

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



please ask for Sharon Griffin
direct line 0300 300 5066
date 4 January 2018

NOTICE OF MEETING

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date & Time

Monday, 15 January 2018 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 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 one meeting.

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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 the 13 November 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	Central Bedfordshire Council Looked After Children Annual Report To consider a report describing the achievements, progress and challenges of the Looked After Children (LAC) health service in meeting the health needs of Bedford Borough Council (BBC) and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) children and young people in care, during the period from 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017.	11 - 22
6	Adoption Fund To consider a report outlining the Department for Education Adoption Support Fund.	23 - 30
7	Looked After Children Social Worker Churn To consider a report outlining the Social Work churn for Looked After Children in Central Bedfordshire.	31 - 34

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| 8 | Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan | 35 - 60 |
| | To consider a report outlining Central Bedfordshire Council's Children's Services Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan. | |
| 9 | The PAUSE Programme | |
| | To receive a presentation on the PAUSE Programme | |
| 10 | Work Programme | To Follow |
| | 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, 13 November 2017

PRESENT

Elected Members (voting)

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

Carers (non-voting)

Mr P Albon

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Mrs A Barker
Mrs J Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Mr D Thorne

Officers in Attendance:	Ms R Coals	Principal Social Worker and Head of Professional Standards
	Mr A Coman	Head of Service
	Ms A Craig	Practice Manager, Fostering
	Mrs J Edwards	Head of Virtual School
	Ms S Griffin	Committee Services Officer
	Mr G Jones	Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
	Mr L Manning	Committee Services Officer
	Miss N Phillips	Practice Manager Adoption

CPP/17/20. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4 September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CPP/17/21. **Members' Interests**

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

CPP/17/22. Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The following announcements and communications were made:

The Chairman expressed her thanks to all those involved in the Celebration of Fostering event which had taken place to highlight the work and achievements of our foster carers and was very well attended.

The Chairman advised that there is a vacancy on the Adoption Panel due to Councillor Barker standing down and sought assistance in filling this position.

Members were advised that due to various reasons the date of the Children In Care Awards had been moved several times. The Awards were now taking place on the 1 December and an appeal would be launched asking Members to contribute to the event.

The Chairman welcomed Alex Coman to the meeting who, following a rigorous interview process, had been appointed as Head of Service, Family Support Service.

At the request of the Chairman, the Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help provided an update on the following matters:

- A visit to Central Bedfordshire Council offices had been requested by Oxfordshire County Council, Northamptonshire County Council and the Deputy Director, Social Care Policy Ofsted to examine the work being undertaken by Children's Services including the transformation agenda.
- Central Bedfordshire Council had been nominated for the following awards:
 - Best social work employer and Adult Social Worker of the Year - the Social Worker of the Year Awards
 - Team of the Year, Kingfisher Residential Home - the Community Care awards.
 - Children's Services – the Local Government Chronicle

Drop in sessions will be arranged for Members to give them the opportunity to meet teams such as Fostering and Adoption. A dedicated suite of rooms was also now available at Priory House for families to visit. The rooms replaced the facilities at Stephenson Court.

Work had been undertaken to investigate the move by some local authorities to exempt care leavers from council tax charges.

CPP/17/23. Agency Report Quarter 2 Fostering 1 July - 30 September 2017

The Panel considered the report outlining the activity in the Fostering Agency during Quarter 2.

Points and comments included:

1. In September, the Service held its Celebration of Fostering event which was attended by over 130 carers and children. Long service awards were presented to 15 foster carers and their families who had clocked up 120 years' service between them. The feedback received from the event had been very positive.
2. As of the 30 September 2017 the Fostering Agency had a total of 110 fostering households (compared to 109 at the end of the previous quarter).
3. As of the 30 September there were 143 Special Guardianship Orders in place which was a small increase compared to 139 at the end of the last quarter. The reason for this increase could be due to seasonal issues such as a larger cohort of early births.
4. The Fostering Service introduced a new 'PACE' (Police and Criminal Evidence) fostering scheme in April 17 which was aimed at approving carers who could care for young people who have been arrested and would otherwise remain in custody. Luton initiated the scheme and the plan was for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Council to work together with Luton Borough Council to recruit and run the PACE scheme, offering cover on a rota basis. There had been some difficulty in recruiting to this scheme despite external and internal advertising. The Service would continue to promote the scheme and work with Luton to ensure its success.
5. Last year the Fostering Service reviewed what was called the Youth Care Scheme and this was now known as Intensive Support. The target to recruit 10 Intensive Support carers by March 2018 was on track.
6. Work in progress included the development of a Parent and Child Scheme by March 2018.
7. The assessment for Family and Friends foster carers was nationally determined and was a very rigorous process. It took into account the current situation of the child, the impact of the placement, and how the child's life would be improved by the placement. Any placement which was felt not to be in the best interest of the child would be challenged.
8. The retention of Family and Friends foster carers was a national issue with the average foster carer providing care for 7½ years. Member's views and ideas on how to extend the service and support and encourage foster carers to continue were encouraged.
9. Whilst the number of unaccompanied asylum seekers was falling, they formed a small but significant increase in the care population with a resulting increase in placement costs.
10. A member expressed concern regarding the number of placements (three or more) that some of the Looked After Children were experiencing. In response the Panel was advised that a small group of Looked After Children exhibited challenging behaviour leading to placement breakdowns. In other cases placements could break down through incompatibility. The meeting noted that the original move into care also counted as a placement.

NOTED

the Fostering Agency Report for Quarter 2.

That the report on Children's Social Worker stability would now be submitted to the meeting on the 15 January 2018.

RESOLVED

- 1. that an update on those children who had had three or more placement moves and the reason for the moves would be provided at the March meeting.**
- 2. that a questionnaire for Foster Carers would be drafted and the results of the questionnaire would be shared with Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel.**

CPP/17/24. Six Monthly Report in Respect of the Adoption Service 1 April - 30 September 2017

The Panel considered the report outlining the activity in the Adoption Service in the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

Points and comments included:

1. The introduction of the ability to enquire about the Adoption Service via social media has resulted in a significant increase in the enquiries received in this period in comparison with the previous six months
2. There were 22 households in assessment process at the end of this period. It was envisaged that the target of 20 approvals would be met within the next period.
3. The accessing of support and interventions continues to be a key area of Adoption placements. The Adoptive Support Fund (ASF) was an important source of funding as within the current financial year £76k of therapy support had been provided to adoptive families in Central Bedfordshire.
4. Due to the level of demand for the ASF the DfE had introduced a 'fair usage' cap of £5,000 per child and local authorities will have to share the costs of support over and above that limit through a match-funding approach.
5. Central Bedfordshire continued to be a partner within the Central East Regional Adoption Agency with six other Local Authorities.
6. Since April 2017, 4 of the 54 young people who ceased to be looked after were adopted. Year to date Adoption performance stood at 7.4% at the end of September 2017 which was below the set target of 20.0% but the expectation was that this target will be met by the end of the year.

7. The Ofsted report highlighted that in Central Bedfordshire the adoption process was taking place quickly, that the children were well prepared for adoption and that there was good quality adoptive support in place.

NOTED

the Adoption Service report from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

RESOLVED

that the details of the Adoption Family Christmas Party taking place on the 2 December 2018 would be circulated to Members of the Panel.

CPP/17/25. 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.

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 the addition of:

1. a report on Permanency Planning for children, including the process and early intervention.
2. a presentation on the PAUSE Programme to the Panel's meeting in January 2018 and a further spotlight report on PAUSE in March 2018.
3. a report on the possible exemption of care leavers from council tax charges at the January meeting.
4. an update on the development of an Action Plan arising from the Ofsted inspection at the January 2018 meeting.
5. that a review of the unscheduled reports on the Work Programme would be undertaken and that items that had already been considered would be removed.

CPP/17/26. Exclusion of the Press and Public**RESOLVED**

that in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

CPP/17/27. **Final Report Virtual School for Looked After Children Academic Year 2015/16**

The Panel received the final report for the Virtual School for Looked After Children for the Academic Year 2015/16.

