

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

**This meeting  
may be filmed.\***



**Central  
Bedfordshire**

**please ask for** Sharon Griffin  
**direct line** 0300 300 5066  
**date** 31 January 2019

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

Date & Time

**Monday, 11 February 2019 10.00 a.m.**

Venue at

**Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

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

#### **Elected Members (voting)**

Cllrs Mrs A L Dodwell (Chairman) Cllr S Dixon (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Barker, Mrs S A Goodchild, Mrs C Hegley, 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.

#### **Children in Care Council representative (Co-Chairman) (non-voting)**

**\*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 the 20 December 2018 (copy attached).

3. **Members' Interest**

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**

5. **Understanding our population of Looked After Children and Young People**

To consider a report on the Looked After Children and Young People population in Central Bedfordshire.

6. **Children in Care Council update**

To receive a presentation from the Children in Care Council in conjunction with exempt item 15.

7. **Adoption Agency 6 month report**

To consider the six monthly report in respect of the Adoption Service 1 April – 30 September 2018.

8. **Support for Care Leavers - Personal Advisor**

To consider a report outlining the new extended statutory legislation and demographic growth pressures on the support available to young people leaving care in Central Bedfordshire from their allocated Personal Advisor.

9. **Eastern Region Peer Review Looked After Children and Permanence**

To consider a report providing members with details on the outcome of the November 2018 Eastern Region Peer Review of Looked After Children and Permanence.

10 **Ofsted Action Plan update**

To consider an update on the Ofsted Action Plan 2017-18 and the proposed next steps.

11 **Verbal update from the Director of Children's Services**

To receive a verbal update from the Director on matters of interest to the Panel.

12 **Work Programme**

To consider the Panel's work programme.

13 **Exclusion of 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 paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.



<i>Item</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Exempt Para.</i>
	<b>Final Report Virtual school for Looked After Children 2017/18</b>	* 1
	To consider a report providing 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 2017/18.	
	<b>Children in Care Council update</b>	* 1
	To receive a presentation from the Children in Care Council in conjunction with Item 6.	

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Thursday, 20 December 2018

### **PRESENT**

#### **Elected Members (voting)**

Cllrs Mrs A L Dodwell (Chairman)  
S Dixon (Vice-Chairman)  
Mrs S A Goodchild  
M A G Versallion  
B Wells

#### **Officers (voting)**

Mrs S Harrison Director of Children's Services

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

Mr P Albon  
Ms T Rowlands  
Mr L Youngman

#### **Children in Care Representative (Co-Chairman) (non-voting)**

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Mrs A Barker  
Ms C Hegley, Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations (HRA)  
Ms K Mathu, CYP Participation Officer  
Mrs J Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Substitutes: Cllr Mr R Berry (in place of Cllr Mrs A Barker)

Officers in Attendance: Ms R Coals Principal Social Worker and Head of Professional Standards  
Mr A Coman Head of Corporate Parenting  
Ms S Griffin Committee Services Officer  
Mrs S Harrison Director of Children's Services  
Mr T Keaveney Assistant Director Housing Services  
Mrs S Keenan Practice Manager  
Ms T McDonald Designated Nurse for Looked After Children  
Ms S Rymell Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Early Help  
Mr N Stock Interim Head of Service

Others in Attendance: Children in Care Council Representatives

CPP/18/1. **Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on the 25 October 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

CPP/18/2. **Members' Interests**

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

CPP/18/3. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The following announcements and communications were made:

- On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman welcomed the Children in Care Council Representatives and Foster Carers to the meeting.
- The Chairman advised that she had begun the process of starting to write to members about individual wish list aspirations. The entire list could be circulated if individual members requested it.
- Members of the Panel were advised that Mr Alex Coman, Head of Corporate Parenting was leaving the employment of Central Bedfordshire Council. The Chairman thanked Mr Coman for the work he had undertaken on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- The Chairman welcomed Mr Nigel Stock, Practice Manager, LAC Service to the meeting. Mr Stock would be supporting future meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

