be escalated in line with the governance structure.

2. Improve the quality and timeliness of Health Assessments for children and young people placed out of area, in order to improve the child/young person's experience of their Health Assessments, including Young People placed in secure units.

- a. The BCCG are working closely with the Local Authority and the LAC Health team within SEPT to improve the timeliness of health assessments. As part of the commissioning arrangements in April 2015 funding was provided for a substantive whole time equivalent nursing post to support the carrying out review health assessment within one hour traveling distance of the Bedfordshire borders.
- b. The Designated Professionals within the CCG have identified a number of GP's and Paediatricians who have expressed an interest in carrying out health assessments for children and young people who are placed in Bedfordshire from other local authorities. This has ensured that any young person placed in Bedfordshire has access to health services in a timely manner.

3. To continue to raise awareness within primary care, for GPs' of Looked After Children through training programs and providing updates in issues relating to LAC

- a. Since the completion of 2014/15 report there have been three further training sessions for GP's. These comprise of approximately 120 GPs and a small number of practice nurses. The training consist of the role and responsibilities of GP's in regards to LAC, private fostering arrangements, registering of unaccompanied asylum seekers at GP surgeries, and how to

identify children and young people who are LAC by using a flagging system within the electronic database.

- b. The Designated Nurse is to deliver a training programme to the 0-19 team (this includes school nurse, health visitors and the immunisation team) within SEPT in regards to what is a private fostering arrangement; this is an issue across Bedfordshire where children in private fostering arrangements and are going unreported.

4. The LAC health group will establish greater links with the LAC Health Improvement Group (HIMP). The focus of the HIMP group will remain operational reporting to the strategic LAC health group both group will meet quarterly.

- a. Following the review of both groups they have now gone through a process of restructuring. The HiMP will now be known as the Promoting the Health & Wellbeing of LAC (PHWLAC) as per National Guidance. All partners and agencies attend this group.
- b. This group reports to the LAC Strategic Health Board which provides a clarity of purpose by developing strategic objectives which include; monitoring the work of the operational group (PHWLAC), monitoring performance data, input and oversight of LAC audits, capturing the voice of the child, emotional wellbeing of the child, and monitor the delivery and effectiveness of LAC training. This information will help inform the strategic direction.

5. To work closely with Children in Care Council (CiCC) to hear the voice of the child so as to ensure we are delivering services to meet the needs of LAC.

- a. A good working relationship has developed between the Designated Nurse, the children in care council and the Participation Officer within Central Bedfordshire. The Designated Nurse within BCCG has worked closely with Stevenage Leisure Ltd (SLL) to provide incentives such as free swimming and seven day gym membership for children and young people who took part in the LAC survey. SLL has agreed to support the CiCC with any future surveys.
- b. The Designated Nurse has been invited to a CiCC event on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016 as representative from health to engage with young people and hear their views of health services

6. *The Designated Nurse is part of the LSCB sub group for the voice of the child which is in the process of planning a voice of the child conference in November 2015.*

- a. The LSCB sub group, the voice of the child, is developing an active participation self-assessment framework with partners in line with our statutory responsibilities and latest supporting guidance. It draws heavily on the 'Hear by Right' self-assessment tool that has been developed by a consortium of 6 leading children and young people agencies. It will provide a framework that will enable organisations, partnerships and directorates to help establish the effectiveness and quality of their approach to development of their active participation policy and practice.
- b. The toolkit is to be sent to all relevant partners who work with children and young people in mid February 2016; the findings will be reported on in the 2015/16 annual report.
- c. The voice of the child conference is provisionally booked for September 28<sup>th</sup> 2016.

7. *To involve young people to review the Health Passport and its usefulness to them.*

- a. An audit to review the Leaving Care provision offered by the Looked After Children's Service within SEPT. The Audit will review the following areas.
  - To review the quality of information shared with young person which will include health promotion
  - To review the quality and timeliness of the young person health summary
  - To establish if the voice of the child has been captured within the Review Health assessments
  - To review the number of health passports issued
  - To establish how many young people have been offered ongoing support from the Leaving Care service once they have left the care system.
  - To have clear understanding of consent
- b. The audit will be completed in February 2016 a full report of the findings and recommendations will be in the annual report for 2015/16.

8. To explore strategies to engage young care leavers to access advice in regards to health. An option is to develop a text messaging service.

- a. The Designated Nurse has linked in with a project being developed by the School Nursing Service for a text messaging service which will be offered to all young people which will include Looked After Children

9. To establish a closer working relationship with Designated Teachers by working in partnership with the Head teacher of The Virtual School for Central Bedfordshire.

- a. To build on this working relationship with the Designated Teachers to promote the role of the school nurse in regards to LAC and Universal services. The Designated Nurse has also been liaising with the school nursing service to promote this partnership working with the Designated Teachers. This is to ensure young people know how to access services and can be signposted to the appropriate services for them.

10. Health Practitioners to utilise the SDQ and associated information to support Health Assessments thus ensuring a comprehensive holistic assessment.

- a. The SDQ's pathways are due to be updated taking into account transformation project for CAMHS under the new provider East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) and the role of the designated teachers.
- b. The Head Teacher for the virtual schools in January 2016 rolled out a training programme for all the Designated Teachers within Central Bedfordshire on completing the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ's) for looked after children and young people placed within their schools. The virtual school reported that awareness of SDQs varies in schools, feedback is positive and also identified areas for improvement. For example a number of teachers said that SDQ scores were not being shared during LAC review.



This page is intentionally left blank

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

14 March 2016

---

**Interim Report Virtual School For Looked After Children**

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

Advising Officers:

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

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

---

**Purpose of this report:**

This report provides information on the role of the Virtual School and the validated outcomes at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 for Looked After Children (LAC) in Central Bedfordshire in the Academic Year 2014/15. 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. The Head of the Virtual School role was expanded on 1 May 2015 to become Head of Service Virtual School and Vulnerable Learners. The aim of this combined role is 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. This reorganisation of roles enables increased rigour and cross agency focus to support children who might be vulnerable and on the edge of care.
5. To support this restructure and ensure capacity for the Head of Service to take a more strategic role, a Team Leader for the Virtual School has been appointed and started on 4 January 2016. The post holder is initially focussing on the quality assurance of PEPs, monitoring the effective use of pupil premium particularly in early year's settings and in and out of Central Bedfordshire.
6. The Virtual School has pupils on 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 roll who are living within Central Bedfordshire and who attend Central Bedfordshire schools, but who are in the care of other councils.
8. The team 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. As at February 2016 the total number of Central Bedfordshire pupils of statutory school age who are part of the Virtual School is 187 (Reception to Year 11). A further 16 pupils left care in the last 6 months. 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. There are currently 21 three and four olds who qualify for pupil premium who are placed in early year settings in and out of Central Bedfordshire. Many of these children are placed with adoptive parents but remain looked after until the adoption has been finalised by the courts.

