

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 24 August 2017

NOTICE OF MEETING

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date & Time

Monday, 4 September 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

Venue at

Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

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

Elected Members (voting)

Cllrs: Mrs 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: R D Berry, D Bowater, Mrs D B Gurney, G Perham and G Tubb]

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)

Assistant Director Leisure, Libraries and Countryside (or their representative if
the Assistant Director 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 3 July 2017 (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. | Agency Report Quarter 1 Fostering 1 April - 30 June 2017 | * 19 - 28 |
| | To consider a report outlining the activity in the Fostering Agency during Quarter 1. | |
| 6. | MOMO App | |
| | To receive a video on the MOMO (Mind of My Own) app which is designed to make it easier for young people to express their views. | |
| 7. | Work Programme | * 29 - 34 |
| | To consider the Panel's work programme. | |
| 8. | Exclusion of the Press and Public | |
| | To consider whether to pass a resolution under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that the consideration of the item is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. | |

Exempt Item

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Subject</i> | <i>Exempt Para.</i> | <i>Page Nos.</i> |
|-------------|--|---------------------|------------------|
| 9. | Children in Care Council Presentation | * 1, 2 | |

To receive a presentation from the Children in Care Council.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford. on Monday, 3 July 2017

PRESENT

Elected Members (voting)

Cllrs Mrs C Hegley (Chairman)
Mrs A L Dodwell (Vice-Chairman)
R D Berry (substituting for Mrs A Barker)
Mrs S A Goodchild
Mrs T Stock
M A G Versallion
B Wells

Officers (voting)

Mr T Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing Services

Carers (non-voting)

Mr P Albon
Mrs T Rowlands
Mr D Thorne

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Mrs A Barker
Cllr N B Costin
Mrs S Harrison, Director of Children's Services
Mrs J Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Members in Attendance: Cllrs K Ferguson
F Firth
P Hollick
J G Jamieson

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| Officers in Attendance: | Mr R Bharkhada | – Interim Head of Corporate Parenting Service |
| | Ms R Coals | – Principal Social Worker and Head of Professional Standards |
| | Ms A Craig | – Practice Manager, Fostering |
| | Mr G Jones | – Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help |
| | Ms J Howard | – Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer |
| | Ms S Keenan | – Practice Manager Conference and Review Service |
| | Mr L Manning | – Committee Services Officer |

Miss N Phillips – Practice Manager Adoption
 Ms M Short – Participation Officer, Professional Standards

Others in Attendance: Ambassadors – for Children in Care Council
 Mr N Parks – Ofsted

CPP/17/1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CPP/17/2. **Members' Interests**

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

CPP/17/3. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The following announcements and communications were made:

- On behalf of the Panel the Chairman welcomed the Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspector, Nigel Parks, to the meeting. The Chairman thanked everyone for accommodating the change in the start time of the Panel in order to enable Mr Parks to attend and to staff for meeting Ofsted's needs during the inspection. In response Mr Parks stated that everyone had been very helpful and he had been welcomed with openness and a lack of defensiveness.
- The Chairman drew Members' attention to the availability of on line training in relation to autism. In response a Member stated that she had been unable to access the training package and indicated that she required assistance to do so.
- The Chairman updated the Panel on the achievements and activities of some of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) Ambassadors including a contribution at the recent 'Cheering Volunteering' event and a triple distinction in training.
- The Chairman referred to the presentation to Councillor Chatterley at Priory View in Dunstable. This had been held in recognition of Councillor Chatterley's efforts in arranging a visit for Looked After Children to Luton Town Football Club. The Panel noted that the presentation certificate had been designed by a CiCC Ambassador. The presentation had been accompanied with a meeting with the chairman of the Priory View Resident's Association.

- At the Chairman's request the Panel received a brief update on the Aspirations Wish List.

CPP/17/4. **Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report April 2016 - March 2017**

The Panel considered a report of the Director of Children's Services on the Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report for 2016-17. Members noted that the Independent Reviewing Officers' (IRO's) Manager had a statutory responsibility for the production of an Annual Report for scrutiny by members of the Corporate Parenting Panel. To this end a copy of the Annual Report was attached at Appendix A to the Director of Children's Services report.

The Practice Manager Conference and Review Service introduced the Annual Report and highlighted matters of particular interest.

