

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** 28 April 2016

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Date & Time

**Monday, 9 May 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, Mrs 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 14 March 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>Placement Stability for Looked After Children</b>  To receive a presentation on placement stability from the Head of Corporate Parenting.	
6.	<b>Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17</b>  To receive the Adoption Service Statement of Purpose for 2016/17.	* 15 - 28
7.	<b>Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17</b>  To receive the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose for 2016/17.	* 29 - 44
8.	<b>Securing Education, Employment and Training for Looked After Children and Care Leavers</b>  To consider a summary of the work managed by Central Bedfordshire Council's Youth Support Service and the help it provides in raising the aspirations of Looked After Children and care leavers and supporting them as they move towards their chosen careers.	* 45 - 58

9. **Work Programme**

\* 59 - 64

To consider the Panel's work programme.

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 14 March 2016

**PRESENT**

**Elected Members (voting)**

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

**Officers (voting)**

Mrs J Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

**Carers (non-voting)**

Mr P Albon  
Mr D Thorne

Apologies for Absence: Mrs S Harrison, Director of Children's Services

Officers in Attendance:	Ms A Craig	– Practice Manager, Fostering
	Mrs J Edwards	– Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils
	Mr S Lagan	– Independent Review Officer
	Mr L Manning	– Committee Services Officer
	Ms M Short	– Participation Officer, Professional Standards
	Mr E Wong	– Head of Corporate Parenting
Others in Attendance:	Ambassadors	– For Children in Care Council
	Mrs T McDonald	– Designated Nurse for Looked After Children (NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group)

CPP/15/30. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 18 January 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

**Minute CPP/15/25**

- Paragraph 3 – delete the letter ‘e’ from the end of the foster carer representative’s surname so that it reads “Albon”
- Paragraph 4, second sentence – insert “, the Chairman,” after “insufficient time for her” and “to arrange to attend in his place”.

**CPP/15/31. Members' Interests**

Councillor Mrs A L Dodwell declared an interest as a member of the Council’s Fostering Panel.

**CPP/15/32. Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman thanked the Participation Officer and any others involved in the organisation of the workshop at the Leighton Buzzard Youth Centre on 17 February 2016. She expressed her pleasure at seeing so many Central Bedfordshire councillors present and on how the event had provided the opportunity to talk to the new Children in Care Council (CiCC) members in a lively and informal environment. The Participation Officer thanked the Chairman for her comments and explained that former CiCC members, in their new role as Ambassadors, had also helped organise the event.

The Chairman also thanked the Vice-Chairman for undertaking a survey amongst Central Bedfordshire councillors on corporate parenting issues (minute CPP/15/33 below refers).

**CPP/15/33. Corporate Parenting Survey**

The Vice-Chairman introduced her report which set out the results of a survey undertaken amongst all Central Bedfordshire councillors on corporate parenting.

The survey had asked Members the following questions:

- Did you know that as a CBC councillor you are a corporate parent?
- What does this mean to you?
- What would help you to understand your role as a corporate parent?
- Are you a school governor?
- If ‘yes’, do you have any looked after children (i.e. foster children in the care of CBC, either with foster families or in residential settings) in your school?
- 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?

The Vice-Chairman first thanked those who had participated in the survey. She stated that the responses received had included many good suggestions on how to improve Members' role as corporate parents. The Vice-Chairman also stated that many respondents were school governors and Looked After Children attended their schools. She therefore encouraged members of the Panel who weren't already school governors to take on this role. The Vice-Chairman then asked the Panel to consider her report and suggest ways of advancing Members' development and role as corporate parents.

A Member expressed concern regarding the number of Members who had not completed the survey and on those Members who had completed the survey but who were not aware of their role as corporate parents. She asked what action was to be taken with regard to these points. Discussion followed on communication, education and understanding during which the Chairman commented that more effective use could be made of the Members' Information Bulletin and direct emails. The Vice-Chairman stated that individual Members could also be identified for training purposes. She suggested that the survey be conducted on a periodic basis to monitor the situation and maintain Member awareness.

A Member, whilst congratulating the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the efforts made, expressed disappointment at the response rate and queried whether more could be done through the encouragement of the Group Leaders. He then welcomed the proposed Member briefing on corporate parenting with Looked After Children, foster carers and social workers and suggested that holding it pre-Council could be the most favourable time as all Members would be present. He also suggested that a briefing on corporate parenting should be made mandatory in Members' post election training. The Member then referred to previous efforts to improve the Panel's role, including visits to other local authorities to study their arrangements, and queried what had happened to the work which had already been undertaken. He concluded by stressing that the Panel should seek out best practice and implement it locally.

The Chairman fully acknowledged that, whilst members of the Panel had a high degree of awareness through their attendance at the Panel's meetings, the real test of awareness was the degree of understanding and commitment displayed by other Members.

A Member reminded the meeting that other people were also corporate parents and suggested that the survey should also be carried out amongst the Council's staff and its foster carers in order to achieve a complete assessment. She felt this inclusive approach would be beneficial should there be a query on this issue during an inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). In response the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing confirmed that staff and foster carers were corporate parents and that, based on this factor alone, the survey should be carried out amongst them.

The Vice-Chairman suggested that the notes for the proposed Member briefing should be placed online for easy access by those who couldn't attend and for reference purposes .

**RESOLVED**

- 1 that the suggestions arising from the survey undertaken by the Vice-Chairman amongst Central Bedfordshire Councillors on corporate parenting with regard to improving Members' understanding of their role as corporate parents through written briefings, case studies and presentations by social workers be implemented;**
- 2 that the above survey be suitably reconfigured and undertaken amongst the Council's staff and foster carers;**
- 3 that the Head of Corporate Parenting examine the possibility of placing the notes for the Member briefing on corporate parenting online for easy access and reference.**

**CPP/15/34. The Children in Care Council and Participation Annual Report 2015-2016**

The Panel considered the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Participation Annual Report for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. The aim of the report was to update Members on the activities of the CiCC Participation during this period.

Following an introduction by the Participation Worker, Professional Standards the Ambassadors, representing the CiCC, worked through aspects of the report, drawing Members' attention to points of particular interest. At the conclusion a Member commented on the high level of engagement, commitment and hard work displayed by the CiCC and asked that this be recognised by the Panel.

The Chairman referred to the decision made at the last meeting of the Panel to examine the feasibility of starting the Panel's meetings at 4.00 p.m. (minute CPP/15/26 refers) and sought clarification on what progress, if any, had been made. In response the Participation Worker, Professional Standards stated that she was aware that the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations had discussed this matter and the Chairman undertook to raise this matter with him to establish the outcome.

A Member drew the Panel's attention to the reference in the report to the development of a 'mentoring' relationship between senior managers, acting as corporate parents, and members of the CiCC. The Participation Worker, Professional Standards explained that this had developed informally out of the meeting with the Children's Commissioner where the role of officers as mentors had been considered. Discussion followed during which the Participation Worker, Professional Standards stated that it was now necessary to identify additional Council officers who wished to support and mentor young people. This task was on the Participation Forward Plan for 2016/17.

Following a Member's query the Participation Worker, Professional Standards informed the meeting that a special consultation day had taken place on

leaving care. In view of Members' positive comments on the value of the event discussion took place on how the event could be replicated.

The Director of Social Care, Health and Housing thanked the Ambassadors for the work the CiCC undertook on behalf of the Council.

The Participation Worker, Professional Standards advised the meeting that the CiCC would be represented at a further Children's Commissioner event in April 2016.

#### **NOTED**

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

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1 that the efforts of the Children in Care Council be recognised and its members be thanked for their contribution;**
- 2 that the Participation Worker, Professional Standards consider replicating the leaving care consultation event, possibly annually.**

#### **CPP/15/35. Future Developments from the Annual Report 2014/15**

The Panel considered a report from the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children, NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), which provided an update to the Looked After Children's Annual Report 2014/15 which was presented to the Panel on 21 September 2015 (minute CPP/15/13 refers). The update focused on the commitments made within the Annual Report and provided a summary of the developments to date.

Following an introduction by the Designated Nurse discussion took place regarding the health needs for children and young people and the quality of service available to them. Particular attention was paid to the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) during which a Member expressed concerns on this issue and sought the perspective of the Designated Nurse. In response the Designated Nurse explained that all referrals were made through a single point of access and this should enable any referral to be directed to the correct service in CAMHS.

Following further comment the Head of Corporate Parenting indicated that he also shared Members' concerns. He stated that concerns had been raised at other meetings given that it had been twelve months since the appointment of a new provider for CAMHS and there had been only limited changes in service provision. A Member commented on the need for challenge given the lack of progress. The Director of Social Care, Health and Housing advised the meeting that there would be a focus on mental health and young people at a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Head of Corporate Parenting stated that social workers and managers were challenging the accuracy of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

(SDQ) scores given the important role they played in the assessment of children. He indicated that there would be report on this subject to a future meeting of the Panel.

A Member referred to the medicals undertaken by Looked After Children and queried what impact these had with regard to their relationship with their peers. She stressed the need to ensure that the Looked After Children were not made to feel different from other children and suggested a 'bespoke' approach to achieve this.

The Head of Corporate Parenting assured the meeting that there were no Looked After Children at risk of harm because of any delay in the provision of mental health services through CAMHS. He stated that, if necessary, the service would be purchased separately to ensure it was available.