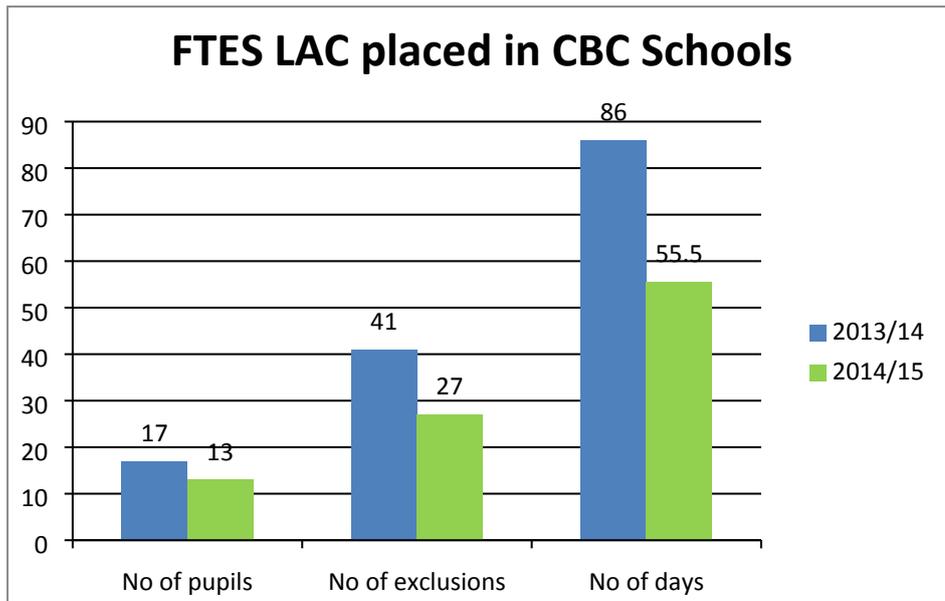
10. There is a statutory requirement to monitor the progress of all LAC and to ensure that each child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP records children's previous educational experiences and attainment as well as setting targets for future achievement. The nominated social worker and the designated teacher at the school 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 of each child. All Virtual School staff now have access to pupil progress data through Aspire Fisher Family Trust (FFT) which allows them to monitor targets set by schools.
11. The Virtual School are now linking PEP meetings where possible to other statutory meetings for example LAC reviews or SEND reviews to reduce bureaucracy. This enables appropriate support and challenge with regard to ensuring pupils are making expected or better than expected progress. The Team Leader is now robustly quality assuring the PEP process including the documentation.
12. The PEPs now have 2 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 have been some amendments to this section to reflect the new assessment processes in schools. 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.
13. In April 2011 the Government introduced the Pupil Premium. The amount increased in April 2014 to £1900.
14. 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.
15. 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. This will remain the same in 2016/17. The £500 per term is released to the schools following the return of good

quality PEPs that evidence that the funding is being used to meet the needs of the child.

16. There is 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. There are now opportunities for social workers and carers to apply for this additional funding, as well as schools. Examples of how this funding is being used are:
- i. High quality 1:1 tuition as part of a personalised curriculum for some of our most vulnerable learners;
  - ii. Additional adult support in schools to support learners to access learning;
  - iii. Access to IT equipment to support learning;
  - iv. Extended learning opportunities including play therapy;
  - v. Incentive programmes for Y11 learners to encourage attendance and attainment.
17. The Governing Body is now well established and 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**

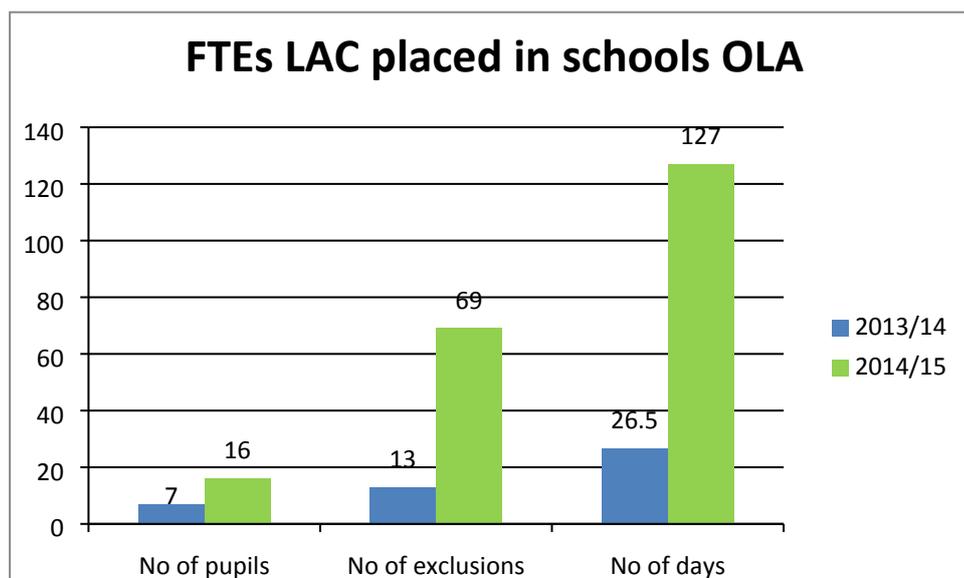
18. There was 1 permanent exclusion during 2014/15 for serious misconduct. The Virtual School worked closely with other agencies including social care, providing 1:1 tuition while the transfer to the Academy of Central Bedfordshire (ACB) was arranged. The student is now making good progress at the ACB. There have been no permanent exclusions of a LAC this year to date.
19. 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.
20. In the academic year 2013/14 there were a total of 86 days lost as a result of fixed term exclusions (FTE) 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.



21. 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.

22. 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.

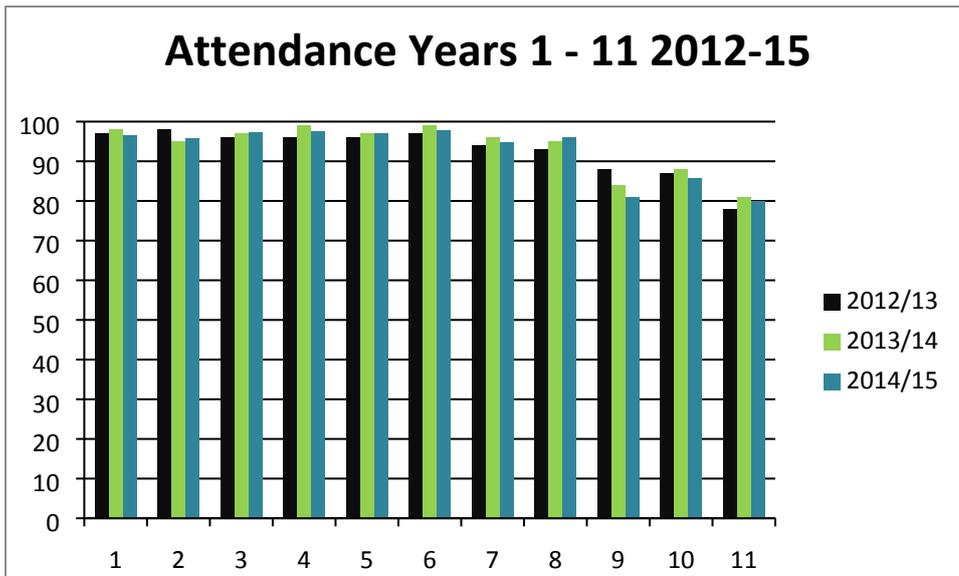
23. There has been considerable multi-agency working and investment to engage these young people into education or training. This remains a priority for the Virtual School and partners.