Points and comments included:

- The Practice Manager Conference and Review explained that a Looked After Child's participation in a review would take full account of the child's wishes and many took place outside school and after school hours. The Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help Members stressed that the emphasis was on the child remaining in school to continue their education.
- With regard to comments by nearly three quarters of children and young people that they were not happy with the contact arrangements with family the Practice Manager stated that the information provided had been fed back to social workers to see if changes were both in the child's interest and could actually be implemented.
- The number of reviews had decreased slightly from 899 during 2015-16 to 872 in 2016-17. The Practice Manager stated that the number of Looked After Children had actually increased during 2016-17 and that the Council was required to meet a statutory requirement in relation to how often a child was reviewed.
- Ten young people had not participated in their reviews, seven of which were missing at that time. The Practice Manager explained that they had only been in Central Bedfordshire for a short period before going missing. She stated that everything was done to try and locate a missing child. The Interim Head of the Corporate Parenting Service stressed that a missing child was not forgotten and action was taken to track them.
- The Practice Manager referred to the forthcoming introduction of the MOMO (Mind of My Own) app for use by young people and how it provided young people with an instant and convenient way to express their views, wishes and feelings and provide social workers with a way

to record them. The Chairman asked that it be shown to the Panel and feedback provided from users.

- The CiCC Ambassadors commented favourably on the participation by IROs in activity days and how spending time with them in an informal and relaxed setting was beneficial to their relationship.

NOTED

the activity of the Conference and Review Service in relation to the reviews of Looked After Children during 2016-17 as set out within the Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report;

RESOLVED

that a presentation/demonstration of the new MOMO app take place at the Panel's meeting on 4 September 2017.

CPP/17/5. **Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2017/18**

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing which set out the fostering recruitment target for 2017/18 including an overview of key marketing initiatives and targeted campaigns.

A copy of the Strategy was attached at Appendix A to the report.

Points and comments included:

- The suggested use of Instagram and Snapchat as recruitment tools. The Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer stated that discussions were to be held on the possible use of Instagram. Advertising on roundabouts was also suggested but the Practice Manager Fostering, whilst willing to take such suggestions on board, commented on the high cost of doing so.
- A Member reminded the Panel of an event held at Millbrook Parish Hall in 2015 when discussions had taken place involving Members, officers and some young people who were on the verge of living on their own on what was involved. He asked that a similar event be arranged. The Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help welcomed the suggestion and asked the Participation Officer Professional Standards to make arrangements. A Children in Care Council (CiCC) Ambassador referred to her highly positive experience of living in a supported lodging scheme. Discussion took place on using this experience to help form future policy.
- A Member referred to 2013 when the percentage of Looked After Children placed with in-house foster carers was of the order of 41-42% and compared this with the current figure of 65% (as at 31 March 2017). He commented on the range of benefits that arose from this and

expressed his congratulations to the Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help for this achievement. In response the Assistant Director referred to the range of benefits which arose from in-house placements whilst acknowledging the competition posed by the Independent Fostering Agencies.

RESOLVED

that the Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2017/18, as set out at Appendix A to the report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing, be approved.

CPP/17/6. Investigating Concerns and Complaints against Foster Carers

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing which set out the new procedure for investigating concerns and complaints against foster carers.

A copy of the new procedure was attached at Appendix A to the report.

Points and comments included:

- The Practice Manager Fostering stated that the draft procedure had been discussed with foster carers and no concerns had been raised. The procedure would be disseminated through the next fostering newsletter.
- The Practice Manager Fostering stressed that the aim of the procedure was to provide a clear process for carers.

NOTED

the new procedure entitled 'Investigating Concerns and Complaints against Foster Carers' attached at Appendix A to the report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing.

CPP/17/7. Agency Report Quarter 4 - Fostering 1 January - 31 March 2017

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing which set out the Fostering Agency Report for Quarter 4 covering the period 1 January – 31 March 2017.

The Practice Manager Fostering informed the Panel that that part of the report had been omitted but a replacement copy of the report, which included the missing text, would be circulated after the meeting (Note: an extract from the replacement report which sets out the missing text in italics is attached at Appendix A to these minutes).

Points and comments included:

- A Member queried whether discussions took place with those Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers who transferred to Central Bedfordshire Council in order that their experiences in the two sectors could be compared. The meeting noted that discussions were held with potential transferees to ensure that they would be no worse off. The Council did learn from their experiences whilst providing them with support, training, stability and continuity.
- In response to a query the Practice Manager Fostering stated that exit interviews no longer took place due to resource issues although it was hoped that they could be reintroduced.
- The Practice Manager Fostering stated that all carers attended core training, had a personal development plan and a strengths and vulnerabilities profile which was taken account of when matching them with a child.
- The Practice Manager Fostering explained that some carers experienced difficulties in carrying out the training so 1-2-1 assistance was provided in such cases. The Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer added that consideration was being given to developing DVDs, books and other media as an alternative to the existing pc/web based learning materials.
- The Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help explained the circumstances leading to Special Guardianship Orders. He stated that the child or children involved were not formally in care, being cared for by a family member such as a grandparent, but the Council still had some responsibility for them.