Arising from a query by the Chairman the Designated Nurse stated that she would report the Panel's concerns to her Director and the BCCG. She also explained that all assessments were carried out at school and Looked After Children were not taken out and made to feel or appear different.

Members expressed some concern that the BCCG had failed to understand the Panel's frustration and that the report before them lacked information. In reply the Designated Nurse explained that the data they requested was not yet available in a refined form.

The question arose of how to gather the views of the foster carers and young persons. The Designated Nurse stated that she would like to engage with foster carers and it was suggested that the Head of Corporate Parenting facilitate attendance at monthly foster carer meetings. However, a foster carer referred to the issue of confidentiality.

#### **NOTED**

- 1 the update on the Looked After Children Annual Health Report for 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015;**
- 2 that the Designated Nurse will set out her perspective on the progress made in the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) since the appointment of a new provider in the report of the Head of Corporate Parenting.**

#### **RESOLVED**

**that the Head of Corporate Parenting submit a report on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to the Panel.**

#### **CPP/15/36. Fostering Agency Report Quarter 3 - 1 October - 31 December 2015**

The Panel received a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined activity in the Fostering Service during Quarter 3 (1 October - 31 December 2015).

The report contained updates on various issues including the following:

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

The Practice Manager, Fostering introduced the report and highlighted particular items of interest.

A Member referred to a recent presentation by the Community Safety Partnership on the growing number of asylum seekers decanting from vehicles at Toddington Services. The Practice Manager, Fostering confirmed that the number was increasing, with Toddington Services being the first stop by some lorry drivers after they had crossed the Channel from France. Whilst the Police had increased their presence at Toddington in response to this situation it was now known that some drivers had chosen to stop elsewhere. The Head of Corporate Parenting informed the meeting that since 1 January 2016 Central Bedfordshire had received no new unaccompanied asylum seekers. He added that the reason for the decrease was unknown.

The Vice-Chairman raised a query regarding the number of fostering training courses that foster carers were expected to attend each year. In response the Practice Manager, Fostering stated that carers were expected to attend training courses throughout their careers and attend at least three courses every year. In addition, training had been linked to the level of fees paid and carers could receive an increase or decrease in the level of their fees due to the tier structure adopted. A Member referred to the three fostering households who were overdue in completing their mandatory Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDs). In response the Practice Manager, Fostering stated that there were always a small number of foster carers who were outside the training timescale. However, their skill requirements had been identified and one-to-one support would be provided to assist them.

With reference to the staffing changes taking place within the Fostering Agency a Member referred to the length of time that a child, on average, spent in the foster care system and how important a change in their social worker was. She emphasised the need to ensure that a replacement social worker was fully aware of the child's background as this would help facilitate bonding. In response the Head of Corporate Parenting explained that the staffing situation within the Fostering Agency had been very stable but the changes represented

an implementation of the Council's adopted policy of moving towards employing permanent staff. The Practice Manager, Fostering acknowledged that a change in social worker could give rise to difficulties but the Fostering Agency staff worked as a team and were able to provide support when required.

In reply to a Member's comment on the increase from 129 to 131 Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) since the last quarterly report, the Head of Corporate Parenting explained that this situation was driven by Family Court decisions. He added that the Council was working to reduce the number of SGOs whenever possible.

Following further discussion the Chairman asked the Practice Manager, Fostering to inform her staff of the Panel's thanks for their efforts.

### **NOTED**

**the content of the Quarter Three report on the Fostering Service for the period 1 October to 31 December 2015.**

#### CPP/15/37. **Virtual School Report**

The Panel considered a report from the Director of Children's Services which explained the role of the Central Bedfordshire Virtual School, the validated 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. The Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Children stated that an interim report on the unvalidated educational outcomes for Looked After Children in the academic year 2015/16 would be presented to a future meeting.

The Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils then introduced the report before Members which covered the following matters:

- Background
- Exclusions
- Attendance
- Pupils' Achievement
- Validated Key Stage 1 results
- Validated Key Stage 2 results
- Validated Key Stage 4 Results 2014/15
- Year 12 and 13
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC)
- Summary of Strengths
- Key Areas for Development

The Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils stated that the educational attainment gap between all Looked After Children and non Looked After Children was closing. Whilst welcoming this development a Member felt

that it would be helpful to be able to examine the progress made by children since becoming Looked After.

The Vice-Chairman referred to the link between attendance and attainment and queried if any incentives were offered to encourage attendance. In response the Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils stated that the majority of the Council's Looked After Children had a good attendance record. However, there was a small but significant number of older pupils who were challenging in their attitudes on a wide range of issues, including school attendance. She added that, normally, one of the key measures that could be taken with respect to poor attendance was some form of legal intervention against the parent. However, it was not possible for the Council to take action against itself. The Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils stated that a gift card attendance incentive was offered and other means of encouraging attendance were being considered.

A Member commended the officers for the action taken to reduce absences and exclusions. The Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils explained that the positive advances arose through collaborative action between teams and the development of the understanding of the needs of those particular Looked After Children and how to meet them. This had resulted in fewer reasons to impose permanent exclusions.

The Chairman suggested that the report should be drawn to the attention of those Members who were also school governors. She also suggested that the report be drawn to the attention of the Council's Group Leaders.

In response to a query by the Chairman on whether the level of careers advice offered to Looked After Children and young people was sufficient the Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils stated that Looked After Children's academic and vocational aspirations were being raised. Following discussion she suggested that Michelle Wilson, Personnel Advisor, whose role was to raise the aspirations of Looked After Children, be invited to attend a Panel meeting to brief Members on the measures being taken.

#### **NOTED**

**the outcomes for Looked After Children in the academic year 2014/15 and the impact of the measures taken since September 2015 to develop the role of the Virtual School in order to improve outcomes for Looked After Children and young people.**

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1 that a report setting out the academic progress made by Looked After Children since becoming Looked After be submitted to the Panel;**
- 2 that the Interim Report Virtual School for Looked After Children from the Director of Children's Services be drawn to the attention of those Members who are also school governors;**

- 3 that the Interim Report referred to in resolution 2 above also be drawn to the attention of the Council's group leaders;
- 4 that the Personal Advisor attend a future meeting of the Panel to explain the measures being taken to raise Looked After Children's aspirations.

CPP/15/38. **Work Programme**

Members considered a report which set out the Panel's work programme for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year and the municipal year for 2016/17.

The meeting was aware that additional items had already been added to the work programme (minutes CPP/15/35 and CPP/15/37 above refer).

The Head of Corporate Parenting suggested that the unscheduled 'Spotlight Report' on placement stability for Looked After Children be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.

**RESOLVED**

**that the proposed Corporate Parenting Panel work programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/16, as attached at Appendix A of the report of the Committee Services Manager and Committee Services Officer be approved subject to including a 'Spotlight Report' on placement stability for Looked After Children for consideration at the next meeting of the Panel on 9 May 2016 in place of the scheduled report on the Corporate Parenting Action Plan – Annual Review.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.04 p.m.)

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Monday, 9 May 2016

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**Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17**

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

Advising Officers: Nickie Phillips, Practice Manager Adoption  
([nickie.phillips@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:nickie.phillips@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

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**Purpose of this report**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Consider, comment and agree the Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17 attached at Appendix A to the report.

**Issues**

1. Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2011, Standard 18 and Adoption Regulations require an adoption service to produce a statement of purpose which contains a range of detailed information as set out in Standard 18.
2. Appendix A is the Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.

**Council Priorities**

3. Improving education and skills; protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing.

**Corporate Implications**

4. Legal, financial and equalities implications were requested and are included in the report.

### **Legal Implications**

5. Having considered the requirements under Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services and Regulation 2 of the Adoption Service (England) Regulations, the Statement of Purpose complies with the requirements set out therein. There are no other legal implications highlighted within the Statement of Purpose.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

6. The report is a statement of purpose and has no direct financial implications.

### **Equalities Implication**

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 belief orientation. The Statement of Purpose highlights the need to ensure that these requirements are reflected both in terms of meeting children's needs and recruiting adopters from diverse backgrounds.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

8. This Statement of Purpose consists of:

A statement of the aims and objectives of the Adoption Service, and the services and facilities provided by the Adoption Service.