The Panel were advised that the DfE only released the Statistical First Release (SFR) in March 2016 and until this happened it had not been possible to provide any comparative data.

The report provided information on the role of the Virtual Schools and the validated outcomes at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 for Looked After Children (LAC) in Central Bedfordshire in the Academic Year 2015/16 and identified the steps the Virtual School was taking in the current Academic Year 2016/17 in partnership with other agencies including schools and social care to raise the achievement and progress of all LAC.

CPP/17/28. **Interim Report Virtual School for Looked After Children Academic Year 2016/17**

The Panel received the Interim Report from the Virtual School for Looked After Children for the Academic Year 2016/17.

The report provided information on the role of the Virtual School and the unvalidated outcomes at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 for Looked After Children (LAC) in Central Bedfordshire in the Academic Year 2016/17 and identifies the steps the Virtual School was taking in the current Academic Year 2017/18 in partnership with other agencies including schools and social care to raise the achievement and progress of all LAC.

The Panel considered in fill the measures being taken to improve the educational attainments and recognised the progress and improvements which had been made.

NOTED

The interim Report Virtual School for Looked After Children Academic Year 2016/17.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Panel be invited to attend a Personal Education Plan (PEP) Moderation meeting.**
- 2. That a sample of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) would be circulated to the Chairman of the Panel for information**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.28 p.m.)



Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's Looked After Children's Health Annual Report

1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Director: Anne Murray, Director of Nursing and Quality
Author: Teresa McDonald, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
Date: November 2017



better care, better value, better health

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Executive Summary

This report describes the achievements, progress and challenges of the Looked After Children (LAC) health service in meeting the health needs of Bedford Borough Council (BBC) and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) children and young people in care, during the period from 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017. The report provides an update on work and developments for the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's (BCCG) commissioned service for the health of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, and gives an overview of service provision.

This annual report replaces previously reported formats and reflects BCCG commissioned health service input rather than replicating local authority information and data as found in previous annual reports and reported by the local authorities.

The LAC Health Team within Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT) co-ordinates all the statutory LAC health assessments for in county and out of county placements for BBC and CBC children and young people; this includes responsibility for quality assuring LAC Health Assessments.

Introduction

This annual health report informs on the health aspects for BBC and CBC Looked After Children (LAC). The Department of Health Statutory Guidance '*Promoting the Health of Looked After Children (2015)*' requires a report on the delivery of service and the progress achieved for the health and wellbeing of children in care.

This report covers the period of 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, but also outlines the current work being undertaken and the strategic aims set out for 2017/18. It will inform partners of the work to improve health outcomes for Looked After Children, as well as identifying some of the challenges facing the service.

Looked after Children and Young People should expect to have the same opportunities as other children and young people, including being healthy and safe. They should be provided with the opportunities needed to help them move successfully to adulthood. The needs of Looked After Children and Young People vary, but are often complex, and can be met only by a range of services operating collaboratively across different settings.

BCCG have in post a full time Designated Nurse for LAC, along with a Designated Doctor who has allocated time to undertake this role. The role of Designated Professionals is to work in partnership with the provider, Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT), to ensure that the health needs identified for looked after children are met.

Partnership working

The importance of the health of children and young people in care cannot be underestimated. The health of looked after children is everyone's responsibility, so partnership working is essential to ensure optimum health for each individual child and young person. There is evidence of good partnership working between the LA and Health services. This is evidenced through the following meetings:-

- *Corporate Parenting Panel*
The CCG is represented on BBC and CBC corporate parenting panels which meet quarterly.
- *The Edge of Care Panel (BBC)*
The Designated Nurse is an active member of the panel which meets monthly. The Panel's purpose is to improve the service to, and outcomes for children who might become looked after, agreeing a plan to support the children and young people and their families.

- *The Resource Panel (CBC)*

The Resource Panel is a multi-agency panel that oversees, challenges, endorses and reviews any financial implication for planning processes for Looked After Children and young people (LAC) and those at the edge of care. The Resource Panel's role is to ensure that all proposed and existing internal residential, external residential (OoAs) and Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) continue to best meet the individual needs of the young person whilst at the same time ensuring that Best Value principles are implemented in the care planning process. The Panel will also address potential or actual drift in Care Planning by reviewing such placements and funding arrangements as it deems appropriate

The cases are presented by the social worker, any issues that arise in regards to the health of the children and young people are raised, discussed and fed back to the health commissioner or provider as appropriate.

- *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)*

Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Boards have a statutory duty to assess the needs of the local population through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This is a local assessment of current and future health and social care needs. Representatives from the BCCG participate in in all areas of the joint assessment. (Bedford Borough link: www.bedford.gov.uk/jsna Central Bedfordshire Link: www.jsna.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

- *Voice of the child*

The BCCG Designated Nurse and the Children in Care Council (CiCC) work in close partnership with Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire in engaging young people to ensure the voice of the child is captured and participates in events across Bedfordshire involving children and young people. This in turn informs commissioning and service provider arrangements. This has included the development of "The Pledge" which gives a commitment from health services to ensure timely completion of health assessment and for all young people leaving care to be issued with a health passports.

- *The LAC strategic and operational health groups within the CCG.*

The CCG continues to play an active role on the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils by ensuring active engagement in the Safeguarding partnerships. Strategic planning for LAC is directed through the local authorities and accountability for the services provided to Looked After Children from the local authority and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) is directed through the respective Corporate Parenting Panels. Multi-agency strategic planning and operational oversight is directed through the Multi-agency Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked after children Group (PHW-LAC), which contributes to strategic planning via the Children and Young People's Plans and the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) partnership, and reports up through the BCCG's governance structure.

The LAC health strategic group meets quarterly, and has the following responsibilities:

- Ensure clear lines of accountability are in place and that issues identified are addressed in a timely manner
- Ensure relevant information sharing occurs between BCCG and relevant stakeholders
- Monitor and delegate appropriate work streams to the Promoting the Health and Well-being of LAC Group
- Identify strengths and gaps in service provision
- Develop multi-agency plans to address key issues
- Monitor progress against agreed actions
- Review and monitor service developments
- Monitor performance data and ensure timely action is taken to remedy poor performance
- Escalate concerns in service or performance where not appropriately addressed

- Ensure all LAC work is in line with statutory guidance, NICE and essential standards
- Maintain a LAC risk register

The LAC strategic aims have been discussed and agreed for 2016-2017. The aims are as follows:

Strategic Aim 1: To ensure effective channels of communication between local authority staff working with looked-after children, CCGs, educational provision, health service providers, as well as carers

Strategic Aim 2: To ensure that looked-after children (according to age and understanding) have the information they need to make informed decisions about their health needs, including appropriate levels of health promotion and education, and access to universal services as well as targeted services.

Strategic Aim 3: To ensure the timely and effective delivery of health services.

Strategic Aim 4: To take into account the views of looked-after children, their parents and carers, to inform, influence and shape service provision, including through the Children in Care Councils

Strategic Aim 5: To ensure all staff working with looked after children who are delivering health services receive appropriate supervision, training, guidance and support

- *Operational PHW-LAC group has the following aims:*
 - Each agencies sets their own objectives the strategies aims.
 - The results are fed back to the group quarterly and discussed any issues arising in regards to meeting their objectives.
 - The result or any issues identified are fed up to the LAC strategic Board to inform strategic objectives

Child Sexual Exploitation

NHS organisations are subject to the section 11 duties of the Children Act 2004, which places responsibility on the health provider to ensure that effective safeguarding children arrangements are in place. This is achieved through commissioning and monitoring processes identified within the contractual arrangements, and includes arrangements regarding child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Safeguarding Children Boards have developed a strategic CSE action plan based on identified risks and recommendations from an independent CSE review. A pan Bedfordshire Child Sexual Exploitation Group (CSEG) has also been developed which has replaced the previous Child Sexual Exploitation Panel (CSEP). CSEG is a multi-agency group which ensures a co-ordinated approach to concerns about child sexual exploitation and to maintain an overview of emerging child sexual exploitation issues in Bedfordshire. BCCG is represented on both the strategic group and CSEG to ensure health partners are involved throughout.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Lead

- The post was commissioned by BCCG for one year, with the remit of raising awareness, reviewing pathways, provide training and working to support CSE awareness and reporting within Primary Care in regards to CSE.
- The role involves multi-agency training
- The post holder also sits on the Child Sexual Exploitation Group (CSEG) and feeds back any relevant information to health partners
- The post holder attended a promoting the health of looked after children meeting where they delivered the training to all the providers in attendance, which was well evaluated.
- The Designated Nurse also supported this post by attending GP surgeries and pharmacies in the local area to raise awareness of CSE in community

Designated Clinical Officer

A Designated Clinical Officer has been appointed to support the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) agenda

- The role is to support the implementation of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) for children and young people and to ensure input from health services
- A high percentage of LAC children have additional educational needs and require an EHCP. As a result the designated nurse for LAC is working closely with the post holder to ensure we are meeting the needs of these children.
- As part of the SEND improvement plan for Bedfordshire, the Designated Nurse also sits on a number of SEND sub groups to identify and address issues relating to LAC. These groups include the local offer, transition and children with exceptional circumstance.