NOTED

the Fostering Agency Quarter 4 Performance Report for 1 January – 31 March 2017.

CPP/17/8. Corporate Parenting Service - Fostering Team Annual Report 2016/17

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing on the 2016/17 Annual Report for the Fostering Agency. A copy of the Annual Report was attached at Appendix A to the Executive member's report and a copy of the Annual report of the Chair of the Fostering and Permanence Panel was attached at Appendix B.

The Practice Manager Fostering advised that, in the third sentence of paragraph 4.1.2, the number of Special Guardianship Order (SGO) families which had contacted the Fostering Service for specific support during this period should be 26 and not 27 as stated.

Points and comments included:

- The Chairman requested that the Practice Manager Fostering pass on the Panel's thanks to staff for their efforts.
- A Member suggested that particular issues be highlighted for consideration by Members in future rather than the report being submitted for noting.
- The Panel was advised that in-house fostering placements were spread amongst foster carers across Central Bedfordshire.
- The Vice-Chairman suggested that foster carer material could be made available at Members' surgeries.
- With regard to the possibility of undertaking further action if a complaint was not upheld, the Practice Manager Fostering stated that the outcome would be discussed with the complainant so that he or she was fully aware how the decision to not uphold a complaint had been reached. The Practice Manager Conference and Review Service added that discussions would also take place amongst the relevant staff to understand and clarify any issues raised.
- The Chairman asked that the Panel's thanks be passed on to the staff, foster carers and the Chair and members of the Fostering and Permanence Panel.
- The Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help advised the meeting that information on the forthcoming Foster Carer Celebration would be circulated shortly.

NOTED

the Annual Report of the Fostering Agency for the period 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.

CPP/17/9. Adoption Recruitment Strategy 2017/18

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing which outlined the adoption recruitment target for 2017/18, including an overview of key marketing initiatives and targeted campaigns.

A copy of the Adoption Recruitment Strategy was attached at Appendix A to the report.

The Marketing, Recruitment and Training Officer introduced the report.

The meeting noted that the strategy was similar in approach to that approved by the Panel for foster carers (minute CPP/17/5 above refers).

RESOLVED

that the Adoption Recruitment Strategy 2017/18, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing, be approved.

CPP/17/10. **Adoption Agency Annual Report 2016/17**

The Panel considered a report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing on the Adoption Agency's Annual Report for 2016/17.

A copy of the Annual Report was attached at Appendix A to the Executive Member's report and a copy of the Overview Report of the Chair of the Joint Adoption Panel for 2016/17 was attached at Appendix B.

The meeting noted that the Annual Report described the activities of the Council's Adoption Agency during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, including achievements and the remit and focus of the Agency's work. The report also identified recommendations for the development of the service.

Points and comments included:

- The Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help referred to the mixed progress in the formation of a regional adoption agency. He reported that, following discussions it had been decided to reset the Central East Partnership, of which Central Bedfordshire Council was a member, so that Central Bedfordshire became the lead under the Director of Children's Services. The Assistant Director, mindful of the previous concerns expressed by the Panel, assured the meeting that the regional adoption agency would provide an improved service.
- A Member expressed his congratulations over the Council's performance in securing a reduction in the time taken in fully implementing the adoption process. On behalf of the Panel the Chairman expressed her thanks to those involved including the officers in the adoption team and the Chair and others involved in the Joint Adoption Panel.
- The Chairman queried if it would be possible for the Council to further reduce the length of the care proceedings but the Practice Manager Adoption advised that factors, such as court time availability, were beyond the Council's control.
- The Panel noted that Councillor Mrs Barker, a member of the Joint Adoption Panel, wished to step down from that position and a replacement was therefore required. In addition observers were needed to attend the Joint Adoption Panel. Members were encouraged to consider taking up one of these roles.

NOTED

the Adoption Agency Annual Report for 2016/17.

CPP/17/11. **Work Programme**

Members considered the report of the Committee Services Officer which set out the Panel's proposed work programme for part of the municipal year 2017/18.

The Panel was aware that it had already agreed to a presentation/demonstration of the new MOMO (Mind of My Own) app at the meeting on 4 September 2017 (minute CPP/17/4 above refers).

With regard to the Panel's meeting on 4 September 2017 Members noted that the proposed item on the Chairman of the Adoption Panel's annual report should be deleted as the report had already been included with the Adoption Agency's annual report considered at the last meeting.

RESOLVED

that the Corporate Parenting Panel work programme, as attached at Appendix A to the report of the Committee Services Officer, be approved subject to:

- **deleting the proposed item on the Chairman of the Adoption Panel's annual report scheduled to be considered on 4 September 2017;**
- **adding a Children in Care Council progress report item for consideration at the Panel's meeting on 4 September 2017.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 4.40 p.m.)