9. If approved, the Statement of Purpose will be sent to Ofsted with 28 days of Approval by the Registered Provider, made available to all staff via the Council's Intranet and to members of the public via Central Bedfordshire Council. The Statement of Purpose will also be presented to the Adoption Panel for its consideration.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

### **Background Papers**

None

**Appendix A**

**Adoption Service**  
**Statement of Purpose**  
**1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017**



**Statement of Purpose**  
**Central Bedfordshire Council - Adoption Service**

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

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## 1. Background

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

The Adoption Service is an integral part of the Corporate Parenting Service in Central Bedfordshire Council.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

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

### Aims

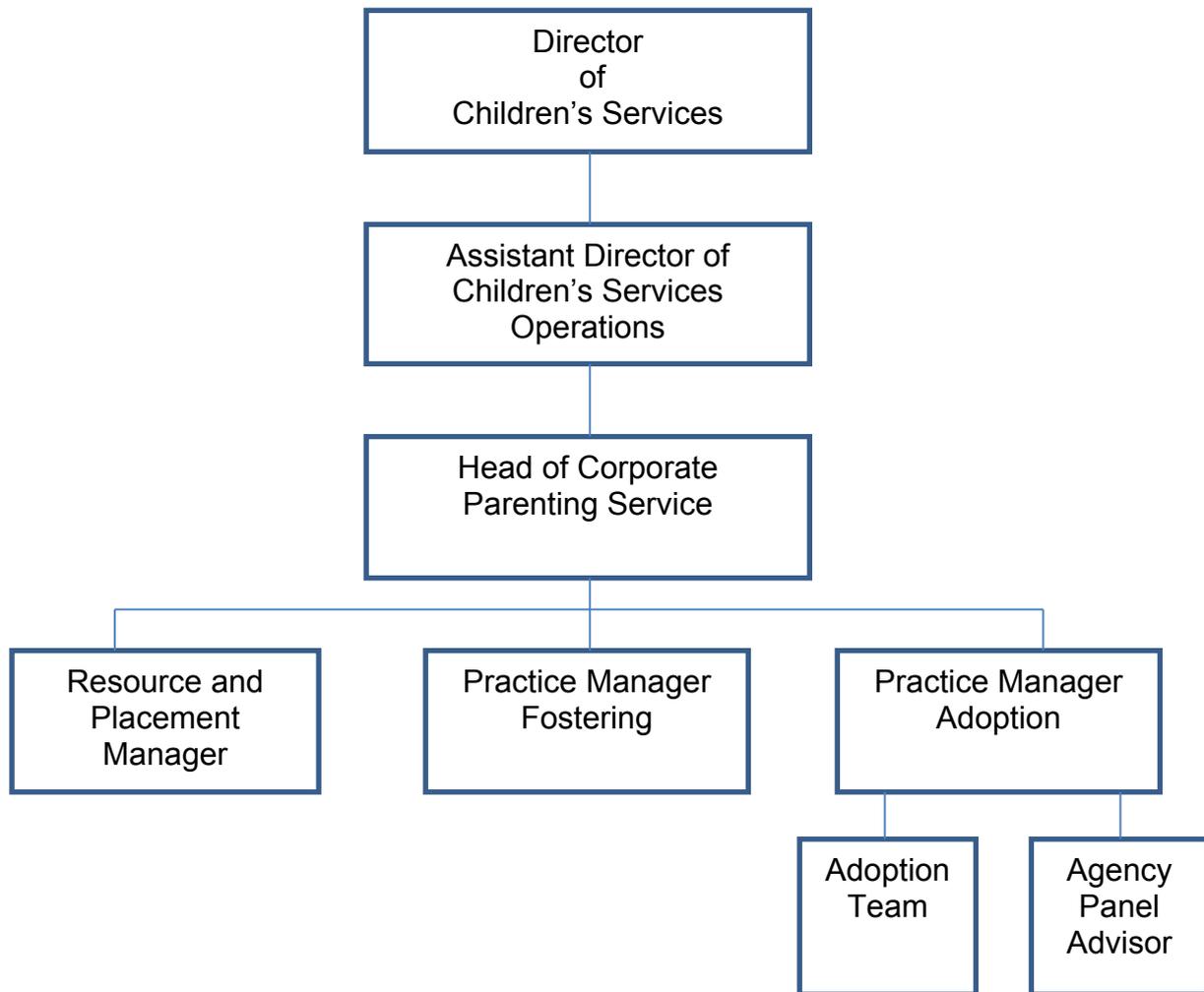
To provide adoptive placements for children who have a Care Plan for adoption and ensure early permanence is achieved.

To provide high level adoption support to ensure the placement and stability of children placed for adoption to enables them to experience good quality parenting to achieve their potential.

### Objectives

- To provide a high quality adoption service for the residents of Central Bedfordshire.
- To provide a suitable and timely adoptive placement for every child with a plan for adoption.
- To ensure that recruitment of adopters is targeted to meet the needs of children requiring adoptive families.
- To recruit a range of prospective adopters able to meet the diverse needs of children.
- To ensure safe, stable and consistent care for every child placed for adoption.
- To ensure that the ethnic origin, cultural background, religious heritage, language and identity of children are fully recognised and valued.
- To provide support services that ensure successful outcomes for children placed for adoption.
- To ensure that adoptive families are enabled to meet the health and education needs of children placed with them.
- To provide a range of support services for adopted adults within Central Bedfordshire.
- To offer timely information, advice and counselling to members of the public enquiring about adoption.
- To ensure support is provided for the birth relatives of the children who are placed for adoption by Central Bedfordshire Council.
- To ensure that the Adoption Service adheres to Adoption Regulations, National Minimum Standards Children and Families Act 2014 and best practice.

### 3. Management and Organisational Structure



#### The Registered Manager

Nickie Phillips

**Central Bedfordshire Council** Adoption Service, Unit 16, Stephenson Court, Priory business Park, Fraser Road , Bedford, Mk44 3WJ  
Direct Dial: 0300 300 8090 Fax No. 0300 300 8255  
Email: [nickie.phillips@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:nickie.phillips@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

HCPC registered with a recognised Social Work Qualification. Twenty years experience of Children's Services social work of which ten years have been within an Adoption Service.

Ultimate responsibility for the Adoption Service rests with the Elected Members. The Adoption Service forms part of Central Bedfordshire Council's Children's Services for which the Director of Children's Services is responsible.

The Assistant Director Operations has overall management responsibility for the Adoption Service. Operational managerial responsibility sits with the Head of the Corporate Parenting Service. The Practice Manager for the Adoption Team supervises the adoption social workers

and the Agency Panel Advisor for adoption. The Resource Team, which is managed by the Head of the Corporate Parenting Service, supports the adoption service in relation to the recruitment of adopters, publicity and communications.

#### **4. Services Provided by Central Bedfordshire Adoption Service**

The Adoption Service provides the following services:

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

#### **5. Procedures**

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

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

- Enquirers can telephone the Service on 0300 300 8090 or email interest via the website. They can also download an information brochure from the website. The Adoption Duty Worker will gather basic information about the enquirer and answer questions about adoption to assist them to consider whether adoption is the right choice for them.

- Prospective adopters contacting the Service are provided with information about adoption within 5 working days. They are given the opportunity to meet with a social worker and attend an Information Session.
- If the enquirer submits a Registration of Interest Form, this is passed to the Adoption Practice Manager, who will consider whether or not to accept the Registration of Interest.
- If accepted the prospective adopter(s) are invited to a meeting with a member of the Adoption Team to complete a Stage One Plan (Agreement), detailing what will be expected of them and the Agency, during this stage.
- The applicant should use this time to gain childcare experience and explore the extent of their interest in and capacity for adoption, including considering whether they could offer a Fostering for Adoption placement. The Agency carries out Statutory Checks, in accordance with the Adoption Agency Regulations 2005.
- These Checks include:
  1. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS)
  2. Three written personal references, one family member and two friends
  3. Employment references
  4. Local Authority checks
  5. Medical checks
- In addition, DBS Checks are taken up on any other person in the prospective adopter's household aged 18 and over.
- Central Bedfordshire Council will offer support to prospective adopters during Stage One as appropriate, the process being monitored by a co-ordinator within the team.
- Towards the end of Stage One, prospective adopters are offered an end of Stage One Interview in order to consider the information gained during the period including the completed checks.
- Following the end of the Stage One Interview, social workers will discuss with the Adoption Manager whether the Agency feels able to progress the application to Stage Two.
- Should the Adoption Manager decide that a prospective adopter is not suitable to adopt, either during Stage One or at the end of Stage One, they will provide the prospective adopter with a written explanation of the reasons.
- If the Adoption Manager decides that the prospective adopters can proceed to Stage Two, the case will be allocated to a Social Worker once the applicants are ready to proceed. A Stage Two Plan will be completed and the Social Worker will carry out an adopter assessment to complete the Prospective Adopter Report. The report and the decision as to the applicants' suitability to adopt should be completed within four months of the date of the Stage Two Plan.
- Applicants will be expected to attend Preparation Groups during Stage Two.
- Once the assessment is completed this will be presented to the Adoption Panel for a recommendation. The recommendation is then presented to the Agency Decision Maker for a final decision on the applicants' suitability to adopt. Should the Agency

Decision Maker be minded not to approve the application, prospective adopters can either make representations to the Service or to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

- The report and the decision as to the applicants' suitability to adopt should be completed within four months of the date of the Stage Two Plan.
- The Adoption Team demonstrates a positive and supportive approach towards applications to adopt from previous adopters and foster carers wishing to adopt a child in their care. These assessments will be fast tracked, with prospective adopters moving directly to Stage Two.
- Following approval, Central Bedfordshire Council will seek to place a child with the prospective adopters as soon as possible; either children in the care of the Council or nationally. This includes the active consideration of Fostering for Adoption placements alongside other adoptive placements in order to make the most suitable and timely placement for each child requiring adoption.
- Adopters for whom a match has not been identified will be referred to the National Adoption Register.
- The Adoption Team aims to provide ongoing support to adoptive families, and an adoption support plan will be drawn up before placement which identifies the likely support needs of the placement. This is then reviewed prior to the Adoption Order being granted and annually thereafter as required.
- Children in adoptive placements are reviewed by the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Review helps identify when it is appropriate for an Adoption Order to be lodged by the applicants. In most cases, this would be decided by the time of the second Review. Adopters are supported by their Social Worker in making the application.

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

Central Bedfordshire Council provides a range of ongoing support to adoptive families, including family events and activity groups for adopted young people. In line with legislation, adopters for whom we are the responsible Adoption Agency can ask for an assessment of their adoption support needs.