24. 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.

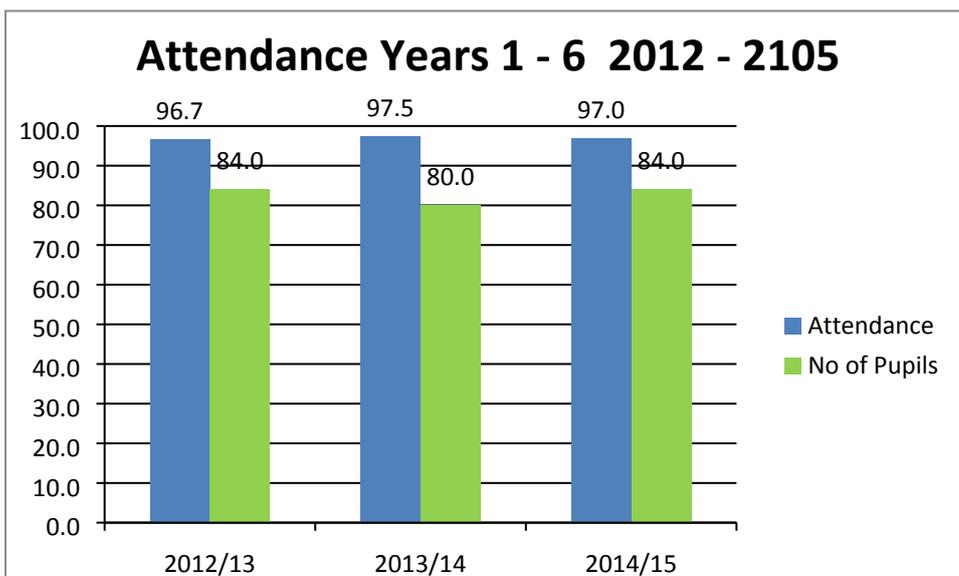
### **Attendance**

25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. The Virtual School receives daily updates regarding all pupils on the day they are reported absent if no acceptable reason for this absence has been recorded by the school. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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 year groups, 1 or 2 pupils will have a significant impact upon whole school year attendance.



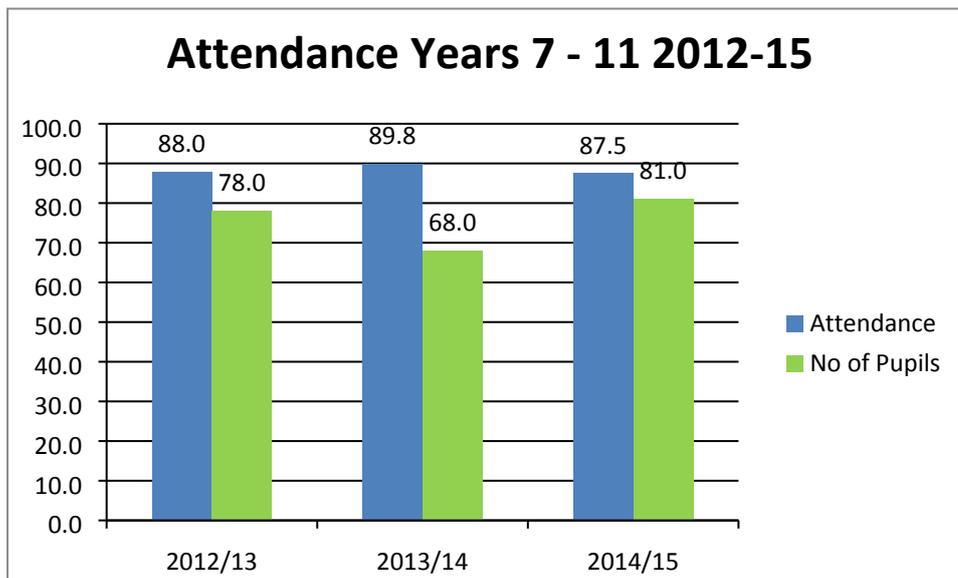
31. The Virtual School is working with schools and young people to re-engage them in learning. Individual tutors are commissioned where the pupil needs it to ensure access to learning if a pupil is not attending school. The Virtual School now has a Personal Adviser who works directly with these young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

32. The following table demonstrates that in the primary year groups overall attendance has reduced by 0.5%. This has been influenced by a number of children undergoing statutory assessment for special educational needs and disability (SEND) resulting in new schools being identified when their additional needs have been identified. Currently whole school data to compare attendance of LAC against non-LAC is not available.



33. 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.



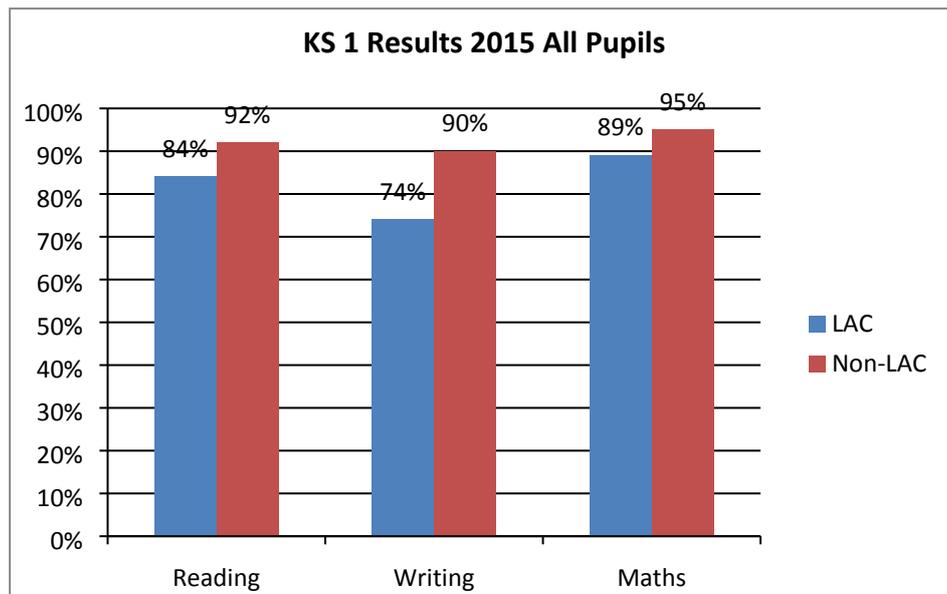
34. Attendance can be low where pupils have moved placement or have spent some time waiting for a school place in other authorities, or where they have had periods on part-time timetables. Currently all pupils where attendance has been identified as a concern are being closely monitored by both the Virtual School and Social Care.
35. 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.
36. 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.
37. 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.
38. The Virtual School works in partnership with social care colleagues to commission care placements which can maintain school placements whenever possible.