CAMHS

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Bedfordshire are provided by East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT). Specialist CAMHS (Tier 3) offers assessment and treatment to children and young people with moderate to severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, including mental illnesses. Core services are provided within several multidisciplinary teams as illustrated below, depending upon the particular needs of the young person. CAMHS staff are mainly based within specialist centres in Bedford and Dunstable, although services are offered across the county. Where feasible, staff are embedded within or closely linked to partner agencies to provide an integrated care package. Tier 2 CAMHS are provided by several third sector organisation across Bedfordshire including CHUMS, Open Door, Relate and Sorted. These services provide assessment and short-term treatment to children and young people with less severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Looked after Children’s CAMHS Service Performance Data 2016-17.

Looked After Children	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Referrals	19	15	18	27	79
DNA’s	8%	2%	10%	7.7%	8%
Direct Patient contact	360	279	632	395	1666

DNA’s

When a service user fails to attend an initial appointment the clinician will attempt to contact the service user/carer during the appointment time, by telephone, to ascertain reasons for non- attendance and to enhance future engagement. If it is not possible to make contact by telephone, following a risk assessment of available information, a letter will be sent requesting the service user/carer to contact the service in order to offer an alternative appointment. For first appointments the original referrer and GP will be advised of non- attendance.

If, after a two week period, the service user/carer have not contacted the service a further letter will be sent. There may also be telephone discussion with the original referrer to assess the degree of risk or other professionals involved in the service user’s care, if known. If after a further 2 week period there has been no contact with the service user/carer the individual clinician will carefully consider discharge and make a professional judgement based on the available information. If the decision is to discharge the original referrer and the GP will be informed in writing.

Direct Patient Contact

Children and Young People currently receiving services were seen in a variety of settings including CAMHS clinics, schools or home. Dependant on individual needs appointments were either face to face, telephone, consultation with other professionals, i.e. school, social care etc. This ensures that the young person is seen in the place that suits them the best and were they feel comfortable. This will support the young person engagement in the process.

Waiting Times

Under the NHS Constitution, no patient should wait more than 18 weeks for any treatment. The average waiting times for routine appointments across Bedfordshire CAMHS varies the majority of the cases are seen for an initial appointment within 11 weeks of referral. The cases waiting outside of this, these are assigned to our Neuro Development Team and are awaiting specialist assessment. When a child presents in Crisis they are seen and assessed immediately and a care plan will be developed in response to the identified need.

East of England Protocol

Bedfordshire CCG is an active member of the regional working group to draw an East of England protocol for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The protocol will spell out the agreed principles and practice that will be applied when a looked after child from one LA area presents in another LA area in need of

- a. a routine community CAMHS referral
- b. a specialist CAMHS intervention/support when a crisis occurs – either in the community or General Acute Hospital setting
- c. admission to a CAMHS Tier 4 inpatient unit

Looked after children and care leavers from one Local Authority who present in another Local Authority in need of a mental health assessment and/or intervention. There will be some of these children and young people with exceptionally high levels and complexity of needs who will require particularly intensive treatment and support packages, way in excess of any area's core offer. These children and young people should already be subject to joint Local Authority and CCG planning processes. Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings will be called to determine what bespoke service offer will be commissioned and provided for such cases and which organisation will pay for each part of the package.

What do we want this protocol to achieve in the East of England?

Elimination of the variation in practice and the delay and harm that can cause to looked after children and care leavers. We want to ensure children and young people have consistent, fair, open access to the local core service offer in whichever part of the East of England they live or present in.

The variation in practice also causes confusion among operational staff from the mental health providers, Local Authorities, and commissioners which can exacerbate the delay and harm to children and young people and damage effective working relationships between staff and organisations.

When a looked after child or care leaver from one Local Authority area presents in another Local Authority area in need of:

1. A routine community CAMHS referral – to either a Targeted or Specialist service – for a mental health issue that was already part way through being addressed when the child or young person lived in his/her originating Local Authority area.
2. A routine community CAMHS referral – to either a Targeted or Specialist service – for a newly emerging mental health issue.
3. A mental health assessment which had been part completed at the point of a move to another Local Authority area – and needs to be completed.
4. A specialist CAMHS assessment and intervention when a crisis occurs, including when an inpatient Tier 4 CAMHS hospital admission may be needed.

The protocol for the East of England is still process of being finalised and we awaiting the final document. Once agreement has been sought it will implemented across Bedfordshire and evaluated as to it effectiveness in the meeting the outcome of these children and young people

Child Protection - Information Sharing (CP-IS)

The national implementation of the CP-IS is part of the NHS standard contract. Bedfordshire is implementing the Child Protection Information Sharing System (CP-IS). When a child is known to Children's Services- Social Care, as a Looked After Child or on a Child Protection Plan, basic information about that plan is shared within the NHS, via a secure IT system. If that child attends any NHS unscheduled care setting, such as an emergency department or a minor injury unit:

- *The health team is alerted that they are on a plan and has access to the contact details for the social care team*
- *The social care team is automatically notified that the child has attended, and*
- *Both parties can see details of the child's previous 25 visits to unscheduled care settings in England*

This means that health and social care staff have a complete picture of a child's interactions with health and social care services.

Leaving and After Care

BCCG commissioned a Looked After Young People's Nurse within the LAC health team to provide care leavers with support which is offered until their 21st birthday. All Care Leavers, whether placed in or out of county, are provided with contact numbers and details of the LAC Health Team at the time of their final Health Assessment, in order to facilitate easy access and support as required.

The service specification was reviewed and agreed in February 2016 to include:

- To ensure all Care Leavers are offered a service from the LAC Health Team and are provided with information on how to access health care provision
- The leaving Care Service ensures it makes contact with all Care Leavers within the first three months of leaving care to offer any further support or advice
- To provide all Care Leavers who are placed out of area, and whose final RHA is undertaken by an external provider, with the Leaving Care Letter
- To raise the awareness of the availability of the leaving care service and the support it can offer to young people
- To increase the number of young people leaving care who have received a Health Passport. This process is currently under review.

BCCG is working with The Care Leavers Association on a three year project commissioned by the Department of Health to improve the health of adults and young people by utilising the user voice to develop guides and resources to better inform commissioning and delivery of services.

The LAC Health Team

Essex Partnership University Foundation Trust (EPUT) is commissioned by BCCG to provide a service for statutory health assessments for Looked After Children from Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. The purpose of the health assessments are to:

- Ensure that holistic and specific health needs are identified and plans in place to support/manage needs, including opportunities for routine health checks and screening, preventative measures and health education/promotion.
- The service co-ordinates the statutory LAC Health Assessments for in county and out of county placements for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire children and young people. This process is supported by an administrative single point of contact within each Local Authority which improves the efficiency and streamlining of this service.

The Service Specification was reviewed and agreed in February 2016. It requires that the Specialist Nurses for LAC quality assure all health assessments completed by external health providers, and quality assure a 10 % dip sample of all those completed by EPUT health professionals. This ensures that all assessments meet the required standard. Any issues identified through the quality assurance process are followed up, as specific to the child/young person, or as development of the professional undertaking the assessment.