The Adoption Support Services Advisor for Central Bedfordshire Council is Nickie Phillips who can be contacted on 0300 300 8090.

Central Bedfordshire Council provides a service to Adopted Adults and their Birth Relatives.

Details of these services can be found on our website and in the Adoption Support Leaflet which can be downloaded. A Children's Guide to Adoption Support is also available.

The Adoption Team ensures that all those seeking to adopt are fully informed as to their entitlements in regards to adoption support from the very beginning of the process. Updated information is provided upon request and via the periodic newsletters.

## 6. Staffing

The current complement is:

1 Practice Manager (full time)

- 1 Senior Practitioner (part time)
- 4 Social Workers (3.5 Full time equivalent)
- 1 Social Work Assistant (full time)
- 1 Business Support Officer (full time)

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

The Practice Manager for Adoption provides operational management, quality assurance, performance and budget management for the team and panel and co-ordinates the work of the team. In addition to supervising the work of the staff the manager also supervises the Adoption Panel Advisor and reports to senior managers on service activities and issues of concern.

The Adoption Agency is supported by specialist staff who work across the Adoption and Fostering Service. These include a Recruitment and Marketing Officer, a Training Coordinator, a Professional Panel Adviser and Panel Secretaries who support the Adoption Panel and the Fostering Panel.

## **7. Adoption Panel**

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

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

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

Decisions about whether a child should be placed for adoption are made by the Agency Decision Maker without recourse to the Panel. The exception of this are children relinquished by consent from the parent.

### **Agency Decisions**

The Assistant Director for Children's Services Operations is the delegated Senior Manager for Central Bedfordshire who makes the decision based on the Panel's recommendation. These decisions are made within seven working days of receipt of the minutes of the Panel meeting.

## **8. Quality Monitoring**

The quality of the work of the Adoption Service is monitored through staff supervision. In addition, the Agency Panel Adviser provides scrutiny and feedback as does the Adoption Panel Chairperson.

Monthly Adoption tracking meetings are undertaken alongside monthly performance reporting.

Regular reports are provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel. Feedback from service users is sought at regular intervals e.g. after Information Evenings, Preparation Training, Panel, Adoption Order.

In addition the Service is subject to inspection by Ofsted.

## **9. Complaints**

All local authorities are required to ensure a complaints process is provided under the Children Act 1989.

All complaints and queries will be dealt with in a manner that meets Central Bedfordshire local and national requirements.

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

The Complaints Procedure has several stages: Stage 1 applies to local resolution but if this is not achieved, there are 2 more stages. Information on these further stages is available from the Adoption Service or from Central Bedfordshire's Customer Relations Department.

## **10. Allegations in respect of children placed for adoption**

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

## **11. Reviewing the Statement of Purpose**

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

This statement of purpose will next be reviewed in March 2017.

### **13. Arrangements for the Revision and Circulation of the Statement of Purpose**

The Registered manager is responsible for the annual revision of the Statement of Purpose. Revisions may occur at other times if necessary.

The revised Statement of Purpose will be presented to the Adoption Panel annually for their consideration.

The Statement of Purpose will be available to all staff via the Councils Intranet and to members of the public via Central Bedfordshire Council.

### **14. The Registration Authority**

The Registration Authority is:

Ofsted

Ofsted National Business Unit

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

E-mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

### **15. Contacts**

For more information about Adoption in Central Bedfordshire please contact:

Adoption Team

Corporate Parenting Service

Central Bedfordshire Council

Unit 16 Stephenson Court

Fraser Road

Priory Business Park

Bedford

MK44 3WJ

Tel: 0300 300 8090

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

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

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

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



**Approved:**

Signed.....

**Sue Harrison  
Director of Children's Services**

Dated.....

Signed.....

**Cllr Carole Hegley  
Executive Member for Children's Services**

Dated.....

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Monday, 9 May 2016

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**Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17**

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

Advising Officer: Annie Craig, Practice Manager, Fostering Team  
([annie.craig@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:annie.craig@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

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**Purpose of this report**

Central Bedfordshire Council Fostering Service Statement of Purpose is prepared in accordance with the requirement of the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of Fostering Services. The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 governing the work of fostering services throughout England.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Consider, comment and agree the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17 as attached at Appendix A.

**Issues**

1. Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations require a fostering service to produce a Statement of Purpose which contains a range of detailed information as set out in Standard 16.
2. Appendix A is the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17.

**Council Priorities**

3. Improving education and skills; protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing.

**Corporate Implications**

4. Legal, financial and equalities implications were requested and are included in the report.

### **Legal Implications**

5. Having considered the requirements under Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations, the Statement of Purpose complies with the requirements set out therein. There are no other legal implications highlighted within the Statement of Purpose

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

6. The report is a Statement of Purpose and has no direct financial 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. The Statement of Purpose highlights the need to ensure that these requirements are reflected both in terms of meeting children's needs and recruiting Foster Carers from diverse backgrounds.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

8. This Statement of Purpose consists of: -
  - a statement of the aims and objectives of the Fostering Service and the services and facilities provided by the Fostering Service.
9. If approved, the Statement of Purpose will be sent to Ofsted with 28 days of approval by the Registered Provider, made available to all staff via the Council's Intranet and to members of the public via Central Bedfordshire Council. It will also be presented for the Fostering and Permanence Panel for their consideration.

### **Appendices**

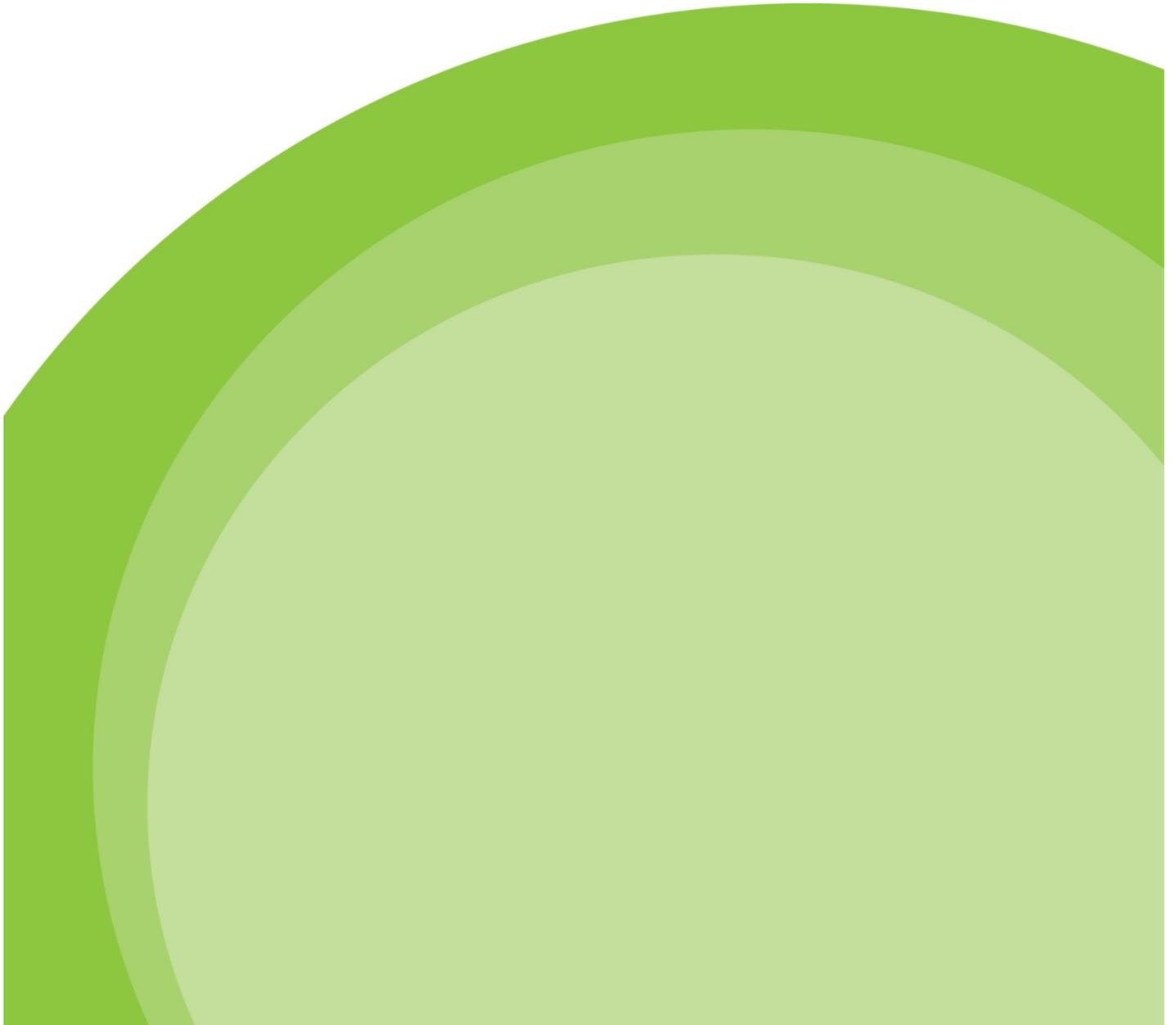
Appendix A – Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17

### **Background Papers**

None

**Appendix A**

**Fostering Service**  
**Statement of Purpose**  
**2016/17**



## **Statement of Purpose – Central Bedfordshire Fostering Service**

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

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### **CONTENTS**

1. Introduction
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Management and Staff Structure
4. Our Services to Children
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6. Children's Guide
7. Recruitment and Assessment of Prospective Foster Carers
8. The Fostering and Permanence Panel
9. The Foster Carer Charter
10. Support and Supervision of Foster Carers
11. Reviewing the Approval of Foster Carers
12. Training for Foster Carers
13. Complaints
14. Monitoring and Evaluation
15. Evaluating the Service
16. Arrangements for the Revision and Circulation of the Statement of Purpose
17. Useful Contacts

## 1. Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council Fostering Service Statement of Purpose is prepared in accordance with the requirement of the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of Fostering Services. The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 governing the work of Fostering Services throughout England.