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Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Monday, 3 July 2017

Agency Report Quarter 4 – Fostering 1 January – 31 March 2017 CPP

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

Advising Officers: Sue Harris, Director of Children’s Services, and Annie Craig, Practice Manager, Fostering (annie.craig@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Purpose of this report

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Consider and note the Fostering Agency Quarter 4 Report

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report has not been to or is planned to go to Overview and Scrutiny as no recommendations/decisions are required. Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to consider and note the Fostering Agency Quarter 4 report.

Executive Summary

- The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require the Local Authority Fostering Service to report to Members regularly on the activities of the Service. This report, therefore, focuses on the work

undertaken in the Fostering Service during quarter 4 (1 January – March 2017). It focuses on the recruitment, assessment, approval and training of foster carers. It also reports on any Ofsted notifications, allegations, complaints or compliments received regarding foster carers or the Service as a whole.

- *This quarter is a significant one as it is also the end of the financial year where the Fostering Service is judged as to whether it has met any relevant targets set.*
- *In this report it is important to note that the Fostering Service achieved the target set for 2016/17 in relation to the recruitment of foster carers.*
- *It is also significant to note that at the end of this quarter the number of children placed with in house foster carers was at an all time high.*
- *Other important achievements during the quarter were in relation to placement stability where both the short term and long term placement stability targets were exceeded.*

Recruitment of Foster Carers

- *During January, February and March 2017, a variety of recruitment activities and events took place in line with the Fostering Services Recruitment Strategy.*
- *In terms of outreach work 2 activities took place. An information evening was held in Biggleswade in January and an information drop in took place at Watling House, Dunstable in March.*
- *During this quarter various advertising took place which included 2 radio adverts on Hearts radio, a newspaper advert in Biggleswade advertising a planned Information Evening. Ongoing advertising continued on a roundabout outside Tesco's in Flitwick, in Info Central, a residents guide to Council Service's which is sent with all CBC council tax bills and adverts on the back of Crossing Patrol workers. Leaflets were also distributed to postcode areas around the Fostering Information area event. Posters and leaflets were also distributed to St John's school in Bedford.*
- *In January a press release was sent to local news and contacts regarding the launch of the Supported Lodgings Scheme, this was followed up in February with an article in Beds on Sunday and in Staff Central. Articles were also placed in Biggleswade Chronicle and on the Beds on Sunday website promoting the Supported Lodgings Scheme.*
- *Online posts have continued to be promoted during this quarter and have had particular focus on the Supported Lodgings Scheme and the revised Intensive Support Scheme. These went to CBC, Town and Parish Councils, Schools, Governors and a local hospital. On line*

articles were placed on the Beds on Sunday website, Luton Today and various newsletters such as Central Essentials (sent to all head teachers in all schools/academies in the CBC area), Governors Essential (sent to all Governors of schools/academies in the CBC area), Connect (sent to all staff within Social Care, Health, Housing and relevant portfolio holders). A local news webpage takeover (fostering advert) was also placed in Biggleswadedetoday.co.uk.

- In terms of social media various posts were made on Central Bedfordshire Council's Twitter account and Facebook page. A Net Native campaign started with Facebook adverts regarding the Intensive Support fostering scheme and a Google search campaign which focused on general fostering.
- During this quarter 2 number of carers chose to transfer from their agency to CBC as a result of the 'Golden Handshake' initiative that was introduced in September 2016.
- As a result of the recruitment that took place during this period we received a total of 34 enquiries, 16 in January, 10 in February and 8 in March (this is 13 more than in the last quarter). There were 24 Initial Visits during this period: 6 in January, 8 in February and 10 in March (this is 6 more than in the previous quarter). There were 7 application forms received during this period: 4 in January, 2 in February and 1 in March (this is 5 less than in the previous quarter). The best form of recruitment during this period was via the net native campaign (7 enquiries) and the CBC website (5 enquiries).

Assessments

- During this period 17 new assessments were started: 5 career carer, 2 Regulation 24 (temporary approval), 8 Family and Friends/Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and 2 Supported Lodgings assessments. As of the 31st March 2017 there were a total of 16 assessments in progress: 6 career carers, 2 Regulation 24's, 6 Family and Friends/SGO's and 2 Supported Lodgings assessments.
- 6 Fostering households were approved, all as career carers, during this quarter (2 of which were IFA transfers). This brings the number of approval for the year to 11 which exceeds the recruitment target set for 2016/17 which was to recruit 10 career carers.

During this quarter there were 2 de-registrations of foster carers, 1 carer resigned following concerns being raised with her regarding the care provided to the child in placement, The second resignation was from a carer where a planned review of her approval was going to recommend she was no longer suitable to be approved as an Intensive Support foster carer.