A key change to the service specification now includes that if a young person is placed out of area and there is no provision in the out of placement to carry out the health assessment, they can be invited back to Bedfordshire to undertake their health assessment; this is with the proviso that the young person, foster parents and social worker are all in agreement. The health assessments will be completed by the LAC health team in line with normal contractual arrangements and not incurring additional payment arrangements.

The CCG has implemented a process for the funding of initial /review assessment for Looked After Children placed out of area (OOA). The process will ensure that any payments made to an OOA provider will be quality assured by the LAC health team prior to any payments being made. This will ensure that the children and young people placed OOA have a detailed comprehensive health assessment. The CCG has an escalation process in place for when there are issues in commissioning health assessment for children placed OOA.

Community Paediatricians undertake the Initial Health Assessments for Bedfordshire Children placed in Bedfordshire and one hours travel outside the Bedfordshire Border. Access to Community Paediatricians is via clinics in Bedford and Flitwick. Bedfordshire children/young people placed out of county and within one hour of the Bedfordshire borders will be invited to attend a Bedfordshire Paediatric clinic for their Initial Health Assessment. Those placed outside this area will be completed by an out of area provision under a service level agreement, or invited back as outlined above if no provision available.

GP Training

The CCG delivers level 3 Safeguarding to all GP practices within Bedfordshire. As part of the training programme the Designated Nurse for LAC promotes the roles and responsibilities of GPs in relation to looked after children. This includes the importance for GP's to act as an advocate for the health of each child or young person who is looked after. Raising the awareness of private fostering arrangements and responsibilities around notification to the LA's. The GPs are advised to ensure timely, sensitive access for LAC to specialist services, taking into account the needs and risk of frequent placement change for many children and young people who are looked after. The importance of maintaining accurate and comprehensive records for each young person and to provide report and health summaries as required are also emphasised.

Conclusion

This report has shown the services that are available to Looked After Children for 2016-2017 in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. BCCG is working in partnership with the Local Authorities and East Partnership University Trust. The CCG will continue to monitor the provision of health services that they commission within BBC and CBC to ensure that Looked After Children and Young People receive an appropriate and cost effective service in order for them to achieve their full potential.

Appendix 1

Central Bedfordshire Council Looked After Children's Health Performance Data.

April 1st 2016- March 31st 2017

Table 1: Central Bedfordshire Performance Data.

	2015		2015		2016	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Number of LAC	274	N/A	287	N/A	304	N/A
LAC placed in county	110	40.1	119	41.5%	129	42.7%
LAC placed out of county	164	59.8	168	58.5%	173	57.3%
LAC placed in Foster Placement (total)	197	71.8	199	69.3	211	69.4%
LAC placed with Independent Fostering Agency	91	33.2	86	30.0%	82	27%
LAC placed in Children's homes, hostels and other residential settings including secure units	25	9.1	31	10.8%	34	11.2%
LAC living independently	26	9.4	30	10.5%	40	13.2%
LAC placed for adoption, placed with parents or others	26	9.4	27	9.4%	19	6.3%
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker (UAS's)	-	-	37	12.9%	47	15.5%

Table 2: Performance Data for LAC in Central Bedfordshire

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Statistical Neighbour Average 2015/16
Immunisation & Vaccination Performance	94%	93.5%	90.7%	90.6%
Dental Check Performance	97.7%	97.0%	94.9%	70.9%

The percentage of children who have had their teeth checked and all their immunisations up to date has all dropped marginally since the previous year, however in comparison with 2014/15 benchmarking data, as a CCG we are still performing well.

Table 3: Initial Health Assessments

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17 Completed RHA's
IHA completed	-	-	94.8%	90 out of 116
IHA completed within statutory timescales by %	57.5%	41.2%	89.7%	-

Time band (in working days) Initial Health Assessment	No. of children
0-20 days	90
21 to 30 days	14
31 to 40 days	2
41 to 50 days	1
51 to 60 days	1
61 to 70 days	0
More than 71 days	1
No Initial Health Assessment	7
Total	116
% to timescale	89.7%

Initial Health Assessment (IHA): 90 out of 116 new Looked After Children had their IHA within the statutory requirement of 20 days of becoming Looked After – 89.7% this is an increase of 48.5%.

Table 4: Review Health Assessments (RHA's)

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2016/17 Completed RHA's	Statistical Neighbour Average 2015/16
RHA Performance	97.7%	96.5%	92.5%	174 out of 188	90%

The CCG Designated Nurse is aware of the falling compliance and has taken steps to mitigate risk. This has included meeting with EPUT in the form of contract meetings.

Table 4: Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Statistical Neighbour Average 2015/16
SDQ Completion Rate	-	-	100%	63.8%
SDQ Average Score	14.2	14.5	13.2	15.2

The SDQ is a short behavioural screening questionnaire. It has five sections that cover details of emotional difficulties; conduct problems; hyperactivity or inattention; friendship and peer groups; and also positive behaviour, plus an “impact supplement” to assist in the prediction of emotional health problems.

The scoring range for the SDQ is between 0-40. On an individual basis a score of 13 or below is deemed as normal, with a score of 17 and above being a cause of concern (14-16 is borderline). For local authorities, their overall average score will give an indication of the level of “concern” there is across the service. From a strategic perspective, a high score will indicate that more looked after children are displaying difficulties.

The average score for CBC LAC children has decreased by 1.3% in 2016/17. The score is used to inform the review health assessment carried out by the LAC nurses and will ensure that young people are signposted to the most relevant service.

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

15 January 2017

Update of the Adoption Support Fund

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

Advising Officers:

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

Nickie Phillips, Practice Manager Adoption,
(nickie.phillips@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Purpose of this report

1. To update the Corporate Parenting Panel on the Department for Education Adoption Support Fund

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Note the content of the report
2. Comment on the report

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

2. This item is not planned to go to Overview and Scrutiny as the report is for the Corporate Parenting Panel only.

Issues

3. A Report about the use of Adoption Support Fund was presented to Corporate Parenting Panel on 16th January 2017. This report provides an update from the period 1st January 2017 to 30th November 2017.

4. The Adoption Support Fund has remained available throughout this year to provide therapeutic support and intervention for adopted children and their family. From 1st April 2016 the Department for Education extended the criteria for applications to include Inter-country Adoptions (once the placement has been made and the child is in England) and for Special Guardians who care for children who were previously looked after.
5. In October 2016, following a budget review of the fund the Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families advised of changes to the funds available for families. The letter advised that in 2015/16 the £19 million pound fund was accessed by 3500, families. In 2016/17 the available funding was increased to £21 million and a further £2 million increase was introduced in October 2016. However demand for support was twice the level forecast and in October 2016 the fund had already been accessed by more families than the total in the previous year.
6. Following discussions with the Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Adoption Leadership Board, an interim measure was introduced with immediate effect. This measure was the introduction of a £5000.00 'Fair Access Limit' which meant a maximum amount of funding was available per child for the remainder of the year.
7. The review did recognise that a small number of children may require an exemption to the Fair Access Limit and advised that funding will be available for such children in exceptional circumstances. In such cases funding would be available but only where the Local Authority agrees to 'match' funding. An example would be an application for £14,000.00 which would result in the Adoption Support Fund providing the 'Fair Access limit' funding of £5000,00, and if the Local Authority agree to match-fund, a further £4500,00 Adoption Support Fund 'top up' and £4500,00 from the Local Authority.
8. On 22nd November 2017 the Minister of State for Children and Families wrote to Local Authorities advising that the ASF has been a success in enabling 25,500 children receive therapeutic support since its Launch in May 2015 (this included adoptive and Special Guardianship families).
9. Demand for the fund continues to grow and is almost three times the level it was in 2015-16. In recognition of the rising demand an additional £1m will be made available this year, bringing spend on the Fund to £29m this year. Whilst funding has increased, and will continue to do so until the end of March 2020, it remains necessary to keep the fair access limits in place confirming that the existing fair access limits – up to £2,500 for specialist assessments and up to £5,000 for therapy - will remain in place for the next two financial years.