Standard 16 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and Regulation 3(1) of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations require a Fostering Service to produce a statement of purpose which contains a range of detailed information as set out in Standard 16.

It is intended as a useful source of information for foster carers, Fostering Social Workers, Child Care Social Workers, Children, Young People and any person with parental responsibilities. The aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose should be child focussed and show how the service will meet outcomes for children.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

### Aims

To provide foster placements for children who need to be placed in a suitable home on an emergency basis, whether this is as 'career' foster carers or family and friends (Connected Persons) carers.

Services are offered for children on the principal that their needs and welfare are best met within a caring and nurturing environment.

### Objectives

To provide a high quality Fostering Service to children, their birth parents, foster carers and social work colleagues

- To provide foster placements that meet the needs of children requiring such a placement
- To ensure safe, stable and consistent care for every child placed in foster care
- To promote equality of opportunity 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
- To ensure that the ethnic origin, cultural background, religious heritage, language and all other protected characteristics of children are fully recognised, valued and promoted
- To recruit a range of foster carers from diverse ethnic, cultural and other backgrounds to meet the needs of children needing placements
- To provide support services that promote and enable the retention of foster carers

- To ensure that, at all times, the teams provide services that are effective and that practices are clear, open, honest and fair to all service users
- To ensure that foster carers are enabled to promote positive outcomes for children placed with them
- To actively promote and support training opportunities for all foster carers
- To ensure that the Fostering Teams meet Fostering Regulations, National Minimum Standards and best practice.

### **3. Management and Staff Structure**

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

The Assistant Director then gives strategic leadership to Children's Services (Responsible Person).

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

The Practice Manager for Fostering (Registered Manager) provides operational management, quality assurance, performance and budget management and co-ordinates the work of the two Fostering Teams. In addition to supervising the work of the two Fostering Team Managers, the Practice Manager also supervises/manages the work of the Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer, whose work covers both fostering and adoption as well as the Panel Adviser for the Fostering and Permanence Panel. The Practice Manager also reports to senior managers on service activities and issues of concern.

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

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

The Practice/Team Managers and all social workers are professionally qualified with commensurate social work experience. Staff have an annual Personal Development Review (Your Year) and Central Bedfordshire Council's Learning and Development Team provides bespoke training that meets the identified training needs of staff as well as providing more general corporate training. In addition to the Social Workers and Family Support Worker the team is supported by two Business Support Officers who are supervised by the team managers. A part time clinical psychologist is also available to provide supportive consultations to carers, LAC social workers and supervising social

workers. This person has access to external clinical supervision as well as organisational line management from the Practice Manager. A structure of the service is attached in Appendix A.

#### **4. Our Services to Children**

The primary purpose of the Fostering Service is to provide high quality, safe, secure and caring foster families for children who are unable to live with their parents. Whenever possible and where safe to do so, children will be placed with someone from their extended family or a close family friend. (Connected Person) These arrangements are recognised in legislation as 'Family and Friends' foster placements. Where this is not possible, placements will be found with one of our approved foster carers or a suitable foster carer approved by an Independent Fostering Agency. We aim to clearly identify the particular emotional, physical, cultural and religious needs of a child and find a foster family who can best meet those needs.

As well as offering short/long term, emergency and respite the service also offer some specialist services.

The Family link scheme offers short breaks for children of all ages who have a physical or functional disability. Family link carers care for children in their own home, in the child's home or by taking the child to an activity. Periods of short breaks will be carefully planned and could be for a few hours occasionally or whole weekends on a regular basis.

The service also provides a salaried family link fee based scheme whereby the carer is linked to a number of children/adults who have complex medical needs.

The youth care scheme provides specialist care to young people over the age of 10 who have needs that are particularly challenging or complex.

Except in emergencies, we plan introductory meetings between the child and the foster carer in an effort to lessen the anxiety for the child of moving to a new family. Where a child is placed in an emergency the child's social worker or the foster carer's supervising social worker will give the child as much information about the foster carer's and their household as possible. Profiles are kept on all foster carers and these can be used to help provide children with relevant information about the fostering household/area etc. even in an emergency situation.

Children will be visited in placement by both their own social worker and the foster carers supervising social worker. Children will be encouraged to express their wishes and views about their foster placement and will be invited to provide written feedback about their placement for the foster carer's annual review. The children of foster carer's are invited to provide written feedback regarding their parents foster carer's annual review.

#### **5. Matching Process**

Central Bedfordshire Resource and Placement Team identify foster carers who have vacancies and work with the Fostering Teams to assess if this is the most appropriate placement for the child. If they agree, the match is proposed to the foster carer/s and the child's social worker who will further consider the match, involving the child as appropriate, and makes the arrangements for the placement, if agreed.

## 6. Children's Guide

A children's guide is provided to all children in care, when placed, when they are of sufficient understanding to be able to benefit from the information contained in the guide. The aim is to provide information about what it means to be fostered, what social workers do and what children can do if they are not happy in their foster home or if they have any worries or concerns. The guides are reviewed annually and a copy is sent to Ofsted and all the services foster carers. The link to view the Children's Guide can be found at: <http://cicc-central-beds.tfhosts.co.uk>.

## 7. Recruitment and Assessment of Prospective Foster Carers

The Fostering Service works to a Recruitment and Retention Strategy which is updated annually. a copy of this strategy is available by emailing: [Jenny.thornhill@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jenny.thornhill@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). The strategy recognises the need to recruit local foster carers who will be able to meet the diverse needs of the children requiring foster homes. If you are interested in fostering the link for this can be found at: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/fostering).

The Fostering Service is also responsible for the temporary approval and full assessment/approval of Family and Friends foster carers (sometimes referred to as 'Connected Persons' foster carers). These placements often start during care proceedings and many such placements go on to become permanent arrangements through Residence, Special Guardianship or Adoption Orders. If Special Guardianship Order (SGO) assessments are required, these are generally completed jointly by the Fostering Team and relevant childcare team.

## 8. The Fostering and Permanence Panel

The Fostering Service has a Fostering Panel constituted in accordance with Regulation 23 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. The service maintains a 'central list' of Panel members. The Panel Chair and Vice Chair are Independent people with professional experience of fostering. Other panel members on the central list include a Social Worker with more than three years relevant post-qualifying experience, a Central Bedfordshire Councillor, Independent members and the agency medical advisor. The panel generally meets twice a month and detailed minutes are kept of all Panel meetings.

The functions of the Fostering Panel are to consider:

- Each application and recommend whether or not a person is suitable to be a foster carer and the terms of their approval
- The first annual review of each approved carer and any other review or requested by the Fostering Service
- The termination of approval or change of terms of approval of a foster carer

New applicants and existing foster carers are invited and encouraged to attend Panel when their application or review is presented to Panel.

The Panel has a quality assurance role and monitors the standard of reports presented to it and feeds back any issues or concerns to the Registered Manager. The Panel makes

recommendations to the Fostering Service and these recommendations are referred to the 'Agency Decision Maker' for a decision.

If the Panel or Agency Decision Maker is minded not to recommend approval, applicants are advised that they can request their case is reconsidered by the Panel or apply to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) for a review of their case.

## 9. The Foster Carer Charter

Central Bedfordshire Foster Carer Charter "Children Come First"

The Fostering Service is committed to providing and promoting safe, stable and nurturing placements where the outcomes and life chances for looked after children are positive. In order to achieve this it is important to have a working relationship which is based on trust and respect between all those involved in the care of the child.

The service has worked in partnership with foster carers to achieve the charter, which explains what the roles and responsibilities of the service and the carers are towards each other and the children they care for. The link to view the Foster Carer Charter can be found at: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/children/adoption-fostering/foster-support.aspx>.

## 10. Support and Supervision of Foster Carers

Once a foster carer has been approved by Panel, they will be allocated their own supervising social worker who will provide regular supervision and support. On approval and at any time during their fostering career when foster carers require additional support a 'mentor' can be allocated. Foster carers can also access telephone support out of office hours from the fostering duty worker who is on call from 5.20pm until 10pm weekdays and throughout the weekends and bank holidays.

The service holds quarterly Foster carer Forums ('Talk time'), where foster carers have the opportunity to meet and exchange views with senior managers. In addition the Fostering Service provides periodic social events for foster carers and their children and recognises the dedication and commitment of foster carers with an annual 'Celebration of Fostering' event.

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

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

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

A regular newsletter is also provided for foster carers keeping them up to date on current issues forthcoming training/events, new policies etc.

The Fostering Service arranges various monthly support groups for foster carers and regular events for children of foster carers.

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

## 11. Reviewing the Approval of Foster Carers

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

All other Reviews are presented directly to the Agency Decision Maker for a decision about ongoing approval.

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

## 12. Training for Foster Carers

As part of the assessment process foster carers are expected to attend the "Skills to Foster" preparation training and First Aid Training.