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Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Monday, 4 September 2017

Agency Report Quarter 1 Fostering 1 April - 30 June 2017

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

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

Annie Craig, Practice Manager, Fostering Team (annie.craig@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Purpose of this report

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Consider and note the Fostering Agency Quarter 1 Report

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

2. This report has not been to or is planned to go to Overview and Scrutiny as no recommendations/decisions are required. Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to consider and note the Fostering Agency Quarter 1 report.

Executive Summary

- The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require the Local Authority Fostering Service to report to Members regularly on the activities of the Service. This report, therefore, focuses on the work undertaken in the Fostering Service during quarter 1 (1 April – 30 June

2017). It focuses on the recruitment, assessment, approval and training of foster carers. It also reports on any Ofsted notifications, allegations, complaints or compliments received regarding foster carers or the Service as a whole.

- This quarter is the first quarter report for the financial year 2017/2018.

Recruitment of Foster Carers

- During April, May and June 2017, a variety of recruitment activities and events took place in line with the Fostering Services Recruitment Strategy.
- Traditionally the Fostering Service has undertaken a lot of outreach work. Whilst this will raise awareness in the community about fostering, there is no evidence to suggest it increases the number of enquiries the Service receives. The Service has, therefore, not included outreach work in its recruitment and marketing strategy for 2017/2018 apart from the occasional information session, of which none took place in this quarter.
- During this quarter various advertising took place which included a radio advert, a Fostering banner display that was put up at a refugee football tournament and 10 adverts on the back of buses on different routes across the Central Bedfordshire area. Posters/leaflets/articles regarding different schemes (Intensive Support, Supported Lodgings and PACE (Police And Criminal Evidence Act 1984) as well as fostering in general were distributed to various schools in targeted areas such as Ampthill and Marston Mortaine. They were also distributed to the Community Voluntary Service, Central Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service, Army Reserve Centre's and Children's Centre's around the Central Bedfordshire area, TACTIC (Teenage Advice and Information Centre), MacIntyre Care Home. Other advertising included articles in the Early Years newsletter, Bedford Hospital Staff newsletter and Staff Central magazine. An article about PACE fostering was sent to the Prison Service and leafletting advertising fostering was undertaken in the Lancot area of Dunstable. Extra large posters were also distributed to Tesco stores in Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard.
- In April there was a press release in relation to the newly developed PACE fostering scheme. In May press releases were also sent to the local press regarding foster carer fortnight.
- In terms of Social Media online posts have been the main focus of this quarter as our statistics are clear this is the main media used by people interested in fostering for CBC. Although the Service is always promoting fostering in general, marketing in this quarter has been on promoting the new and amended schemes in fostering which are supported lodgings, PACE fostering and Intensive Support fostering. During this quarter we have had regular Tweets/Posts on CBC's

Twitter/Facebook/SEND/and Fostering Facebook as well as the Seeds of Change Facebook. We undertook a web takeover re. Leighton Buzzard Today newspaper and had on line articles in Dunstable Today and Bedford Today. We had an online advert placed on the homepage of Heart Radio, an on line article/editorial in NARPO (National Association of Retired Police Officers) and sent out E Bulletins to Members and 6801 CBC residents.

- As a result of the recruitment that took place during this period we received a total of 33 enquiries; 14 in April, 6 in May and 13 in June (this is 2 less than at the year end). There were 18 Initial Visits during this period: 4 in April, 10 in May and 4 in June (this is 6 less than at the year end). There were 11 application forms received during this period: 4 in April, 2 in May and 5 in June (this is 4 more than at the year end). The best form of recruitment during this period was via the CBC website (28 enquiries) and Google search to the website (11 enquiries).

Assessments

- During this period 17 new assessments were started (this is the same number as in the previous quarter): 5 career carer, 4 Regulation 24 (temporary approval), 7 Family and Friends/Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and 1 Supported Lodgings assessment. As of the 30th June 2017 there were a total of 21 assessments in progress: 9 career carers (which included 4 IFA transfers), 1 Regulation 24, 8 Family and Friends/SGO's and 3 Supported Lodgings assessments.
- There were no new career fostering households approved during this quarter, however as you can see from above there were 9 assessments in progress which means that our target to approve 10 new career fostering households during this financial year is on course to be met.

Resignations/Termination of Approvals

- During this quarter 1 foster carer's approval was terminated by CBC and another resigned.
- The termination of approval was due to a culmination of concerns/issues that resulted in the removal of the children from the carer. A review of the carer's approval took place which recommended termination of approval. This was presented to panel and the ADM who ratified the decision to terminate.
- In relation to the resignation received, this was due to disagreements the carers had in relation to the Local Authority's Care Plan for the child in their care and the emotional impact this appeared to have on the carer. The carer's approval was reviewed and a recommendation was

made to terminate their approval, however, before this reached Fostering Panel the carers resigned.