10. The DfE evaluate the fund efficiency and is commissioning evaluation through to the end of this parliament which will be closely aligned with the evaluation of the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) programme.

11. The scope for access to the fund has remained unchanged

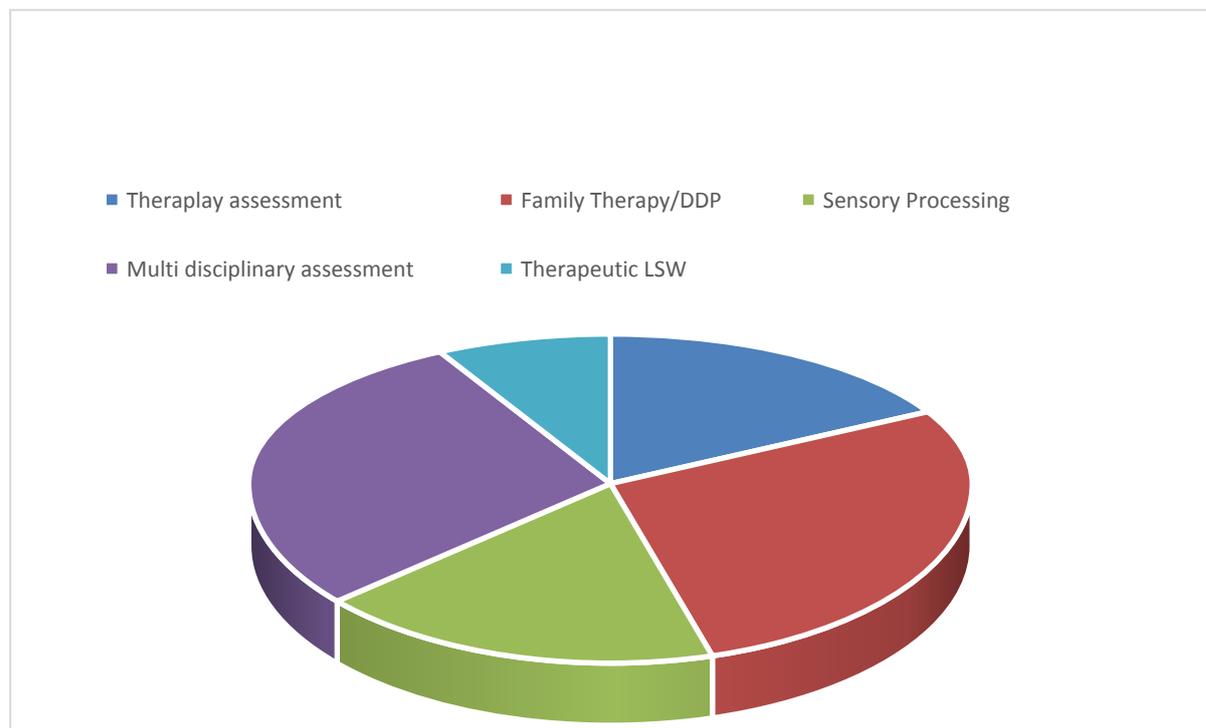
Central Bedfordshire Update

12. 5 applications for funding for therapeutic intervention for Special Guardianship have been submitted and agreed providing a total of £6610.00 to date.

13. Central Bedfordshire Adoption Agency has received £241,896.54 from the fund since it began. A total of 49 applications have been submitted and agreed with the average funding request being £4875.94.

14. From 1st January 2017 to 30th November 2017 11 applications have been submitted and agreed providing a total of £52,055.00 to access therapeutic support for 15 children. The Local Authority matched funding contribution has been £2937.14 to date.

15. The type of therapeutic support accessed for the 11 applications is shown below:



16. Assessments to identify therapeutic support and Family therapy have been the primary reason to apply to the fund in this reporting period.

17. Feedback from adoptive families who have accessed support via the fund include:

PARENT 1:

“Through the Adoption Support Fund, my adopted son and I are currently receiving two courses of therapy sessions. Both are proving to be an invaluable support, as we're experiencing some very challenging issues due to my son's complex birth family situation and his making sense of how this is affecting our everyday lives.

These sessions have given me strength, stability and some self confidence, all of which were lacking and are obviously vital in terms of parenting an adopted child.

The sessions my son has with a psychologist, have had significant, positive impact on both my son and myself. Without these, we would still be struggling to control his anger and high levels of anxiety. Her knowledge of autism and the difficulties experienced because of it, is outstanding. Her level of empathy and engagement with my son has enabled him to open up to her, giving us both a deeper level of understanding of how he sees the world and, in return, enabling us to put coping strategies into place.

Having been an adoptive parent for 11 years, the last 6 of which have been on my own, it has stretched me beyond anything I thought humanly possible.

I am deeply grateful for the support which has been funded through the Adoption Support Fund and hope that other families too have experienced the difference it is making to our lives”.

PARENT 2:

“CAMH and the therapy support has been very useful for both ourselves, the school and our child. The assessment and feedback from the therapy provider was very good and confirmed quite a bit whilst also making us think about how we deal/ interact with our child. We hope that the analysis from will give us more tools to continue the work that she started.

Thanks for all you help and support in enabling this support”.

Parent 3:

“I have found the Adoption Support Fund brilliant in finally having support for my daughter's needs. After many years of trying to find help, we finally have found a solution. So a big thank you for this funding”

18. The Council has a small cohort of children accessing adoption support aged 12yrs + who have complex needs due to multiple diagnosis of autism and/or ADHD, foetal Alcohol syndrome, education needs requiring support from an Education Health Care Plan and anxiety. Children with such difficulties often face exclusion from school and parent to child violence can occur within the family home if the parent

struggles to understand and respond to the child's needs resulting in a risk of family breakdown. Due to their multiple needs such children are unable to access universal services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or Children with Disability services as they often do not meet the eligibility criteria or the complexity of their needs means that the service is unable to be accessed. For the children identified, applications to the fund have assisted to commission a Child and Adolescent Family Psychiatrist who specialises in children with a wide range of mental health, social and educational difficulties to provide an assessment of need and recommend the best type of therapy to support the child and family. This is obtained on a spot purchase basis by accessing the fund. This input has significantly reduced the risk of a family breakdown and identified the 'best fit' therapeutic service and support to improve family life. However such children often require long term intervention to maintain family life.

19. The provision of regular ongoing respite often features within these cases and is either accessed through the adoptive parents support network or via local authority services such as fostering.

Options for consideration

20. None

Reason/s for decision

21. Not applicable

Reason for urgency

22. Not applicable

Council Priorities

23. Making effective use of the Adoption Support Fund ensures that the Council is able to provide a responsive service that protects the vulnerable and improves the child's wellbeing and quality of family life.

Corporate Implications

24. None

Legal Implications

25. None

Financial and Risk Implications

26. The Adoption Support Fund has assisted the local authority to provide therapeutic support to families and children in need where previously

this provision was unavailable unless accessed via universal services or funded solely by the Local Authority. As such access to such services was often limited.

27. If children and families do not receive the therapeutic support they need, they are more likely to experience an adoption breakdown with the child or children returning to care at significant expense to local authorities.
28. To date the average application amount made to the fund has been below the Fair Access Limit. However there is a future financial risk with the requirement of 'match funding' beyond the FAL for families with a higher level of need and therefore a higher level of risk of family breakdown if therapeutic support is not provided.
29. An example of high cost applications prior to the introduction of the Fair Access Limit have included amounts of £14,000.00, £8, 200, .00 and £34,650.00.

Equalities Implications

30. 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. Accessing the Adoption Support Fund enables Central Bedfordshire Council to achieve better outcomes for children and young people with complex needs due to multiple diagnosis of autism, ADHD, foetal Alcohol syndrome, education needs requiring support from a EHCP and anxiety

Implications for Work Programming

31. Not applicable

Conclusion and next Steps

32. Access to the Adoption Support Fund has provided opportunity to provide families with a therapeutic service to achieve the following outcomes:
 - *Improved confidence and ability to enjoy a positive family life and social relationships*
 - *Improved emotional regulation and self esteem*
 - *Improved behaviour management*
 - *Improved relationships with family and friends*

This has assisted to reduce the risk of family breakdown resulting in the child/ren returning to care impacting on a child's sense of belonging, identity, self-esteem and self-worth and mental and emotional wellbeing.