Once approved all foster carers are expected to undertake a range of training to update their skills. The national standards developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council (Training, Support and Development Standards) provide a framework for training for the first two years of a foster care role and set out what foster carers should know, understand and be able to do:

- Standard 1:** understand the principles and values essential for fostering children and young people
- Standard 2:** understand your role as a foster carer
- Standard 3:** understand health and safety and healthy caring
- Standard 4:** know how to communicate effectively
- Standard 5:** understand the development of children and young people
- Standard 6:** safeguard children and young people (keep them safe from harm)
- Standard 7:** develop yourself

Foster carers have an annual PDP (Personal Development Plan). The Fostering Service operates a fees based scheme whereby foster carers not only receive an allowance for the child but they also receive a fee depending on the tier they have achieved.

The tiered scheme is linked to training foster carers have to achieve to be approved and is then linked in with the PDP to ensure they continue to attend identified training to meet their specific needs.

Approved foster carers have access to a broad range of training which includes classroom based courses as well as e-learning. The classroom based courses are available during the daytime, evenings and weekends meaning those carers in employment can also attend. Via the CPD Online training website they can access training from different

streams within Central Bedfordshire Council including Early Years, Virtual Schools, Local Safeguarding Board and the Domestic Violence team. By having access to many specialist courses, foster carers can tailor their training to suit any specific requirements based on the needs of the child they have in placement, as well as attending the core training courses required by the National Minimum Standards of Foster Carers.

Training provided adheres to the Children and Family Care Act 2014 in relation to the requirement for educational attainment.

### **13. Complaints**

All local authorities are required to ensure a complaints process is provided under the Children Act 1989.

All complaints and queries will be dealt with in a manner that meets Central Bedfordshire local and National requirements.

Children, their birth family and foster carers are all given a copy of Central Bedfordshire Council's complaints leaflet.

Children are made aware of the complaints procedure, children's rights services and of their right to make representations and complaints. The information is contained in the Children's Guide.

Birth families and carers will be advised of the complaints procedure and their right to make representations and complaints.

### **14. Monitoring**

A report is written for the Corporate Parenting Panel on a quarterly basis providing the executive of the Council with information/data in relation to the agency's activity.

Other monitoring includes staff supervision linked to an appraisal system, monthly recorded visits to foster carers, Annual Reviews, the Fostering and Permanence Panel and feedback from training sessions, case recording and peer/management audits. Team managers monitor data about incidents of concern in foster care including: restraint; allegations; complaints; unauthorised absence. The Registered Manager (Practice Manager) monitors the schedule 6 and 7 requirements of the Fostering Service Regulations 2011.

### **15. Evaluating the Service**

The information gathered through quarterly and annual reports, audits, inspections and customer feedback is constantly evaluated by the managers of the Fostering Service, to judge its on-going effectiveness and make changes where necessary.

The Fostering Service is also subject to formal inspection by Ofsted and inspections usually take place every three years.

## 16. Arrangements for the Revision and Circulation of the Statement of Purpose

The Registered Manager is responsible for the annual revision of the Statement of Purpose. Revisions may occur at other times if necessary. Staff and foster carers will be consulted on proposed revisions as appropriate.

The revised Statement of Purpose will be presented to the Fostering and Permanence Panel annually for their consideration.

The revised Statement of Purpose will be sent to Ofsted annually and when any significant changes have been made, within 28 days of approval by the Registered Provider.

The Statement of Purpose will be available to all staff via the Council's Intranet and to members of the public via Central Bedfordshire Council'

## 17. Useful Contacts

The Regulatory Authority is:

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

Tel: 0300 123 1231  
E-mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

The Fostering Teams are subject to regular inspection and inspection reports are available from the Fostering Teams or on [www.ofsted.org.uk](http://www.ofsted.org.uk)

For more information about Fostering in Central Bedfordshire please contact:

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

Tel: 0300 300 8090

Independent Review Mechanism:

Independent Review Mechanism  
Unit 4 Pavilion Business Park  
Royds Hall Road

LEEDS  
LS12 6AJ

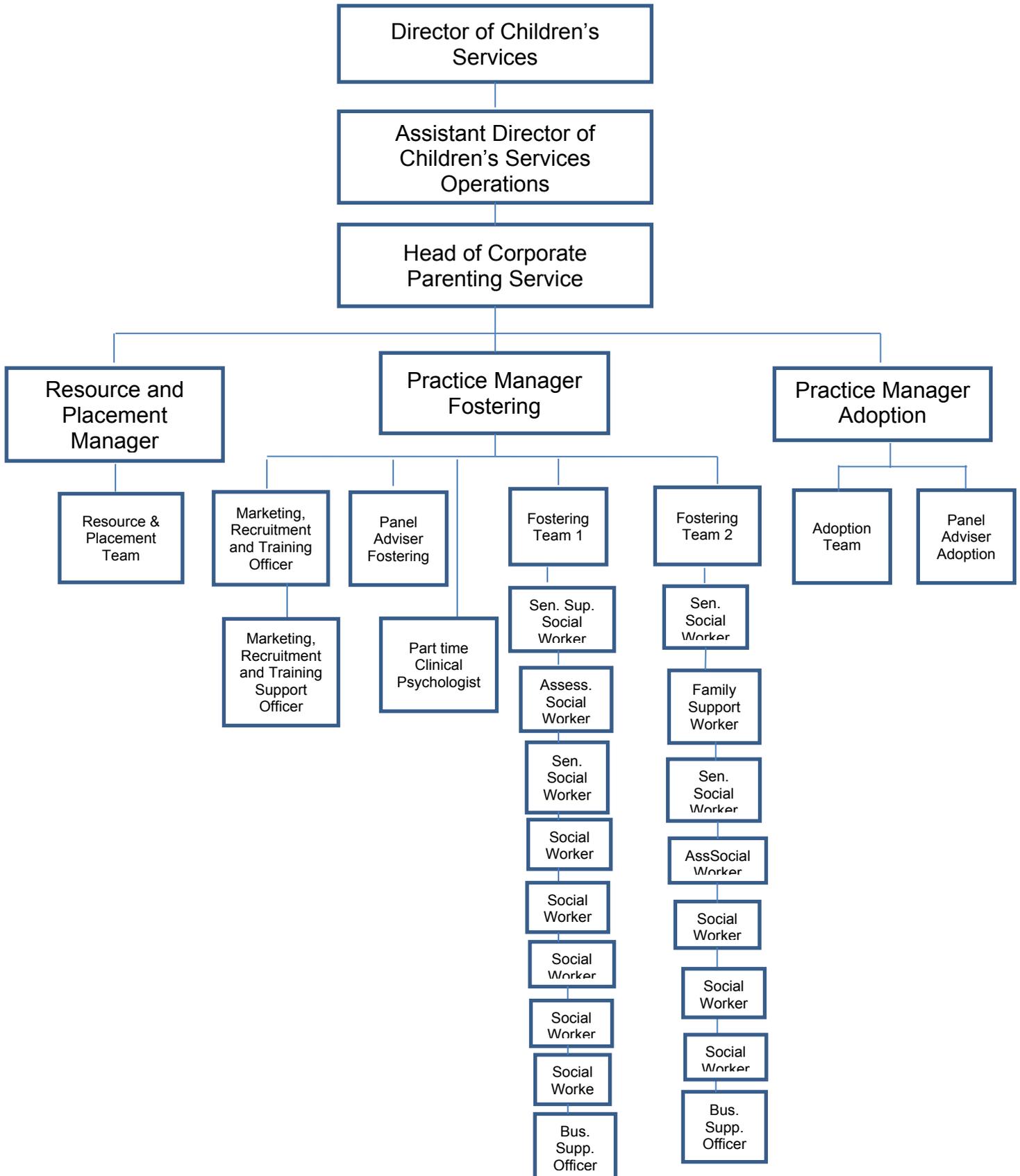
Tel: 0845 450 3956 (charged at local rate) or 0113 2022080  
Email: [irm@baaf.org.uk](mailto:irm@baaf.org.uk)

Fostering Network:

Fostering Network  
87 Blackfriars Road  
London  
SE1 8HA

Tel: 0207 620 5400  
Email: [info@fostering.net](mailto:info@fostering.net)

**Appendix A – Structure of the Service**



**Fostering Service Statement of Purpose**

**April 2016**

**Approved:**

**Signed.....**

**Susan Harrison  
Deputy Chief Executive and  
Director of Children's Services**

**Dated.....**

**Signed.....**

**Cllr Carole Hegley  
Executive Member for Children's Services**

**Dated.....**

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**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Monday, 9 May 2016

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**Securing Education, Employment and Training for Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

Advising Officers:

Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services  
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**Purpose of this report**

To provide a summary of work managed by the Central Bedfordshire Youth Support Service (YSS) for looked after children and care leavers that will help to raise their aspirations and support them to work towards their chosen careers. The summary includes:

- The responsibilities the YSS has to looked after children and care leavers
- The service the YSS provides to looked after children and care leavers
- How the YSS works together with the Virtual School (VS) and Corporate Parenting Service (CPS) to achieve positive outcomes
- Our current performance – including progress for key groups and projects
- Our plans for delivering services and support in 2016/17.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Comment on the offer of services for looked after children and care leavers outlined in this report, our progress to date and recommendations for improvement in 2016/17;
2. Support the development of a new Council wide approach to promoting access to apprenticeships for looked after children and care leavers that are employed by the local authority.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations**

1. This report is not scheduled to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

## **Background**

2. The YSS supports young people to achieve their potential. Its aspiration is to ensure the needs and wishes of young people are heard, represented and they are empowered to achieve personal, social and economic success.
3. The YSS directly delivers, manages and works in partnership to secure a range of services across Central Bedfordshire. These services meet a number of statutory responsibilities and local aspirations. The offer of services includes youth work and positive activities, the active participation of young people in local decision making and securing impartial careers information, advice and guidance.
4. As part of its offer of services, the YSS directly delivers Impartial Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IICAG) for young people with complex needs. This includes looked after children and care leavers who reside in Central Bedfordshire or in neighbouring local authorities. The work is managed by a dedicated IICAG team who also support young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and young people in the criminal justice system.