Carer/LAC Data

- As of the 30th June 2017 the Fostering Agency had a total of 109 fostering households (compared to 107 at the end of the last financial year), 87 of these were career carers.
- In relation to the ethnicity of foster carers and children placed, there is a fair match of ethnicity with foster carers broadly reflecting the ethnicity of our children in care. As part of its targeted recruitment strategy, the Service is, however, aiming to recruit more carers from ethnic minority groups in order to meet the specific needs of children in carer i.e. UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children).

| Ethnicity | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Ethnicity</i> | <i>Foster Carers</i> | <i>Looked After Children</i> |
| White | 89% | 85% |
| Dual Heritage | 1% | 5% |
| Black or Black British | 7% | 3% |
| Asian | 3% | 2% |
| White Gypsy/Traveller | / | 1% |
| Other | / | 4% |
| Not known | / | 1% |
| | 100% | 100% |

- As of the 30th June 2017 there were a total of 127 children placed with in house foster carers compared to 76 with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). The number of children placed with in house carers is increasing year on year. It has risen from 46% of children placed in house at the end of March 2014 to 65% at the end of March 2017 and 63% as at the end of quarter 1.
- Short term placement stability remains good as evidenced in the performance indicator exNI62 which looks at the percentage of children looked after with three or more placements during the previous twelve months. This target was exceeded last year, it was set at 11% and we achieved 9.2%. A more challenging target has been set for this financial year which is 8% and at the end of this quarter the Service sat at just over this target at 8.3%.
- Long term placement stability also remains good as evidenced in the performance indicator exNI63 which looks at the percentage of children

looked after aged under 16 who have been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years, who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption. This target was exceeded last year, it was set at 70% and we achieved 78.4%. Again a more challenging target has been set for this financial year which is 80% and at the end of this quarter the Service sat at just under this target at 79.1%

- As of the 30 June 2017 there were 143 Special Guardianship Orders in place (compared to 135 at the end of the last financial year). Although Special Guardian Order (SGO) carers are generally expected to access universal services, they are entitled to seek support from the Local Authority as and when required. The Fostering Service continues to work with a small cohort of families who contact the service sporadically for support and advice. On average the service works with about 5 families a month and will undertake visits, or provide telephone support in order to meet the needs of individual carers. The main area Special Guardianship Order (SGO) carers seek support with is in relation to contact; children's behaviour or support in financing respite or holiday activities.

Private Fostering

- This report does not cover Private Fostering as the overall management of Private Fostering sits with the Family Support Service.

Referrals/Placements

- During April, May and June 2017 there were 16 new fostering placements made: 2 in April, 7 in May and 7 in June. This is a decrease of 17 new placements compared to the last quarter.

Training

- During this quarter foster carers accessed a wide range of training opportunities to help them develop their knowledge and skills. The Fostering Service provided 14 specialist in house training courses which included: Children who go missing; the risk of sexual exploitation, Internet Safety and digital safeguarding, Drug education, Keeping Safe: de-escalation and breakaway techniques, First Aid, Early Years Development and Attachment, Anxiety and the cycle of rage, Cultural Diversity, Help for carers of troubled teenagers, Oral Healthcare, Developing Protected Behaviours with LAC, Talking about Sex and teaching young people to build healthy relationships and CAMHS workshops on Attachment Disorders and Sleep problems in children.
- 51 foster carers also accessed e-learning, which included; Safeguarding children from abuse by sexual exploitation, Attachment and brain development, Contact in foster care, Safer caring, Domestic

Violence, Adolescence, Behaviour and the Physical environment, Equality and Diversity, E-safety, A new approach to child poverty, Early child development, Awareness of child abuse and neglect, Equality and Diversity in the workplace, Introduction to safeguarding children, Children and young people's development in health and social care settings, Common core of skills and knowledge and Equality and Inclusion in Health, Social Care or children and young people's settings.

- As of the 30th June 2017 there were 83 fostering households that had completed their mandatory Training, Support and Development Standards (TSD's); 10 households were yet to complete their portfolios but still had time to address within the required timescales. 6 households were overdue in completing their TSD Standards and were outside the required timescale. Supervising social workers and the Marketing, Recruitment and Training Support Officer were providing additional support to help these carers achieve the standards.

Ofsted Notifications

- Whenever a significant event happens i.e. a child goes missing from placement or a serious incident/accident occurs the agency have to report these to Ofsted. During this period there were 2 notifications, 1 was due to a foster carer reporting that a known sex offender had been giving lifts to a childminder assistant, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) was contacted who advised to notify Ofsted. The other notification was made in relation to an allegation made against a male foster carer, a JEM (Joint Evaluation Meeting) was held and a S47 Investigation initiated.