CPP/18/4. **Annual (Health) Report (NHS Bedfordshire CCG)**

The Panel considered the report on the achievements, progress and challenges of the Looked After Children (LAC) health service in meeting the needs of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) children and young people in care and care leavers during the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Points and comments included:

1. There was a Designated Doctor in post to undertake Initial Health Assessments (IHA's). However, if the Doctor was not available, IHA's could be undertaken by an appointed paediatrician.
2. In response to a question raised about the possible effect on health services resulting from the potential merger of the Milton Keynes, Bedford

and Luton Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children explained that the Clinical Commissioning Group had appointed a Joint Accountable officer in November 2018 and interviews for Senior Management posts had taken place in December. There would be a transition period after the merger and dedicated professionals in each service area which would be reviewed going forward. It was hoped that the merger would result in services for young people becoming more efficient. Of note, there had always been good communication between Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire in terms of children and safeguarding.

3. Mental Health Services in Central Bedfordshire consisted of psychiatrics, the CAHMS team and social workers with an interest in psychology. The transformation plan for these services included a single point of access being put in place. CHUMS was also part of this process.
4. The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children advised that further analysis and clarification would be sought from colleagues into the reason why the Looked After Children's CAMHS Service Performance Data 2017-18 showed 468 Direct Patient Contact with a DNA rate of 4.7% which lower than any other quarter.
5. Members of the Panel were advised that the Health Passport is paper record of the medical and healthcare history of a Looked After Child held by the local authority. The document is child specific as the young person decides what information they want included on their Health Passport. The document can be a useful source of information for health and appointments. The Health Passport can be requested by the young person during Review Health Assessment for their final meeting.
6. Following a recent workshop held by the Looked After Children Health Team discussions are planned with young people to consider the content and presentation of their Health Passport.
7. The Panel were advised that it would be useful if the Health Passport could be shared with Foster Carers.
8. The Practice Manager, LAC Service explained that the age threshold nationally for the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was 17. However, in Central Bedfordshire this was applied at the age of 14.
9. The Panel noted that the SDQ average score for CBC LAC children had decreased by 1.3% in 2017/18 to 11.9%. A request was made for the data to broken down into gender and under and over 11's to give the Panel a greater understanding of the figures being presented.

## **NOTED**

**the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's Looked After Children's Health Annual Report Central Bedfordshire Council.**

CPP/18/5. **Agency Report Quarter 2 Fostering 1 June – 30 September 2018**

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

Points and comments included:

1. In response to the question raised about average time period to arrange an alternative placement, the Head of Corporate Parenting explained that expectation was that at least 28 days' notice would be received in order give sufficient time to find an alternative placement. However, if there was issue which needed to be resolved immediately, a placement move could sometimes take place at short notice. If a foster carer moved out of the area and was unable to take the young person with them, the Resource and Placement Team would look at finding another suitable placement immediately.
2. The Head of Corporate Parenting advised that the Assistant Director Children's Services was notified of all complaints received about the Fostering Service on a weekly basis along with status of the complaint. Complaints were also logged in the annual report received from the Customer Relations Team.
3. The Practice Manager, Fostering explained that the recruitment of foster carers from diverse ethnic backgrounds was an issue for other local authorities as well as in Central Bedfordshire. The current focus of foster carer recruitment was various faith groups and different diversities. Work taking place included discussions with the fostering network to look at the recruitment of foster carers from the Muslim faith and also with existing foster carers to look at ways of addressing the myths around foster care from other ethnic backgrounds.
4. The recruitment of foster carers continued which included adverts in schools and via parish council. Visits could be arranged to organisations and faith groups such as church congregations. Suggestions of other opportunities of promoting the fostering service were welcomed.
5. A comprehensive training programme was in place for all foster carers to ensure a continuation of growth and development. This was in addition to core training programme provided during the first few years of becoming a foster carer.
6. The Practice Manager, Fostering explained that a tier level of payment of allowances for foster carers had been introduced in Central Bedfordshire approximately three years ago. For foster carers were required to attend mandatory training on an annual basis in order to maintain their current allowance tier or to move to the next tier.
7. The level and amount training for foster carers had increased significantly and placement stability had improved. The personal development plan for each foster carer was reviewed on an annual basis which included looking at the appropriate training to support the foster carer.