### **Pupils' Achievement**

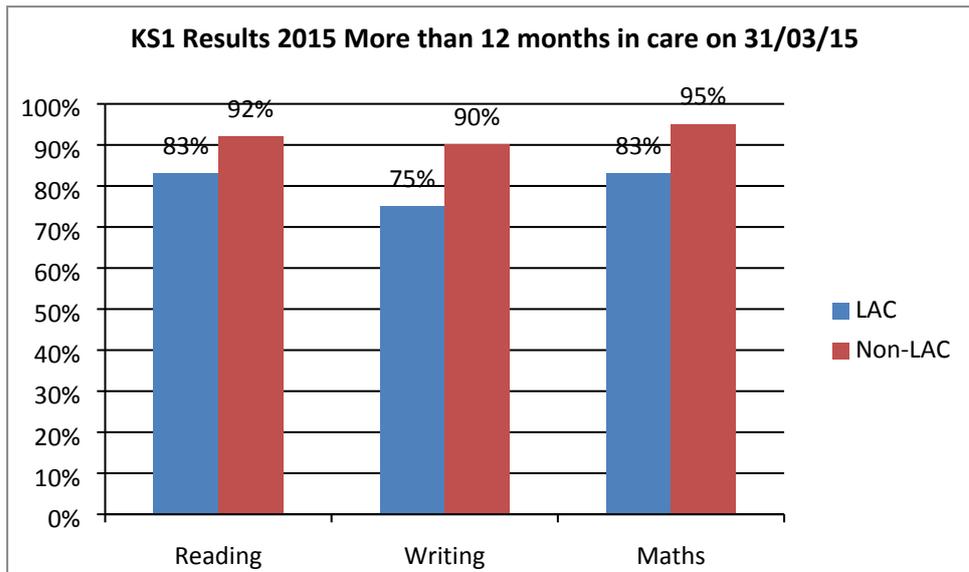
39. Progress and achievement data is collected using the PEP process on a termly basis. The Virtual School analyses the data and works with schools to identify appropriate next steps.
40. The national data for the children looked after continuously for 12 months during the year ending 31 March 2015 will be available in March 2016 so national comparisons will be reported in an update in April 2016.

### **Validated Key Stage 1 results**

41. 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/Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for SEND.
  - b) 11 pupils were educated in Central Bedfordshire schools, 8 pupils in schools in other Local Authorities (OLA).
  - c) 16 out of 19 pupils (**84%**) achieved the expected level or above (level 2) in reading, 14 out of 19 pupils (**74%**) in writing, and 18 out of 19 pupils (**89%**) in maths.
  - d) Of these 19 pupils, 13 out of 19 pupils (**68%**) achieved level 2 or above in all 3 subject areas.
  - e) Of the 11 pupils educated in Central Bedfordshire, 10 pupils (**91%**) achieved the expected level or above in reading, 9 pupils (**82%**) in writing and 10 pupils (**91%**) in mathematics.
  - f) Of the 8 pupils educated OLA where we have the data, 6 pupils (**75%**) achieved level 2 in reading, 6 pupils (**75%**) in writing and 7 pupils (**88%**) in mathematics.
42. In comparison with all KS1 pupils in Central Bedfordshire the gap has closed in all curriculum areas. For LAC in Central Bedfordshire schools the gap has narrowed even further, particularly in reading and maths, bringing these pupils' outcomes almost in line with all children.



43. The following data is for pupils looked after by Central Bedfordshire **who have been LAC for over 12 months on 31 March 2015 (this is the national measure)**.
- a) 12 pupils were LAC on 31 March 2015 for whom we have data, 1 (6%) of whom has a statement/EHCP.
  - b) 5 pupils are in CBC schools, and 7 pupils 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 5 pupils (**100%**) in maths.
  - d) 4 out of the 5 pupils (**80%**) achieved level 2 in all 3 areas
  - e) Of the 7 pupils attending schools OLA, 6 pupils (**86%**) achieved level 2 or above in reading, 5 (**71%**) in writing and 5 pupils in maths (**71%**).
  - f) 5 out of 7 pupils (**71%**) attending schools OLA achieved level 2 or above in all 3 subject areas
  - g) 10 out of 12 pupils (**83%**) achieved level 2 or above in reading, 9 out of 12 pupils (**75%**) level 2 or above in writing and 10 out 12 pupils level 2 or above in maths (**83%**)



44. In comparison with all KS1 pupils in Central Bedfordshire the gap has closed in all curriculum areas. For LAC in Central Bedfordshire schools the gap has narrowed even further particularly in maths where LAC in CBC schools out-performed non-LAC pupils.

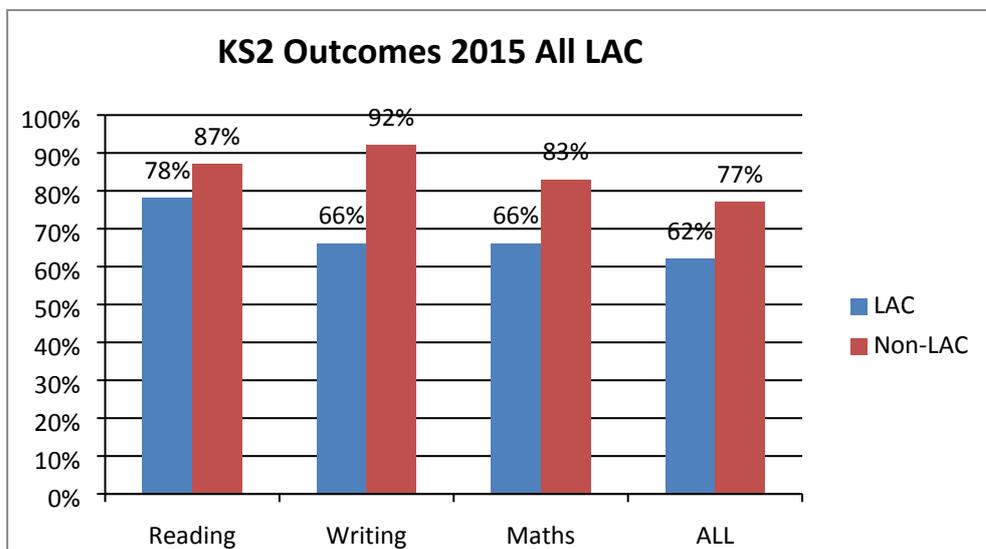
#### Validated Key Stage 2 results

45. The following data is for **all** pupils looked after by Central Bedfordshire, **not only those who have been LAC for over 12 months**. 1 school with 1 pupil with a statement of SEND has had their data suppressed. 1 pupil was educated in Wales and made good progress prior to returning to CBC.  
**This data therefore 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 1 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. Of the 9 pupils educated in CBC schools 5 pupils (**55%**) achieved level 4 in reading, 3 (**33%**) in writing and 4 (**44%**) in maths.