33. Information about the Adoption Support Fund is provided to all those who enquire or request an adoption support assessment. Information can also be accessed on the Local Authority website to ensure fair access for all and maximise the use of the fund to support families and improve family life.
34. At present the adoption service carefully considers families needs and how the fund can be accessed to achieve maximum efficiency of fund and therapy to improve family life. The majority of enquiries for support can be dealt with by providing information and advice including signposting to universal services and accessing advice from the virtual school service. However, for those who require a higher level of input the service completes an assessment to identify the need. If therapeutic intervention is recommended an appropriate provider is identified and an application to the fund is completed with consultation and agreement with parents and child, where appropriate.
35. The Regional Adoption Agency remains in the design and development stage with Central Bedfordshire now being the lead Local Authority. The RAA partnership is aiming to develop an adoption support service able to offer a high level of adoption support to all that is sustainable beyond the fund to reduce the financial risk to the Local authority and increase the local offer to adoptive families.
36. In the meantime the service continues to access the CAMH consultation service available and is working in partnership with other Local Authorities within the RAA, Early Help and Adoption UK to provide services such as Therapeutic parenting programmes focussing on parenting Teens.
37. Social workers within the service are undertaking training in Theraplay so this attachment based intervention can be provided to prepare children for adoption with the support transferring and continuing into their adoptive placement.

Appendices

38. None

Background Papers

39. None

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Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

15 January 2017

Looked After Children Social Worker Churn

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

Advising Officers:

Gerard Jones, Deputy Director for Safeguarding and Early Help
Gerard.Jones@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Ruth Coals, Head of Professional Standards and Principal Social Worker
Ruth.Coals@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information for consideration on social work churn for looked after children in Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Note the content of the report
2. Comment on the report

Issues

Introduction

2. On 4 September 2017 the Corporate Parenting Panel considered the report of the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing which outlined activity in the Fostering Service from 1 January to 31 March 2017. It was noted that the employment stability of permanent social workers working in the Fostering Service with looked after children was very high at above 90%.
3. The Practice Manager for Conference and Review undertook to regularly include data regarding this issue in her annual report. However Members felt an initial report on looked after children social worker churn should be submitted for consideration by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

4. This report describes social work 'churn' for looked after children from January to December 2017. The majority of looked after children receive a service from social workers in the Corporate Parenting Service and for this reason the description of social work employment stability details this part of the service.
5. The Corporate Parenting Service is composed of the Court and Permanence Team, the Leaving and After Care Team and Fostering and Adoption. Looked after children up to the age of 15 receive a social work service from the Court and Permanence Team. Looked after children aged 15 to 18 years receive a social work service from the Leaving and After Care Team. The service also fulfils a statutory role in relation to Care Leavers aged up to 21 years old, 25 if attending in university, and asylum seekers. This includes the allocation of a Leaving Care personal adviser.

Findings

Churn in the Court and Permanence Team

6. The Court and Permanence Team is composed of 22 social workers and four social team managers – a total staff group of 26.
7. The management team has remained stable during 2017.
8. Of the 22 social worker positions in the Court and Permanence Team, six social workers have left the team during 2017. Three have taken up alternative social work posts within Central Bedfordshire. One has taken a sabbatical for personal reasons. One left the employment of Central Bedfordshire Council. One social worker who left was an agency worker employed from February to November 2017, covering a vacant post.
9. This means that in the Court and Permanency Team as a whole, including managers, there has been 77% staff stability over the last 12 months.

Churn in the Leaving and After Care Team

10. The Leaving Care and After Care Team is composed of two team managers each leading a group of social workers and personal advisers. Fully established, there are posts for seven social workers and 6.5 personal advisers - a total staff group of 15.5, including the two team managers.
11. The management team has remained stable over the last 12 months.
12. Of the nine social work positions in the Leaving and After Care Team, four social workers have vacated their position during 2017. One has been promoted to the position of Leaving and After Care team manager, filling the vacant team manager position from January 2017. One has begun a

secondment within another social work team. One has returned to her substantive post after completing a short-term secondment with the Leaving and After Care Team. One social worker has begun maternity leave.

Council Priorities

13. Ensuring that children have stable relationships with their allocated social workers is essential to the well-being of looked after children.

Corporate Implications

14. None

Legal Implications

15. None

Financial and Risk Implications

16. None

Equalities Implications

17. 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. Ensuring that looked after children are provided with stable relationships with their social workers enables Central Bedfordshire Council to achieve better outcomes for children and young people who are additionally vulnerable.

Conclusion and next Steps

18. Social worker stability of employment over the last 12 months in the Corporate Parent Team has been good, particularly in the Court and Permanency Team. Children's Services aspires to sustain and improved social worker stability as this supports good outcomes for children and young people.
19. Children's Services has a well-developed recruitment and retention programme. This includes a good training and development offer from

the Academy of Social Work and Early Help, and well-developed links with local universities through the Assessed and Supported Year Employment (initial post qualifying year for social workers), Step Up to Social Work and Frontline. Central Bedfordshire has additionally raised its profile as a good employer of social workers by securing the Employer of the Year at the recent Social Worker of the Year Awards and through securing a grading of Good during the June 2017 Ofsted Inspection.

20. Members may also be interested to see the Children's Commissioner's Stability Index report published in April 2017. This provides detail and analysis of national stability for looked after children in terms of education, placement and data from a pilot study into social worker stability.
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Childrens-Commissioners-Stability-Index-Phase-One-Technical-Report-1.3.pdf>

Appendices

21. None

Background Papers

22. None

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

15 January 2017

Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan

Responsible Director(s): Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
(Sue.Harrison@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers:

Gerard Jones, Deputy Director for Safeguarding and Early Help
Gerard.Jones@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Ruth Coals, Head of Professional Standards and Principal Social Worker
Ruth.Coals@Centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information for consideration on the Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

1. Note the content of the report
2. Comment on the report

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

2. This item is planned to go to Overview and Scrutiny as a follow up to a previous briefing on the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection provided by the Director of Children's Services.

Issues

3. Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to ensuring that all children are happy, healthy and safe so that they get the best start in life. We are working with our partner agencies to further improve the services we provide to children, young people and their families.

4. The Post Ofsted Action Plan has been developed in response to the Ofsted Inspection that took place between 12 June and 6 July 2017. The Ofsted Inspection concluded that Children's Services in Central Bedfordshire are good and made nine recommendations. The Inspection considered:

- Children who need help and protection – Good
- Children looked after and achieving permanence – Requires improvement to be good 2.1 Adoption performance – Good 2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers –Good
- Leadership, management and governance – Good
- Local Safeguarding Children Board - Good

5. The Action Plan is informed by the nine recommendations in the Ofsted Inspection report published on 25 August 2017. The inspection report can be accessed via the following link:

https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/central_bedfordshire/052_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children's%20services%20and%20review%20of%20the%20LSCB%20as%20pdf.pdf

6. This Action Plan has been co-produced with managers and practitioners in Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services, led by the Director of Children's Services. This Action Plan does not cover the work of the Local Children Safeguarding Board which is independent.

Options for consideration

7. None

Reason/s for decision

8. Not applicable

Reason for urgency

9. Not applicable

Council Priorities

10. The Post Ofsted Action Plan will support the local authority in continuing to provide a consistently high quality service to vulnerable children and their families, to ensure that they are protected and their welfare is promoted.

Corporate Implications

11. None

Legal Implications

12. None

Financial and Risk Implications

13. None

Equalities Implications

14. 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. Ensuring that children with additional vulnerabilities receive a consistently high quality service is central to meeting the statutory obligations of the local authority.