Allegations

- During this period there was 1 allegation made against a foster carer as outlined above.

Complaints

- During this period no new complaints were received, however a complaint made by a foster carer in relation to the Local Authority's decision to move children prematurely to their adoptive placement was escalated to stage 2 of the complaints procedure. This was following the outcome of her stage 1 complaint where she raised 11 points, of which 4 were partially upheld and 1 was upheld. The 4 partially upheld points related to the clarification of raising concerns and communication regarding the carers being placed on hold. This had been rectified through the introduction of a Concerns and Complaints against Foster Carers Procedure. The upheld point related to a process issue in relation to the foster carers payment which had been rectified.

Compliments

- During this period 1 compliment was received from a childcare social worker thanking a foster carer for her 'excellent care' of 2 children she had looked after. The social worker acknowledged that there had been some difficult and upsetting times over the previous few months but that the foster carer's care of the children had never waived from being excellent. The social worker made the carer aware that CBC valued her professionalism.

Ofsted Inspection

- During this quarter an Ofsted Inspection took place and although the draft report has not yet been received, the verbal feedback received from Ofsted, at the time, about the Fostering Service was extremely positive.

Annual Budget

- Year 2016/2017 the Fostering Service within Children's Services had an annual budget of £1,179,630.

Reporting to Members – Legal Requirements

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

Risk Management

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

Staffing

- The Fostering Agency comes under the umbrella of the Corporate Parenting Service and the Head of Service has overall management responsibility for Fostering. Under the Head of Service is the Practice Manager who is also the Registered Manager for Fostering. This person monitors and manages the activities of the Fostering Agency. She supervises 2 team managers who have day to day responsibility for management of 2 fostering teams. During this period there were no new starters or leavers, however as at the 30th June 2017 there were vacancies within the Service for 3 Social Workers and a Business Support Officer. Delays in the Vacancy Management Process (VMP), regarding these 3 posts is having a significant impact on the Service's

ability to assess prospective foster carers and provide the relevant supervision and support to foster carers.

Council Priorities

- Children and Families First.
- Working as One Team close to our community.
- Being great Corporate Parents to children in care and care leavers – much more than care.
- Being a well managed service and providing great public care.

Corporate Implications

- Not applicable.

Legal Implications

- This report provides updating information to allow consideration of the activities of the Fostering Agency in the previous quarter as required by legislation, there are no further legal implications.

Financial and Risk Implications

- The report is an update on the fostering service and does not have financial implications.

Equalities Implications

Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The report highlights ongoing efforts to recruit foster carers from diverse backgrounds and to provide training and development in relation to equality issues.

Implications of Work Programming

- The 4 quarter reports for fostering feed into an annual report which is then presented to Overview and Scrutiny along with the Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

Conclusion and next Steps

- The Fostering Service has met its recruitment targets for the previous 3 years. This years target is to recruit a further 10 career fostering households for 2017/18. The Service is on course to exceed this target with 9 career carer assessments already in progress. 4 of these assessments are Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) transfers, which is very positive as IFA carers can now see the benefits of transferring to a Local Authority, not just in terms of the competitive fees paid but also in relation to the comprehensive support offered. The Service also has targets to recruit 10 Supported Lodgings carers and increase the number of Intensive Support carers from 5 to 10. Work in both areas is positive and at the end of this quarter there were 2 approved Supported Lodgings carers and 3 in assessment. The number of Intensive Support carers had also increased from 5 to 8. If recruitment in these areas continues to increase then these targets are projected to be met by the end of the financial year. A further target which may prove more challenging is in relation to PACE placements. The Service have recently introduced this scheme which will provide overnight stays and support to children and young people who have been arrested and are due to attend court the following day. Work is being undertaken with Luton Borough Council on this scheme. CBC's target is to recruit 5 PACE carers that can then be shared with Luton's pool of carers to provide overnight stays and support to children needing these types of placements, on a rota basis as and when required. Extensive marketing has been undertaken and although there has been some interest, thus far, no carers have applied to be part of this scheme.
- As of 30th June 2017 63% of children were placed with in house foster carers compared to 37% with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). This is a slight decrease from the year end figure which was 65%, however this is only a slight fluctuation and the Service is confident that this % will increase in the coming months. If the Service continues with its robust recruitment strategy, the number of completed assessments/ approvals of prospective foster carers continues at the current rate and foster carers continue to receive a good level of support, the % of children in house should continue to increase and the aspiration to place 70% of children in house by the end of this financial year should be achieved.
- Short and long term placement stability is good and although more challenging targets have been set for this financial year the Service is confident these targets can be met.
- Whilst the Service has seen the resignation of 1 carer and the termination of approval of another during this quarter the service have reflected on both cases. Learning achieved has been put into practice as a result, for instance, a Concerns and Complaints against Foster Carers procedure has now been introduced. This gives clarity to foster

carers and staff in terms of understanding and investigating concerns and complaints against foster carers.