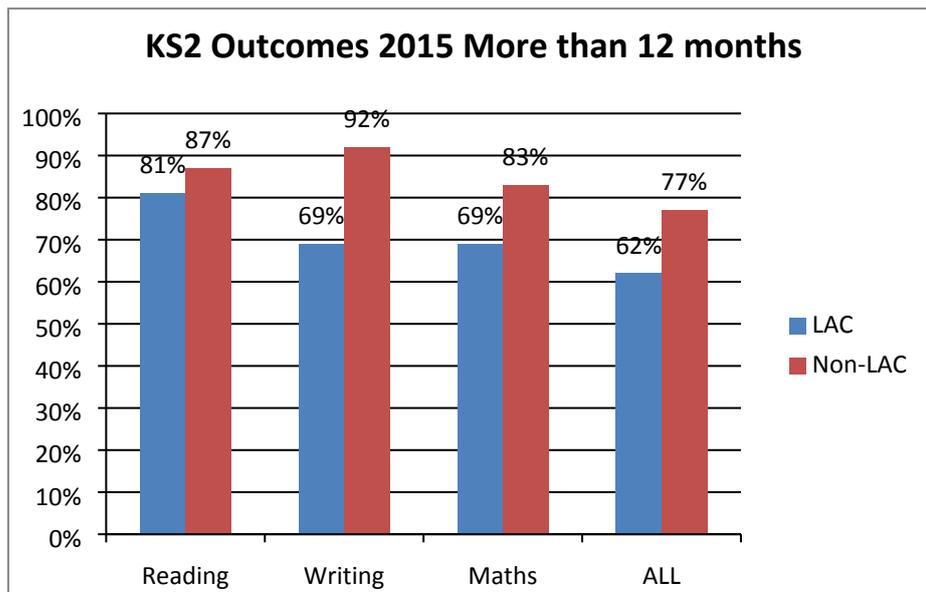
- i. Of the 9 pupils educated OLA 9 pupils (**100%**) achieved level 4 or above in reading, 9 pupils (**100%**) achieved level 4 or above in reading and 8 pupils (**89%**) in mathematics.
- j. 3 pupils out of 18 (**17%**) made **3 levels of progress** between KS1 and KS2 in **writing**
- k. Of the 18 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.
- l. 9 out of 11 pupils (**82%**) without an identified SEND achieved level 4 or above in **maths**
- m. 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**
- n. 11 out of 18 (**62%**) achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths.
- o. 9 out of 11 pupils (**82%**) without an identified SEND achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths.

46. In comparison with all KS2 pupils in Central Bedfordshire we continue to narrow the gap between LAC and all pupils. Pupils placed OLA performed as well as all pupils. However of the 9 pupils in CBC schools 5 had identified SEND, 3 of whom have statements.



47. 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 pupils (**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



### Validated Key Stage 4 Results 2014/15

48. There were 21 CBC LAC students 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.** This does not include 7 Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC) who arrived after May 2015 (see post-16 section).

The following sets out the results in performance table GCSEs or equivalent as identified by the DfE.

- a. 10 out of the 13 students have an identified SEND including 7 with statements
  - b. 8 were educated in CBC, 5 were educated OLA
  - c. 6 students (4 of whom had an identified SEND) achieved at least 1 A\* – C at GCSE
  - d. 8 students achieved at least one pass at GCSE
  - e. 3 students achieved 3 A\* – G including English and mathematics
  - f. 4 students were not entered for any performance table recognised qualifications
  - g. 2 of these students failed to engage in the education provision put in place for them and had periods of being missing.
  - h. The other 2 students had a statement of SEND, made expected progress and achieved vocational qualifications.
49. All the above pupils continue to access effective support from Social Care and the Youth Support Service as part of their pathway planning.

### Year 12 and 13

50. The Youth Support Service provide a detailed report on the outcomes of post-16 learners the next report will be presented at the May 2016 meeting.

51. 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
52. 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
53. 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)**

54. Since March 2014 33 UASC were taken into care by CBC and were identified as being between the ages of 15 and 17 at time of entry.
55. The following outcomes have been achieved by some very effective partnership work between the Virtual School, YSS and Social Care.
56. Currently all of those UASC have accessed tuition to learn English or there are plans in place for them to do so.
57. 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.
58. Currently there are:
- 4 Y11 pupils – 3 have started school, 1 is reported missing and is being followed up robustly by social care teams following statutory guidance.
  - 12 Y12 pupils – 7 are attending college on Entry Level 1 or above courses, 5 recently arrived started a programme of learning English as an additional language in November 2015.
  - 12 Y13 pupils – 11 are attending college on Entry Level 1 or above
  - 5 Y14 pupils – all are attending college on Entry Level 1 or above

## Summary of strengths

### 59. Key Strengths:

- Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 continues to improve.
- The number of days lost to fixed term exclusions from pupils placed in CBC schools continue to drop.
- All pupils are now placed in Ofsted judged good or better schools when moving schools.
- Early identification and support for schools to access statutory assessment for KS1 children with SEND where appropriate.
- 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

60. The report supports the priorities in Central Bedfordshire's Five Year Plan 2015-2020, and in particular ***Improving Education and Skills***.
61. The Council's Executive approved the Partnership Vision for Education in August 2015 which supports our ambition to:
- We will be in the top quartile nationally at the end of each Key Stage.
  - The Free School Meals Gap and other Vulnerable Pupils Gap will narrow.
  - We will increase the percentage of good and outstanding schools.

## Corporate Implications

62. As Corporate Parents all members of the Council have responsibility for supporting improving outcomes for LAC.

## Legal Implications

63. 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.
64. 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.

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

### **Financial Implications**

66. 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**

67. 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.

68. Research indicates that education is a key determinant of life chances. As well as being a right in itself, education is an enabling right, allowing individuals to develop the skills, capacity and confidence to secure other rights and economic opportunities. Education-related inequalities have an impact over an individual's life-span, not just in childhood. The Children and Families Act 2014 provides greater protection to vulnerable children in relation to education and learning. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently highlighted that whilst some improvements have been seen in relation to the attainment of Looked After Children, performance remains below that of other pupils and should continue to be seen as a priority.