## **YSS Offer of Impartial Information, Advice and Guidance**

5. The YSS IICAG team seeks to improve the outcomes of looked after children and care leavers by raising their aspirations, enabling them to overcome barriers to education, employment and training and supporting them to work towards their chosen careers.
6. The type of work the IICAG team offers to young people helps to 'bridge the gap' from school into Education, Employment or Training (EET). It also supports young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and need to re-engage with EET. This work could include:
  - Enabling looked after children and care leavers to identify their interests, their barriers to learning and to have a plan in place for the future.
  - Ensuring looked after children and care leavers are able to navigate the local education system and access the right opportunities that would support them in working towards their chosen careers. For example, a college course or an Apprenticeship.
  - Making sure the transitions between education, employment and training for looked after children and care leavers are smooth.

- Enabling the career aspirations and interests of looked after children and care leavers to be heard and represented multi-agency meetings.
  - Ensuring looked after children and care leavers are able engage with colleges or training providers – including supporting attendance at open events or completing application forms.
  - Enabling those looked after children and care leavers who are NEET to overcome barriers to accessing EET.
7. Examples of how we work with looked after children and care leavers can be found in Appendix A – Case Studies.

8. The IIAG team is multi-skilled and is made up of the following staff:

Intensive Personal Advisers – work with 16-21 year olds:

- The team of 3 staff (2.5 FTE) work with looked after children and care leavers.

YSS/VSS Personal Adviser – work with 13-16 year olds:

- This post is jointly funded (50/50) between the YSS and the Virtual School.
- The post holder works across the Virtual School and YSS to support the engagement of looked after children of a statutory school age.

9. The team also has 3 staff (2.8 FTE) who work with special schools to support our young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The IIAG team will work flexibly with young people where they are open to a number of services to ensure their needs can be met.
10. At anyone time, the YSS supports 120 looked after children and care leavers aged 16-21 and up to 60 looked after children aged 13-16. The highest priority is given to those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), at risk of not sustaining education, employment or training (EET) and through key transition points (e.g. from Year 11 to post-16 provision).
11. Our full offer for young people with complex needs is currently under review. The recommendations of this review will be shared and considered with all partners in the coming months.

### Working Across Services

12. The work to secure access to education, employment and training for looked after children and care leavers is primarily delivered with colleagues from the Corporate Parenting Service (CPS) and the Virtual School (VS).
13. Managers and staff from the CPS, VS and YSS work in collaboration by:
  - Holding monthly managers meetings in order to provide management oversight of cases, to assess funding applications for local authority Post-16 funding and facilitate joint working arrangements.
  - Pooling funding and resources across each team – including the Post-16 pooled budget that will provide additional support for young people who are not catered for by the existing market.
  - Holding monthly meetings looking at young people's progress to EET with staff from the YSS and CPS to support collaborative working, joint planning and resource allocation for young people who are NEET at risk of becoming NEET
  - Developing regular and timely management information reports on the participation of looked after children and care leavers in Education, Employment and Training.
14. The YSS has also developed further partnership arrangements that underpin work to secure education, employment and training opportunities for looked after children and care leavers, including:
  - Co-ordination and liaison with schools, colleges and training providers to ensure ongoing engagement in EET. For example, supporting access to and engagement with colleges.
  - Central Bedfordshire Council's Academy of Social Work and Early Intervention has offered two traineeship programmes for looked after children and care leavers as a 'stepping stone' towards an apprenticeship as it was recognised that looked after young people are not always ready to go straight into an Apprenticeship.
  - Work with the Children in Care Council so that looked after young people have opportunities to help with the recruitment of intensive personal advisors and have opportunities to be involved in the developing shadow Children's Trust which will be made up of young people from Central Bedfordshire Council.

**How we Measure our Success**

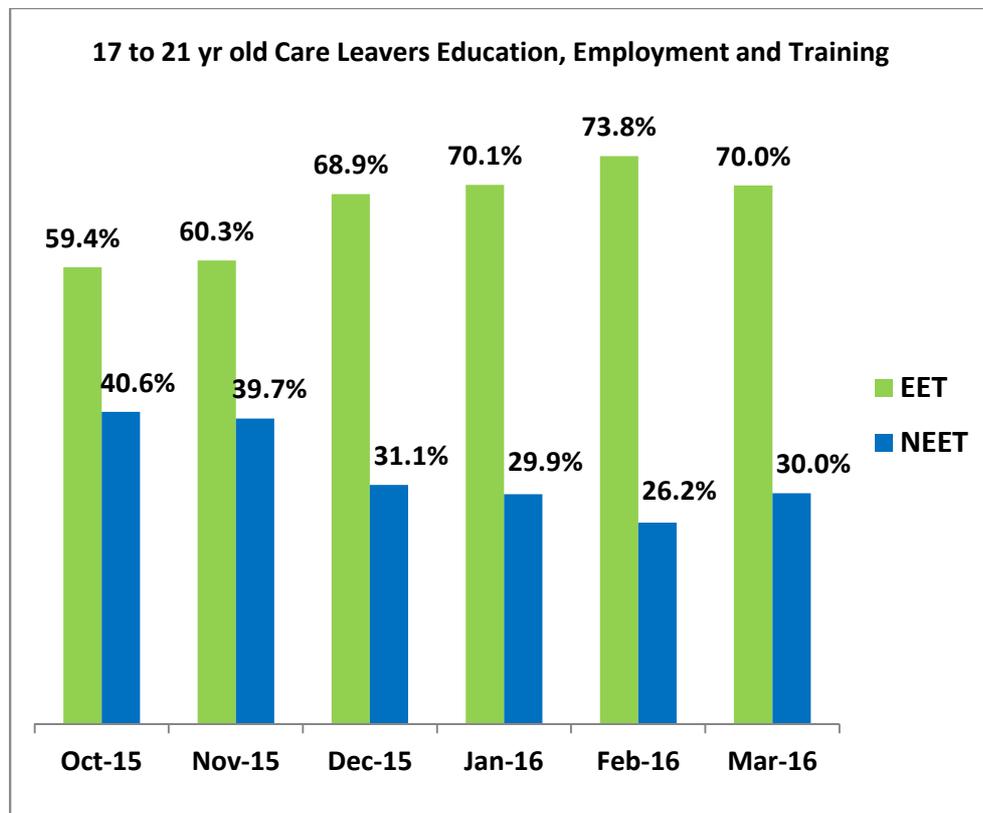
15. There are two key performance indicators that we use to measure the success of our services for looked after children and care leavers. These are:

a) The % of care leavers who are in Education, Employment and Training (Statutory Return to DfE):

The most recent national validated returns for the % of care leavers accessing education, employment and training relate to 2014/15. This data highlights the following:

- Central Bedfordshire = 42%
- Statistical neighbours = 44%
- National average = 47%

However, analysis of performance for the past 6 months shows a significant improvement in the number of care leavers accessing Education, Employment and Training in Central Bedfordshire. This improvement has also been delivered alongside a significant growth in the cohort from 64 in October 15 to 120 in March 2016.



Education, Employment & Training (EET)	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16
<b>Cohort</b>	64	78	90	97	107	120
<b>EET</b>	38	47	62	68	79	84
<b>Not in EET</b>	26	31	28	29	28	36

b) The number and % of young people aged 16-21 who are looked after and care leavers who are in Education, Employment and Training:

The most recent data highlights a growth in the number of young people supported but a slight fall (4.2%) in the cohort who are EET from 61.3% to 57.1%. There remains a consistent cohort of looked after children and care who leavers who are unavailable to participation in EET due to their personal circumstances. This is largely related to emotional and mental health issues.

October 2015 (Performance at the end of Quarter 2) - Of a cohort of 173 young people:

- The proportion of looked after children and care leavers participating in education, employment or training (EET) was 61.3%
- Of those in EET, 81% were in Full Time Education, 14% were in Employment and 5% in Training (E.g. Apprenticeship)
- The proportion of those who were NEET (this includes those that cannot be contacted) was 38.7%
- Of those NEET, 58% were available to access EET with 42% unavailable (e.g. due to illness, a custodial sentence or pregnancy)

January 2016 (performance at the end of Quarter 3) – Of a cohort of 184 young people:

- The proportion of looked after children and care leavers participating in education, employment and training (EET) was 57.1%
- Of those who were EET, 82% were in Full Time Education, 14% were in Employment and 4% in Training (E.g. Apprenticeship)
- The proportion of those who were NEET (this includes those that cannot be contacted) was 42.9%

- Of those NEET, 59% were available to access EET with 41% unavailable (e.g. due to illness, a custodial sentence or pregnancy)
16. In parallel to the two key performance indicators, we will use other methods to help establish the impact of services for looked after children and care leavers aged 13-21. This will include evidence from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which is a questionnaire designed to show young people's emotional health and wellbeing, GCSE results, exclusions survey work and audits of case work.
  17. The development of joint working arrangements to offer education, employment and training for looked after children and care leavers will remain a priority during 2016/17, in particular, the commissioning of more bespoke education and training opportunities for looked after children and care leavers in order more effectively meet their needs.