- Allegations and complaints about the service remain low as do compliments this quarter. The service generally receives a high number of compliments so it is surprising that only 1 compliment was recorded in this quarter. It is highly probable that this is a recording issue so work will be done in the next quarter to ensure all staff are routinely recording all compliments received.
- In conclusion this has been a very positive first quarter for the Service. Although this is only the first quarter the service is on track with all targets set. The performance and available data for the service give a good indication that foster carers are providing a high standard of care to the children placed with them, that children are well matched and supported in local resources and that outcomes for them are good all of which was endorsed by Ofsted in their verbal feedback on the Service.

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

Monday, 4 September 2017

Work Programme

Advising Officer:

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

Purpose of this report

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

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel considers the proposed work programme attached at Appendix A.

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

| 2016/17 Municipal Year | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 6 March 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CiCC and Participation Annual Report 2016/17 (inc. Pledge update) (MS/CiCC) • Update of the Adoption Fund (NP) • Fostering Service Q3 Report (AC) • Virtual School for LAC Interim Report (JE) • LAC Health Report – Six Monthly Update NHS Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (TMcD) • Work Programme (LM) • CiCC Presentation (MS/CiCC) EXEMPT ITEM |
| 8 May 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose 2017/18 (RB) • Fostering Agency Statement of Purpose 2017/18 (RB) • Peer Review and Action Plan (GJ) • Update on Transformation Plan (GJ) • Work Programme (LM) |
| 2017/18 Municipal Year | |
| 3 July 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report 2016/17 (SK) • Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2017/18 (AC) • Investigating Concerns and Complaints against Foster Carers (AC) • Fostering Agency Q4 Performance Report (AC) • Fostering Agency Annual Report 2016/17 (AC) • Adoption Recruitment Strategy 2017/18 (NP) • Adoption Agency Annual Report 2016/17 (NP) • Work Programme (LM) |
| 4 September 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Service Q1 Report (AC) • Children in Care Council Progress Report (MS/CiCC) • MOMO App Demonstration (MS/CiCC) • Work Programme (LM) |
| 13 November 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving Care Housing (spotlight report) (TK/GJ) • LAC Annual (Health) Report (NHS – Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group) (TMcD) • Fostering Service Q2 Report (AC) • Adoption Agency Interim Report (NP) • Virtual School for LAC Interim Report (JE) • Work Programme (LM) |
| 15 January 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Fund (NP) • Work Programme (LM) |

Appendix A

Unscheduled reports:

- Options for the funding of long term family care (GJ)
- Challenges experienced with the adoption process – discussion with carers (GJ)
- The appointment of a lay member/parent and the appointment of a substitute elected Member to the Joint Adoption Panel (author to be determined)
- Video presentation on the work of the CiCC (GJ)
- Foster care leavers be invited to attend and describe their experiences in care and raise any issues (GJ)
- Looked After Children’s Health Care Provision ‘Deep Dive’ Report (by March 2016) (GJ)
- ‘Spotlight Report’ on the current process which applies to young people as they move into adult social care and what additional action can be taken to improve support for them during this phase (young people to be invited to attend and talk about their experiences) (GJ)
- ‘Spotlight Report’ on how the adoption process works and how people become adopters (GJ)
- ‘Spotlight Reports’ on the following issues:
 - a. LAC with disabilities
 - b. Unaccompanied asylum seekers as LAC
 - c. The Virtual School
 - d. The reason for, and the impact of, the movement of LAC between different foster carers
(authors to be determined)
- A report by the foster carer representatives (Central Bedfordshire branch of the FCA) setting out feedback on various issues of their choice
- Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme and LAC (EW)
- ‘Spotlight Report’ providing examples of young people in different types of accommodation situations and what their experiences and outcomes were (18.01.16)
- Statistical information be provided on the number of young people, how they move on and what type of housing offers they receive (18.01.16)
- Given the perceived demand for foyer type accommodation, information be supplied on what is currently available within Central 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)

Appendix A

- 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)
- Regular Update reports on the establishment of a regional adoption agency (GJ) (09.05.16)
- 'Spotlight Report' on youth support and help for adolescents in gaining further education, apprenticeships or employment (GJ) (09.05.16)
- Corporate Parenting Action Plan – Annual Review
- 'Deep Dive Report' with presentation on care leavers' employment (including Aspirations Wish List) (GJ) (08.05.17)

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