### **Key areas for development**

69. Key priorities/areas for Development in 2015/2016 (See Appendix A for detail)

- Improving attendance of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11
- Improving attainment at KS4.
- Improving process for identifying 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.
- Demonstrating effective use of Early Years pupil premium

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Virtual School Development Plan 2015-16

### **Background Papers**

None

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

### 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.
- Further improve the quality of Personal Education Plans
- Monitor the use of Early Years Pupil Premium to support school readiness

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

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Lead Person</b>	<b>By when?</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Update Spring 2016</b>
1 Ensuring that Looked After Children attend school well, in line with their peers. This will be achieved through:	i. The systematic monitoring of attendance data provided by Looked After Call for each pupil, with actions identified to support improved attendance.	JE/JBD  Court & Permanency Team  Schools and settings	July 2016	Improve the overall attendance of years 9, 10 and 11 by 3%  Close the gap between secondary attendance and the national average for all schools by 2%          Sustain the improvement in primary attendance above the national average for all primary schools to at least 1.5%	There are significant challenges with this year 10 and 11s. This is continuing to impact upon overall attendance. We continue to work closely with Social Care to put in place short term educational provision when students refuse to engage or abscond.          Attendance of pupil in years 1 to 6 continues to be above the national average from when they come into care compared to non-LAC pupils
2 Reduce the number of days lost to fixed term	i. Daily notification from Looked After Call of exclusions of all pupils	JBD/AN/DM  Court &		Days lost to FTE reduce by 5% in CBC schools.	A small number of young pupils are impacting upon this figure. Appropriate

APPENDIX A

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

<p>exclusions in out of local authority schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Team Leader Virtual Leader liaises with Education Adviser arranges to visit school to consider alternatives to exclusion</li> <li>iii. School offered additional pupil premium to support the pupil</li> <li>iv. Head of Service Virtual School will work closely with VSHs in other LAS to identify other educational provision where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Permanency Team</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>	<p>assessment and school placement is being addressed.</p> <p>There has been no permanent exclusions this academic year.</p>
<p>3 Ensuring that Looked After Children are placed promptly in schools when moving council areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Social Care Team managers to consult with the Virtual School re school changes for a planned placement move</li> <li>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.</li> <li>iii. The Virtual School liaises with other LAs to ensure that the child/young person accesses appropriate educational provision in a timely manner</li> <li>iv. The Team Leader Virtual School works closely with social care and the Assessment &amp; Monitoring Team (SEND) when a child</li> </ul>	<p>Virtual School</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Team</p> <p>Schools/ Settings</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<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>One pupil has been placed in a CBC school that is judged Requires Improvement but where monitoring visits have been very positive. This decision was based on the pupils own views after visiting identified schools.</p> <p>In all cases schools are identified and places applied for. There is still a challenge where a young person refuses to attend school. This results in a multi-agency response address this.</p>

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

	<p>with a statement requires a new school</p> <p>v. Transition PEP meetings take place where appropriate.</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>	<p>This continues to be a challenge for pupils moved Out of LA who have identified SEND and multiple placement breakdowns. Social Workers and the Virtual School are proactive in supporting and challenging other LAs to identify appropriate provision.</p>
<p>4 Strengthening the school's abilities to meet the needs of Looked After Children. This will be achieved through:</p>	<p>i. The challenge provided by Virtual School staff at termly PEP reviews;</p> <p>ii. The challenge provided through the Head of Service Virtual School and the Governing Body</p> <p>iii. Continue to review the use of pupil premium</p>	<p>Education Advisers/ Team Leader VS</p> <p>Court &amp; 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>This process has been further strengthened by the appointment of the Virtual School Team Leader who currently robustly quality assuring all PEP documentation and processes.</p> <p>The Virtual School now has access to a range of 1:1 tuition agencies both in and out of LA. This services can be commissioned both by schools and the Virtual School.</p>

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

<p>5 Further improving the quality of the PEP process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Quality assuring Section B of the PEP documentation</li> <li>ii. PEP meetings take in place has agreed with all relevant parties invited and attending</li> <li>iii. Virtual School are contacted immediately a school age child is taken into care to arrange a PEP meeting</li> <li>iv. Sharing good practice through subsequent PEP reviews and network meetings</li> </ul>	<p>Team Leader Virtual School</p> <p>VS Education Advisers</p> <p>Intake &amp; 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>	<p>All CBC LAC both in and out of LA have at least two PEP meetings in an academic year the majority over 90% have three meetings.</p> <p>These meetings are arranged with ten days in 90% of cases. Where it is not is due to availability of all parties with this time frame.</p>
<p>6 Ensuring that schools intervene promptly and effectively if a Looked After Child falls behind their target trajectory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p>Team Leader Virtual School</p> <p>VS Education Advisers</p> <p>Schools &amp; settings</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All KS1 &amp; KS2 pupils make at least expected progress from baseline and are in line with national averages for LAC.</p> <p>80% Y11s without an identified special educational need are entered for accredited qualifications in English &amp; mathematics.</p>	<p>At the end of the autumn term 90% of pupils were making expected progress. Where progress has stalled schools are putting additional support as required. This will be updated in April 2016.</p> <p>There are currently 29 Y11s of which 19 have been in care more than</p>

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

	<p>iii. Identifying Y10 and Y11 students at risk of disengagement or under-achievement and offering additional support to school and carers.</p>			<p>40% Y11s without a statement/EHCP achieve 5 A* - C including English and mathematics.</p> <p>50% Y11s with a statement/EHCP make expected progress from baseline.</p>	<p>12 months. Of these 19 students 9 have statements of SEND. Of the 10 who do not have an identified SEND 4 students are predicted 5 A* to C including English &amp; maths.</p> <p>Currently 50% of students with a statement are making expected progress where they are not it is due to other influencing factors including placement moves, periods of absconding and criminal activity.</p>
<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 and employment and are in suitable accommodation by contributing to the Support for Success</p>	<p>i. Monthly meetings to discuss 14 – 19 year old students and identify appropriate intervention for including accessing additional funding.</p> <p>ii. YSS/Virtual School Personal Adviser works directly with targeted Y9, Y10, Y11 to advise and support pathway choices</p> <p>iii. YSS share the Personal Action Plans agreed with students with the Virtual School</p>	<p>Virtual School/YSS/ Court &amp; Permanency Team</p>	<p>Sept 2016</p>	<p>80% current Y12 and 13s who are LAC remain in education, training or employment.</p>	<p>On track with current Y12s not with Y13 – further update at the end of the academic year</p> <p>Where PEPs are not take up the YSS Personal Adviser completes Personal Action Plans with all young people.</p>

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

Panel. Continue the support for UASCs to maintain them in education or training	iv. PEPs offered to post-16 students v. Continue to fund the language tuition and application to college on completion of this tuition				
--	---	--	--	--	--

This page is intentionally left blank

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Monday, 14 March 2016

---

**Fostering Agency Report Quarter 3 - 1 October -31 December 2015**

Report of Cllr Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing  
(carol.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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

Annie Craig, Practice Manager, Fostering, Corporate Parenting Service.  
(annie.craig@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

**Purpose of this report**

1. Fostering Services Regulations 2000 requires 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.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive or Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and note the Fostering Agency Quarter 3 Report

**Issues**

2. 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 regularly on the activities of the Service.
3. This is the third quarter report for the financial year 2015/2016.