### **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) 16-21**

18. Since October 2015, the YSS have also been reporting separately on UASC who are looked after or care leavers in Central Bedfordshire. This decision was reached in recognition that we needed to better understand this growing cohort of young people and that the group may face different barriers to accessing Education, Employment and Training. For example, being able to speak the English language.
19. The analysis of the UASC highlighted the following trends and themes:

#### October 2015 (at the end of Quarter 2)

Of a cohort of 58, the proportion of Asylum Seeking Children participating in education, employment or training was 81.0% compared to 61.3% of the total cohort of LAC / Care Leavers. The proportion of Asylum Seeking Children that were NEET (this includes those that cannot be contacted) was 19.0%. This compared to 38.7% of the total cohort

#### January 2016 (at the end of Quarter 3)

Of a cohort of 65, the proportion of Asylum Seeking Children participating in education, employment or training was 70.8%. This compared to 57.1% of the total cohort of LAC / Care Leavers. The proportion of Asylum Seeking Children that were NEET (this includes those that cannot be contacted) was 29.3%. This compared to 42.9% of the total cohort.

20. The progression and offer of education, employment and training for UASC continues to be a priority, in particular, making sure there is adequate provision of English for speakers of other language courses (ESOL) that will support communication skills and access to broader employment opportunities.

## **Future Aspirations**

21. As outlined above the IAG team in the YSS and its partners seek to raise the aspirations of looked after children and care leavers and enable them supporting to work towards their chosen careers. Over the coming months, the YSS will be working with young people to enable these aspirations can be met. It is important to recognise there is a significant variation in aspirations held by young people in the cohort, including:
  - Construction
  - Meteorology
  - Arts and Design
  - Animal Care
  - Not yet sure - but want to learn the English language so they can access employment
22. It is also important to acknowledge that whilst some young people have higher aspirations, including those seeking to access University; they also face significant barriers in their lives that would impact on them meeting these in the future. For example, emotional and mental health problems that may reduce the capacity of a young person to consistently engage in education, employment and training for sustained periods of time.

## **Apprenticeships and Traineeships**

23. Alongside academic, other vocational and traditional employment routes, one of the potential post-16 learning options available for looked after children and care leavers is an Apprenticeship.
24. Since 2012, there have been 11 looked after children and care leavers who have accessed Apprenticeships. A majority of those have accessed these Apprenticeships since 2014.
25. The Apprenticeships have been with a number of employers, offering varying types of employment and with a number of different training providers. With regard to Apprenticeships with Central Bedfordshire Council, fewer than 5 of the 11 were employed and supported by the local authority. Unfortunately, the course was not completed by any of the apprentices on each occasion.
26. In response to a need identified by a number of partners, the Academy of Social Work and Early Intervention has also been able to deliver two recent traineeships programmes focused on young people with complex needs – including one course specifically focused on supporting care leavers. Each programme has been designed to develop both the qualifications and skills of participants in order for them to progress to future Apprenticeship. In terms of success:

- 8 looked after children and care leavers started traineeships
- 5 were able to secure qualifications through traineeships
- Fewer than 5 were able to access an apprenticeship following the qualifications and skills gained on these courses

27. In April 2016, the YSS was requested to be part of a Council wide approach that would enable better access to looked after children and care leavers to local authority Apprenticeships. This work is currently under development and we request the support of the Corporate Parenting Panel in its development, implementation and review.

### **Council Priorities**

28. The work delivered by the Youth Support Service and its partners is contributing to Council Priorities outlined in its 5 year plan, in particular:

- *Improved Education and Skills*
- *Protecting the vulnerable: Improving Well-being*

29. 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
- Young people valuing the Information, Advice and Guidance they receive
- Young people having the work skills to secure and maintain employment
- There will be clear progression routes for all young people for the next level of training/learning and into work.

30. The work will also make a significant contribution to the emerging council All Age Skills Strategy. In particular:

- Raising Individual Aspiration and Achievement
- Developing our Workforce across Central Bedfordshire

### **Corporate Implications**

31. As Corporate Parents all members of the Council have responsibility for supporting improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. The YSS and its partners meet these duties through its work to help young people raise their aspirations and support them to work towards their chosen careers.

### **Legal Implications**

32. The council has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children it looks after regardless of where they live. In Central Bedfordshire, this duty is delivered by the YSS in partnership with the Virtual School and a range of partners

### **Financial Implications**

33. There are no Financial Implications that result from this report. The support currently delivered by the YSS is done so within the allocated budget.

### **Equalities Implications**

34. 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.
35. 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.

### **Areas for Development**

36. The YSS and its partners have identified the following areas for development in 2016/17:
  - Ensure looked after children and care leavers continue to have a comprehensive offer of IIAG that will enable them to make informed decisions regarding their careers
  - Enable looked after children to manage the transition between statutory schooling and post-16 provision through closer collaboration between the YSS and VS
  - Ensure there are clear and robust integrated working arrangements with health services to ensure barriers to accessing EET for looked after children and care leavers can be addressed at the earliest possible stage

- Ensure the council can secure more bespoke education and training opportunities for vulnerable young people – including ensuring we have sufficient ESOL provision to support looked after children and care leavers
37. We would also request the support of the Corporate Parenting Panel in developing a council wide approach to promoting access to apprenticeships for looked after children and care leavers within the local authority. This approach would need to consider in full the work required in planning for, delivery of and transition from Apprenticeships for this group.
38. The areas for development outlined above will be considered as part of the transformation programme and the identified need to develop a more comprehensive service for vulnerable adolescents. They will be reflected in the YSS plan and the VS development plan. Regular reports on progress will be made to the Virtual School governing body and the Corporate Parenting Operations Group.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Case Studies

## **Background Papers**

None

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## Appendix A

### Case Studies for Corporate Parenting Panel

#### Access to an Apprenticeship – M

M is now 18 and a Care Leaver, after being a Looked After Child for many years and has lived in different placements, including out of county placements.

M currently lives independently in Central Bedfordshire. She completed Year 11 with no formal qualifications as didn't take exams as expected. M later went to an out of county college in 2013 and started a hairdressing course but this did not work out given dynamics with other students on the course. M then dropped out of college and was not in Education, Employment or Training for more than a year.

M had a number of health issues which affected her greatly – including the use of drugs. M was later referred to a mental health hospital where she was 'in and out' for months.

M has now completed a traineeship course run by Central Bedfordshire Council, where she achieved a Cache Entry Level 3 Certificate in Social and Personal Development. M also had the opportunity to take an active part in work experience where she gained a lot of self confidence and employability skills like job search skills, CV skills and interview skills.

M used these skills to search and apply for Apprenticeship opportunities. M was immediately offered a job as an Apprentice nursery nurse at a nursery setting. M worked at this Nursery for few months but made the choice to leave due to difficulties with public transport and reliance on family members for lifts.

M is still very positive about working and has been actively looking and applying for suitable jobs in the area. Her health has greatly improved, has continued to stay away from drugs and continued to independently manage accommodation. M is now able to confidently ring services to ask for help and recently reported that subject to references, they have found a new job.

#### Meeting aspirations – B

B is a looked after child who showed talent in their chosen subject but also had communication difficulties had to be addressed at all times.

During year 9, the talent B had for languages was identified and a career's guidance meeting was arranged to help this young person identify what careers she could be suited to with a talent for languages and to support her with her GCSE option choices. Numerous meetings were held to identify how best to support her to foster this talent by attending a school trip to France/Germany.

Emotional issues had been a concern and an additional teaching assistant who had the capacity to offer 1-1 support to the young person through-out the trip attended. Funding for the trip was drawn from Virtual School. Advice was also taken from

**Appendix A**

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs) and Social Care as to how best the young person could prepare for such a trip.

Having a key worker available to offer 1-1 support and who knew the young person very well who also had the ability to read the individual well as and when communication was an issue was critical to the young person's success in school. Equally identifying that this young person was intelligent and reminding her of her intellect and potential at an early stage contributed to her communicating more effectively.

It was evident that a genuine team working around the child who cared for and knew the individual well was an integral part of enabling the young person to flourish educationally and emotionally.

**Central Bedfordshire Council**

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Monday, 9 May 2016

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**Work Programme**

Advising Officers:

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**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.

**Council Priorities**

3. 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**

4. There are no legal implications.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

5. There are no financial and risk implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

6. 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.
7. 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**

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

### **Appendices**

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>• Placement Stability for Looked After Children (presentation) (EW)</li> <li>• Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17</li> <li>• Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2016/17 (EW)</li> <li>• Securing Education, Employment and Training for LAC and Care Leavers (JD)</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>• Corporate Parenting Action Plan – Annual Review (EW)</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> </ul>

Appendix A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 (TMcD)</li> <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)

Appendix A

- 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 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)
- Accuracy of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (EW) (14.03.16)
- Academic progress made by children since becoming Looked After (14.03.16)
- Personal Advisor to attend Panel to explain measures taken to raise LAC expectations (JE) (14.03.16)

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