Conclusion and next Steps

15. The Action Plan contains SMART objectives with detailed actions to be carried out. Monitoring of the Action Plan is as follows:

- Monthly monitoring of the plan by the Director of Children's Services with the Directorate Team for the first three months then quarterly thereafter
- Local Safeguarding Children Board on a quarterly basis
- Overview and Scrutiny on a quarterly basis
- Frontline management team on a quarterly basis

16. Annual Report to the Corporate Leadership Team. The Action Plan will be updated monthly and provide evidence of progress against timescales. This will form the basis of regular monitoring. A data set and summary report will be prepared quarterly by the Deputy Director of Children's Services that will summarise progress and evidence how the identified actions are improving the service and the difference this is making for children and families in Central Bedfordshire. This will be submitted to the groups identified above to form the basis of the quarterly programme of review.

Appendices

17. The full Post Ofsted Action Plan is attached as an appendix.

Background Papers

18. None

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Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services

Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan

November 2017 – September 2018

Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to ensuring that all children are happy, healthy and safe so that they get the best start in life. We are working with our partner agencies to further improve the services we provide to children, young people and their families.

This Post Ofsted Action Plan has been developed in response to the Ofsted Inspection that took place between 12 June and 6 July 2017. The Ofsted Inspection concluded that Children's Services in Central Bedfordshire are good and made nine recommendations. The Inspection considered:

1. Children who need help and protection – Good
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence – Requires improvement to be good
 - 2.1 Adoption performance – Good
 - 2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers – Good
3. Leadership, management and governance – Good
4. Local Safeguarding Children Board - Good

The Action Plan is informed by the nine recommendations in the Ofsted Inspection report published on 25 August 2017. The inspection report can be found [here](#). This Action Plan has been co-produced with managers and practitioners in Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services, led by the Director of Children's Services. This Action Plan does not cover the work of the Local Children Safeguarding Board which is independent.

The Action Plan will contain SMART objectives with detailed actions to be carried out. Monitoring of the Action Plan are as follows:

- Monthly monitoring of the plan by the Director of Children's Services with the Directorate Team for the first three months then quarterly thereafter
- Local Safeguarding Children Board on a quarterly basis
- Overview and Scrutiny on a quarterly basis
- Frontline management team on a quarterly basis
- Annual Report to the Corporate Leadership Team

The Action Plan will be updated monthly and provide evidence of progress against timescales. This will form the basis of regular monitoring. A data set and summary report will be prepared quarterly by the Deputy Director of Children's Services that will summarise progress and evidence how the identified actions are improving the service and the difference this is making for children and families in Central Bedfordshire. This will be submitted to the groups identified above to form the basis of the quarterly programme of review.

OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS –Single Inspection Framework (SIF) 2017

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
1	<p>Improve the effectiveness of frontline managers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs in ensuring that children’s assessments are updated in response to changes, plans are progressed and drift is prevented.</p>	<p>1.1 Action</p> <p>A first line leadership and management programme will be developed for frontline managers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs so that effective supervision, management and leadership is provided to practitioners. This will include all first line managers undertaking appropriate supervision training.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Effective supervision will be evidenced in audits.</p> <p>Frontline managers will evidence increased skill, confidence and effectiveness through self evaluation and evaluation by practitioners and managers.</p>	April 18	Head of Learning and Development	A first line leadership programme is in development. A learning needs analysis is currently underway.	Yellow

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>1.2 Action</p> <p>The procedural guidance and practice standards for the completion of assessments will be reviewed, and practitioner and manager awareness promoted.</p> <p>A thematic audit on the quality of supervision, planning and review will be completed, and an improvement action plan devised. The impact of the action plan will be reviewed through audit in June 2018.</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Performance data will show that all children's assessments are updated in compliance with practice standards.</p> <p>Audits will show that children's assessments are updated in response to change and that planning and review practice results in timely interventions for children.</p>	June 18	Head of Professional Standards	<p>A review of guidance and practice standards in respect of assessment practice was completed in November 2017.</p> <p>A thematic audit on supervision, planning and review was completed in November 2017 and an improvement action plan will be implemented from February 2018.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>1.3 Action</p> <p>Best practice in assessments learning events will be delivered to practitioners and managers by Consultant Social Workers and Audit Managers.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Impact will be evidenced through a thematic audit.</p>	May 18	Head of Professional Standards	Best practice in assessments learning events began in November 2017.	
		<p>1.4 Action</p> <p>Child Protection Chairs will ensure that plans are progressing for children between review meetings, with a particular focus on children who have been Subject of a Child Protection Plan for +9 months and children who are subject of the Public Law Outline process.</p> <p>Bi-monthly review meetings will take place with the Family Support Practice Managers and Conference and Review Practice Manager for all children who are Subject of a Child Protection Plan for +9 months so that additional challenge and oversight will be provided to prevent drift.</p>	April 18	Head of Professional Standards	Bi-monthly review meetings for children who are Subject of a Child Protection Plan for +9months are underway.	

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		<p>Outcome</p> <p>Case file audit will evidence that effective and timely action is being taken for children.</p>				
		<p>1.5 Action</p> <p>The Independent Reviewing Officer Dispute Resolution process will be strengthened.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Consistent recording of evidence of resolution of the issue of concern and collated learning and updates to managers on the successful completion of any required remedial action will be evidenced.</p> <p>Examples of good practice will also be shared with practitioners and managers to support learning about what good looks like.</p> <p>Compliance and impact will be reviewed through case file audit.</p>	February 18	Head of Professional Standards	A revised Dispute Resolution process has been implemented from September 2017.	