**Recruitment of Foster Carers**

4. During October, November and December 2015, a variety of recruitment activities and events took place in line with the Fostering Services recruitment strategy.
5. In terms of outreach work 7 activities took place (one in October, four in November and two in December). These included presentations to staff

at Swanstaff in Houghton Regis and Childminders in Potton. Information evenings and “drop in” sessions to find out more about fostering were held in Flitwick and Bedford. The Service also had information stands at the Family Court Open Day and at Priory Methodist Church.

6. In relation to advertising, an advert was placed in Community Care jobs. The Service was a page sponsor for East of England online which included an editorial in their digital magazine. A window display advertising fostering in one of the Dunstable showcase shops was placed in October and November. Leaflets and promotional items were distributed to all Central Bedfordshire Councillors. Leaflets about fostering were distributed at an Access and Inclusion Network meeting. A leaflet and poster drop about caring for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People was sent to the volunteers and trustees of Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS).
7. Press coverage took place in the form of editorials in the Times and Citizen, Biggleswade and the Chronicle and Leighton Buzzard Observer in relation to the Celebration of Fostering event that took place in September. An editorial was also placed in the Early Years newsletter regarding fostering in general and there was an article in the Staff Central magazine.
8. Online posts have continued to be promoted during this quarter. The Service had a rotating advert about fostering on Central Bedfordshire Council’s website homepage. A Net Native digital campaign using Facebook was promoted. An email advertising fostering and an up and coming information evening were placed on Central Bedfordshire Council’s email alert. As part of 24 hour ‘tweetathon’ via twitter ‘#(hashtag)ourday’ the Service included Twitter messages. The Fostering Service sponsored two pages in the East of England On line magazine. Facebook posts were also placed on the fostering page and included myth busting questions and answers and seasons greetings.
9. As a result of the recruitment that took place during this period we received a total of 16 enquiries: 10 in October, 5 in November and 1 in December (10 less than the previous quarter). There were 18 Initial Visits during this period: 8 in October, 5 in November and 5 in December (this is the same number as the previous quarter). There were 11 application forms received during this period: 4 for October, 4 for November and 3 for December (3 more than in the previous quarter). The best forms of recruitment in this period were via the net native campaign, the website, followed by word of mouth from other foster carers or staff.

## Assessments

10. During this period 9 new assessments were started: 2 career carer, 4 Regulation 24 (temporary approval), 1 Family and Friends and 2 Special Guardianship Order (SGO) assessments. As of the 31 December 2015 there were a total of 19 assessments in progress: 12 for career carers, 1 full family and friends/connected persons and 6 Special Guardianship Order (SGO) assessments.
11. During this quarter 2 fostering households were approved, both of which were as family and friends' foster carers.
12. As of the 31 December 2015 the Fostering Agency had a total of 97 fostering households, 74 of these carers were career carers.
13. In relation to the ethnicity of foster carers and children placed, there is a good match of ethnicity with foster carers broadly reflecting the ethnicity of our children in care.

<b>Ethnicity</b>		
<b><i>Ethnicity</i></b>	<b><i>Foster Carers</i></b>	<b><i>Looked After Children</i></b>
White	90%	82%
Dual Heritage	1%	10%
Black or Black British	7%	6%
Asian	2%	2%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

14. As of the 31 December 2015 there were a total of 119 children placed with in house foster carers (57%), compared to 90 (43%) with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). Since the disaggregation of the fostering service with Bedford Borough Council at the end of December 2013, the number of children placed with in house foster carers continues to increase year on year and therefore our reliance on more expensive IFA placements decreases.
15. As at the 31 December 2015 there were 131 Special Guardianship Orders in place (compared to 129 at the end of the last quarter in September 2015). Although Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers are generally expected to access universal services, they are entitled to seek support from the Local Authority as and when required. The Fostering Service continues to work with a small cohort of families who contact the service sporadically for support and advice. On average the service works with about 5 families a month and will undertake visits, or provide telephone support in order to meet the needs of individual carers. The main area Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers seek support with is in relation to contact, children's behaviour or support in financing respite and holiday activities etc.

## **Referrals/Placements**

16. During October, November and December 2015 twenty three new fostering placements were made: 7 in October, 2 in November and 14 in December. This is a decrease of 16 new placements compared to the last quarter. Out of the 23 new placements, 12 were placed in house, 7 out of the 11 young people placed in Independent Foster Agencies (IFA's) were asylum seeking young people 5 of whom were placed in semi-independent living accommodation. The other 4 placed were for young people with challenging behaviour and there were no in house resources available to meet their needs.

## **Training**

17. During this quarter 14 in house fostering training courses took place. This included intensive weekly Fostering Changes training (behavioural management strategies to support placement stability), supporting education achievement, understanding attachment and trauma, understanding bad behaviour, skills to foster and first aid. Carers also accessed the shared training programmed provided by Early Years and Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), these included safeguarding awareness, introduction to play in a home setting, Makaton, Promoting children's emotional wellbeing, Healthy lifestyle choices for children, the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and the busy world of a 2 year old. E-learning was also accessed on the following topics:- foetal exposure to alcohol, parental mental health issues, communicating with children and young people, impulsive behaviour, child development, narrative work and contact in foster care.

18. As of the 31 December there were 68 fostering households that had completed their mandatory Training, Support and Development Standards (T.S.D.'s); 21 households were yet to complete their portfolios but still had time to address within the required timescales. 3 households were overdue in completing their TSD Standards and were outside the required timescale. Supervising social workers and the Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer were providing additional support to help these carers achieve the standards.

## **Ofsted Notifications**

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**

During this period there were no allegations made regarding foster carers. A concern was raised in relation to a family and friends foster carer's behaviour, it did not, however, meet the criteria to be investigated as an allegation and

was addressed with a plan of action agreed, which included reviewing the foster carers approval.

### **Complaints**

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

### **Compliments**

During this period there were 11 compliments received covering a range of work undertaken. In October a social worker fed back on the work the social work assistant was doing with a Looked After Child (LAC) stating this was “having a hugely positive impact”. In court the solicitor for a Children’s Guardian praised the quality of the assessment presented by one of the assessing social workers. An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) also wrote in her feedback for a foster carer review – “excellent foster carer’s, have played a significant role providing quality care which has contributed to the progress both children have made”.

During November a foster carer received a complimentary letter from a birth mother thanking her for all her work. Four thank you letters were also received from foster carers thanking the team for the book vouchers given to their children as part of sons and daughters week. In December a Thank You was received from a friends and family carer to the assessing/supervising social worker stating “many grateful thanks for the support and help you have given “. One foster carer thanked a member of staff “for being brilliant with an over tired child” at the ‘Kids Who Care’ pantomime. Another foster carer also thanked the fostering team for taking her son to the pantomime, stating “he was so excited when he told us about it”.

### **Annual Budget**

For the Financial year 2015/2016 Adoption and Fostering Service within Children’s Services has a combined annual budget of £3,673,263.

### **Reporting to Members – Legal Requirements**

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

### **Risk Management**

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

## **Staffing**

The Fostering Agency comes under the umbrella 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 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. At the end of December 2015 there were 14.3 full time social workers within the Service, 1 full time social work assistant, 1 full time Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer, 1 part time Panel Adviser, 2 full time panel secretaries and 2 full time business support officers. As of the 31 December 2015 one team managers post remains vacant, with the work being covered by the other manager and practice manager. Interviews took place for 3 social worker vacancies in December with recommendations being made to fill all 3 posts. Interviews were also held for the panel adviser post and a recommendation made in relation to this post.

## **Council Priorities**

The Children and Young People's Plan 2015-2017; Priority 2 Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Fostering is a key statutory service to Looked After Children.

## **Legal Implications**

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

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

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

## **Equalities Implications**

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. Analysis indicates that:

- there is a good match of ethnicity with foster carers broadly reflecting the ethnicity of our children in care
- carers are recruited from diverse backgrounds
- with the recruitment of additional career carers this has enabled more choice in placement availability, therefore better matchings are taking place and this contributes to placement stability

- Equality / cultural awareness training is available for all foster carers to access

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

21. 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. Whilst no career carers have been approved during this quarter, the number of assessments currently in progress and timescales set are set to enable the service to meet its recruitment target by 31 March 2016.
22. As of the 31 December 2015 57% of children were placed with in house foster carers compared to 43% with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). The % of children placed in house is increasing on a month by month and year by year basis. This has not only enabled the Local Authority to make significant savings in relation to our use of more expensive Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements but it has also meant that we have more choice in terms of available placements and therefore better matching can take place. Children are being placed with local foster carers and placement stability has improved.
23. The aspiration is to have 70% of children placed with in house foster carers and 30% with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) in future years. This is ambitious; however, based on progress made, thus far, this aspiration is achievable and reflects a strong position for Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) in only using Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) for specialist out of area placements.
24. During this quarter the Fostering Service piloted 'Fostering Changes' which is an intensive training programme for foster carers that provides them with the tools and strategies to manage difficult and challenging behaviour and enhance attachments with children. The feedback from this course has been positive and will now be taken forward as a regular training course for foster carers and staff in the fostering service will also be training in this area. This training has and will continue to make an invaluable contribution to the support and retention of foster carers and will contribute to placement stability.
25. During this quarter there have been no notifications, allegations or complaints. The lack of activity in these areas is a further indication of placement stability and suggests that foster carers are being provided with the relevant supervision, support and training to help ensure that children's needs are being appropriately met.
26. In conclusion this has been another busy and productive quarter for the Fostering Service. We are on course to meet our recruitment targets and are continuing to support foster carers and children to enhance placement stability.

**Appendices**

None

**Background Papers**

None

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Monday, 14 March 2016

---

**Work Programme**

Advising Officers:

Mel Peaston, Committee Services Manager  
([mel.peaston@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mel.peaston@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

Leslie Manning, Committee Services Officer  
([leslie.manning@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto: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.

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. A revised copy of the Looked after Children and Young People's Participation Forward Plan will be presented to the next meeting of the Panel.

**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. By considering, approving and following its work programme the Panel helps support the Council's priorities of providing improving education and skills, protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing and being a more efficient and responsive Council.

### **Corporate Implications**

### **Legal Implications**

5. There are no legal implications.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

6. There are no financial and risk implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

7. 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.
8. Report authors will be encouraged to work with the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) in order to ensure that relevant equality implications are identified.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

9. 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**

The following Appendix is attached:

Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

### **Background Papers**

None

Appendix A

**Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme**

<b>2015/16 Municipal Year</b>	
18 January 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Fund (NP)</li> <li>• Refreshment of the CiCC Representation on the Panel – Update (MS/CiCC)</li> <li>• Update on Accommodation Provision for Young Persons (NC)</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
14 March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Parenting Survey (Cllr A L Dodwell)</li> <li>• CiCC and Participation Annual Report 2015/16 (MS/CiCC)</li> <li>• Fostering Agency Q3 (Oct-Dec2015) Report (AC)</li> <li>• Virtual School for LAC Interim Report (JE)</li> <li>• LAC Health Report – Six Monthly Update NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (TMcD)</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
9 May 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose, Fostering Agency Statement of Purpose (EW)</li> <li>• Corporate Parenting Action Plan – Annual Review (EW)</li> <li>• NEET/Apprenticeships – EW/KO/James Dove</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
<b>2016/17 Municipal Year (Possible Items)</b>	
4 July 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report 2015/16 (IW)</li> <li>• Fostering Agency Q4 Performance Report (AC)</li> <li>• Fostering Agency Annual Report 2015/16 (AC)</li> <li>• Adoption Agency Annual Report 2015/16 (NP)</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
5 September 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CiCC Presentation (MS)</li> <li>• LAC Annual (Health) Report (NHS – Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group)</li> <li>• Fostering Service Q1 Report (AC)</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
14 November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostering Service Q2 Report (AC)</li> <li>• Adoption Agency Interim Report (NP)</li> <li>• Virtual School for LAC Interim Report (JE)</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
16 January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Fund (NP)</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
6 March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CiCC and Participation Annual Report 2016/17 (MS/CiCC)</li> <li>• Fostering Service Q3 Report (AC)</li> <li>• Virtual School for LAC Interim Report (JE)</li> <li>• LAC Health Report – Six Monthly Update NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group</li> </ul>

Appendix A

	(TMcD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>
8 May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose, Fostering Agency Statement of Purpose (EW)</li> <li>• Corporate Parenting Action Plan – Annual Review (EW)</li> <li>• Work Programme (LM)</li> </ul>

Unscheduled reports:

- 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)
- 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)
- ‘Spotlight Report’ on the current process which applies to young people as they move into adult social care and what additional action can be taken to improve support for them during this phase (young people to be invited to attend and talk about their experiences) (GJ)
- ‘Spotlight Report’ on how the adoption process works and how people become adopters (GJ)
- ‘Spotlight Reports’ on the following issues:
  - a. LAC with disabilities
  - b. Unaccompanied asylum seekers as LAC
  - c. The Virtual School
  - d. The reason for, and the impact of, the movement of LAC between different foster carers  
(authors to be determined)
- A report by the foster carer representatives (Central Bedfordshire branch of the FCA) setting out feedback on various issues of their choice
- Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme and LAC (EW)
- ‘Spotlight Report’ providing examples of young people in different types of accommodation situations and what their experiences and outcomes were (18.01.16)
- Statistical information be provided on the number of young people, how they move on and what type of housing offers they receive (18.01.16)
- Given the perceived demand for foyer type accommodation, information be supplied on what is currently available within Central

Appendix A

Bedfordshire and what the aspiration is for future provision  
(18.01.16)

- The impact of the government's policies towards the adoption process, including the changes to the family court system (18.01.16)
- Proposal on how to co-ordinate information relating to the Council's role as corporate parent (18.01.16)

This page is intentionally left blank