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		<p>1.6 Action</p> <p>Social workers and managers will be provided with additional guidance and support to produce consistently high-quality reports for Looked After Children Reviews, to ensure sufficient information about the child's progress is understood and consider where their needs have changed. A series of learning events led by the Consultant Social Worker and Head of Service are planned and will be delivered to all practitioners in Corporate Parenting by February 2018.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The impact of the learning events will be evaluated through feedback from workshop attendees, their managers and an audit of case files. A roll out of these learning events to the broader social work staff group is planned from February 2018, informed by learning from the audit activity and workshop attendees.</p>	February 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	Planning is in hand for the delivery of assessment learning events.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>1.7 Action</p> <p>Supervision practice standards will be reviewed and amended to ensure that progress for the child is explicitly and purposefully evaluated and recorded in all supervisions.</p> <p>All Team Managers will complete training on reflective, outcomes focused supervision.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>An audit of quality in supervision is planned to be undertaken in March 2018, to evaluate progress in supervision practice standards and identify further practice development needs.</p>	March 18	Head of Professional Standards	A survey of supervision experience by practitioners is currently underway.	
		<p>1.8 Action</p> <p>Social workers and managers will be provided with additional support and guidance on the formulation of plans that focus consistently on the outcomes to be achieved and the timescales for the child. Learning events will be delivered to all Corporate Parenting practitioners and managers.</p>	February 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	Planning is in hand for the delivery of planning learning events.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>Outcome</p> <p>The impact of the learning events will be evaluated through feedback and an audit of case files. A roll out of these learning events to the broader social work staff group is planned from February 2018, informed by learning from the audit activity and feedback.</p>				
		<p>1.9 Action</p> <p>The Conference and Review Quality Assurance Meetings RAG rating system will be revised and reviewed to evidence greater oversight and impact of improvement actions recommended by Independent Reviewing Officer and Child Protection Chairs.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Greater clarity will be evidenced on learning and remedial action activity. This will be provided in a quarterly highlight report to SMT, CSMT and an annual report to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.</p>	June 18	Head of Professional Standards	Quarterly presentations to SMT and CSMT will begin in December 2017.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
2	Ensure that pre-proceedings work is initiated promptly when children's circumstances do not improve and, as part of this, that thorough and holistic assessments are carried out to inform future planning.	<p>2.1 Action</p> <p>Practitioners and managers will be provided with Legal Planning Meeting Training, guidance and support on outcomes focused practice.</p> <p>The guidance and support will be informed by best practice nationally and input from CAFCASS. A series of learning events is planned to be delivered to all Family Support Social Workers. A roll out of these learning events to the broader social work staff group will take place from April 2018.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>An audit of pre-proceedings work will be undertaken to ensure pre-proceedings work is being initiated promptly and key assessments are being carried out in sufficient depth to provide the court with clear evidence supporting the Local Authority's plans for children.</p>	April 18	Head of Family Support	Planning is in hand for the delivery of pre-proceedings learning events.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>2.2 Action</p> <p>The Head of Service for Family Support will Chair all Initial Legal Planning Meetings to ensure clear and focussed planning and oversee the accuracy of processes to prevent drift and delay in achieving permanency for children.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Legal processes will be completed in a timely way for all children.</p>	March 18	Head of Family Support	This arrangement has been in place from August 2017 and an impact review will be undertaken in March 2018.	
		<p>2.3 Action</p> <p>The Head of Service for Family Support and the Senior Legal Representative will meet monthly to review the progress of the cases in pre-proceedings. This review will ensure the agreed assessments, interventions and plans are on track. The learning from the reviews will be collated quarterly and embedded in the learning and improvement plan for the service.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>There will be no delay in the progression of cases in pre-proceedings.</p>	March 18	Head of Family Support	This arrangement has been in place from August 2017 and the next learning review will take place in March 2018	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>2.4 Action</p> <p>The Senior Legal Representative a monthly report to SMT as part of our Performance Framework.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Greater visibility of legal proceedings will be provided as part of a regular stream of information to the Director and senior leaders.</p>	February 18	Senior Legal Representative	This will begin in February 2018	
3	Provide rigorous oversight and tracking of children's plans when children become looked after, to ensure that permanence is formally approved and achieved in a timely manner for all children.	<p>3.1 Action</p> <p>Permanency planning meetings will be convened for all looked after children before their second Looked After Child Review.</p> <p>The permanency tracking process for looked after children will be reviewed and amended. This will include fortnightly case review meetings coordinated by the Practice Manager for Conference and Reviews.</p> <p>Permanency Tracking will be embedded within the Mosaic electronic case recording system for children. This will ensure that effective performance management processes are applied.</p>	February 18	Head of Professional Standards	A revised permanency tracking process has been put into place from November 2018. Amendments to the Mosaic electronic case recording system will be in place by January 2018.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>All children in residential care will be reviewed at SMT and CSMT every six months.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>All looked after children will be provided with permanence in a timely way. Performance will be closely monitored. The efficacy of the process will be reviewed in February 2018 and quarterly thereafter, with oversight by SMT and CSMT through highlight reports.</p>				
4	<p>Ensure that the performance management and quality assurance framework is strengthened to provide managers with a clear line of sight to practice and quality in all key areas, including the offer and completion of return home interviews and the use of child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment tools.</p>	<p>4.1 Action</p> <p>An annual review of audit processes will be undertaken to ensure that it meets best practice standards.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The focus of audit evaluation will be on the effectiveness of interventions and impact on children's progress and experience, as well as compliance with practice standards.</p>	Jan 18	Head of Professional Standards	A revised audit programme will be introduced from February 2018.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>4.2 Action</p> <p>The return home interview notification pathway on the Mosaic electronic case recording process will be amended, so that missing notifications are received directly by the Return Home Interview service. All managers and practitioners will be reminded of the practice standard expectations in respect of missing children.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>All missing children will be offered a return home interview promptly. Oversight of performance data on return home interviews will be provided quarterly at SMT and at the CSE Pan Bedfordshire Group.</p>	February 18	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Managers and practitioners were provided with additional guidance on return home practice standards in November 2017. Completion of modifications to the electronic notification pathways is anticipated to be operational in December 2017.	
		<p>4.3 Action</p> <p>Compliance with the effective use of child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment tools will be strengthened through increased practitioner and manager awareness and enhanced performance management processes.</p>	March 18	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention		

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>Outcome</p> <p>Audit will show that child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment is used for all children where there are indicators of possible child sexual exploitation.</p>				
5	<p>Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Panel is routinely informed about issues and areas for improvement, so that it is able to act as a critical friend, challenging and holding to account senior managers and driving improvements in outcomes for children in care and care leavers.</p>	<p>5.1 Action</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Agenda Forward Planner will be agreed with the Chair based upon areas of challenge, risk and development needs.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Deep dives on areas of concern, for example the health needs of looked after children living outside of Central Bedfordshire, will be completed and shared at Corporate Parenting Panel.</p>	Jan 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	<p>Planning is in hand and will be confirmed at the January 2018 Corporate Parenting Panel.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
6	Improve the quality of personal education plans (PEPs) by ensuring that actions are based on a clear analysis of need and that targets are precise, detailed and time-bound.	<p>6.1 Action</p> <p>Every section B of the PEP will be quality assured by the Virtual School Team Leader and judged against agreed criteria. If judged unsatisfactory the document will be returned to the school and pupil premium withheld until the document is returned at the required standard. The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board to be invited to the meeting in the spring term 2018.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The percentage of PEPs that are outstanding and good will increase. Progress will be reviewed at half term moderation meetings.</p>	June 18	Team Leader Virtual School	This began in September 2017 and significant improvements in the quality of PEPs was evident in the November 2017 half term moderation meeting.	
		<p>6.2 Action</p> <p>The Team Leader and the Virtual School Head Teacher will attend a minimum of three PEP meetings a term to quality assure the process.</p>		Team Leader and Virtual School Head	This process will begin in January 2018 and will continue until July 2018.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>Outcome</p> <p>Meetings will be attended by the appropriate people, there will be clear evidence of the use of pupil premium, targets will be SMART and the child's voice will be evident during the process.</p>				
		<p>6.3 Action</p> <p>Training was provided on effective PEP practice at the Designated Network meeting in the autumn term 2017.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>An impact review of the training will be undertaken in January 2018 through securing feedback and an audit of PEPs, with quarterly progress reviews thereafter.</p>	Jan 18	Team Leader Virtual School		
		<p>6.4 Action</p> <p>Targeted support to identified Designated Teachers on writing SMART targets has been delivered.</p>	March 18	Virtual School Team Leader	Session delivered at the October 2017 network meeting. Review of target setting will be ongoing until March 2018.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>Outcome</p> <p>All PEPs will be judged good or better.</p>				
7	Ensure that children's physical and emotional health needs are considered earlier when plans are being made for them to be placed at a distance from the authority, so that they can access any services they need in a timely manner.	<p>7.1 Action</p> <p>Service provision for looked after children placed at a distance will be reviewed monthly at the existing partnership meeting with the Looked After Children Nursing Team.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The physical and emotional health needs of all looked after children will be fully met, through close monitoring, planning and effective remedial action as required. Impact will be reviewed through an audit of case files in March 2018.</p>	March 18	Head of Corporate Parenting	The agenda of the monthly partnership meeting with the Looked After Children Nursing Team will be introduced in December 2017.	
8	Ensure that 16 and 17 year-old homeless children are provided with clear information about their entitlements to accommodation and support under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.	<p>8.1 Action</p> <p>All social work and Early Help staff to be provided with refresher training on best practice for homeless 16 and 17 year old by the Homeless and Mediation Service.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>All practitioners will provide 16 and 17-year old homeless children with</p>	March 17	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Planning in hand for this to be delivered.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale	Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		accurate and effective information. Case file audits will evaluate service quality.				
		<p>8.2 Action</p> <p>Homeless interviews will be placed on children's Mosaic electronic case files.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Practitioners working with homeless children can trigger and complete required actions.</p>	Dec 17	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Action in hand for this to be completed.	
		<p>8.3 Action</p> <p>The process for accommodation of homeless 16 and 17 year old children will be strengthened to ensure there is no drift.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>Emergency accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds will be used for a maximum of 28 days, preventing drift and ensuring planned and supported placement endings for all children. A progress reviewed will take place in March 2018, and quarterly thereafter.</p>	March 18	Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention	Emergency accommodation practice has been revised.	

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9	Ensure the agency decision-maker provides a coherent rationale for all adoption decisions and that this is recorded on children's files.	<p>9.1 Action</p> <p>The agency decision maker will provide an explanation for all adoption decisions, with regular QA provided by the Panel Advisor.</p> <p>Outcome</p> <p>The Deputy Director, as agency decision maker, is now ensuring that a summary rationale is provided in all sign off of adoption decisions.</p>	March 18	Deputy Director of Safeguarding and Early Help	This outcome has been implemented. A progress review will be completed by the Adoption Panel Chair in March 2018.	

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