8. In response to a question raised about identifying the specific cultural needs of the children rather than general approach which might not the match of the child, the Practice Manager Fostering explained that in general the cultural background of the child was known from the initial referral and the needs of the child were looked at in order to try and match a foster carer accordingly.
9. In response to a question raised about anticipating the need for foster carers from different cultural backgrounds and having carers in place, the Corporate Parenting Manager advised that the recruitment strategy for foster carers was reviewed on an annual basis and adapted accordingly taking into account the make-up of the Looked After Children population and possible effects from crisis in other areas of the world. Training for existing foster carers included culturally sensitive areas. Looked After Children with dual heritage was an area of pressure which needed to be targeted as part of the recruitment strategy for foster carers.
10. The Practice Manager Fostering explained that existing foster carers were being upskilled and were put in contact with other foster carers from a similarly cultural background for support. A resources pack had been compiled for unaccompanied young asylum seekers which covered information such as culture, customs and food.
11. The Practice Manager Fostering advised that children in foster care had previously been involved in the training of foster carers and the expansion of involvement in this process through the Children in Care Council was welcomed.
12. In response to concerns raised about the continued increase in the number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) put in place, the Corporate Parenting Manager explained that there had been concerns when SGOs were first introduced but Courts had now become more considerate in issuing these. The current rate of SGOs for Central Bedfordshire was 10/15 year rather than 40. SGOs were a recommendation from the social worker supported by the family guardian and were put in place when this was felt to be right for that particular child. The final care plan and recommendations were signed off by the Head of Corporate Parenting prior to proceeding to the Court.

## **NOTED**

### **The Fostering Agency Quarter 2 report.**

#### **CPP/18/6. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To exclude the Press and Public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that its consideration involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CPP/18/7. **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person as Looked After Children – Spotlight Report**

The Panel received an exempt report on the way the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people become Looked After Children in Central Bedfordshire.

On conclusion of the consideration of exempt minute item CPP/18/8, the meeting was open to the Press and Public.

CPP/18/8. **Looked After Children Social Worker Stability**

The Panel considered a report providing further detail regarding social worker stability for Looked After Children.

Points and comments included:

1. The Head of Professional Standards and Principal Social Worker explained that there might be the need to use agency staff in some cases such as a social worker being off work for an extended period of time due to sick leave, if there was a temporary arrangement in place due to a gap in provision or the social work team was not at full complement.
2. The Head of CP explained that where a social worker has been recruited from outside CBC there could be a delay in their start date due to outstanding leave or work commitments. In these cases team members cover wherever possible, with management oversight of caseloads.
3. The Head of Professional Standards and Principal Social Worker explained that every effort was made to ensure that a young person was made aware of a change to their social worker in order to try and alleviate any possible effects that might occur from the change. There was some consistency in terms of the Independent Reviewing Officer not changing during the young person's journey and in a majority of cases, the team manager also remained the same.
4. The Director of Children's Services explained that in Central Bedfordshire the teams were small enough to have a shared knowledge of the children within the service. The stability, continuity and co-working across teams had also improved greatly.
5. The care plan in place for each young person is monitored on a regular basis through Looked After Children reviews. Part of this process was to challenge consistency, continuity and communication to ensure the best outcome was achieved for the child.
6. The Head of Corporate Parenting explained that the Children's Commissioner produced an annual report on the stability of the lives of children in care. The report included data that could be used for statistical benchmarking against neighbouring local authorities and could be presented at a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel for information.

**NOTED**

**Looked After Children Social Worker Stability in Central Bedfordshire.**

CPP/18/9. **Work Programme**

Members considered the report of the Committee Services Officer which set out the Panel's proposed work programme for the part of the municipal year 2018/19.

**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 following amendments:**

**8 April 2019**

- **Spotlight reports – LAC transition to Adults' Social Care**
- **Presentation on the overview of the process of a Health Passport**
- **Update on children's services as part of transformation.**

**24 October 2019**

- **Children's Commissioner annual report on the stability of the lives of children in care.**

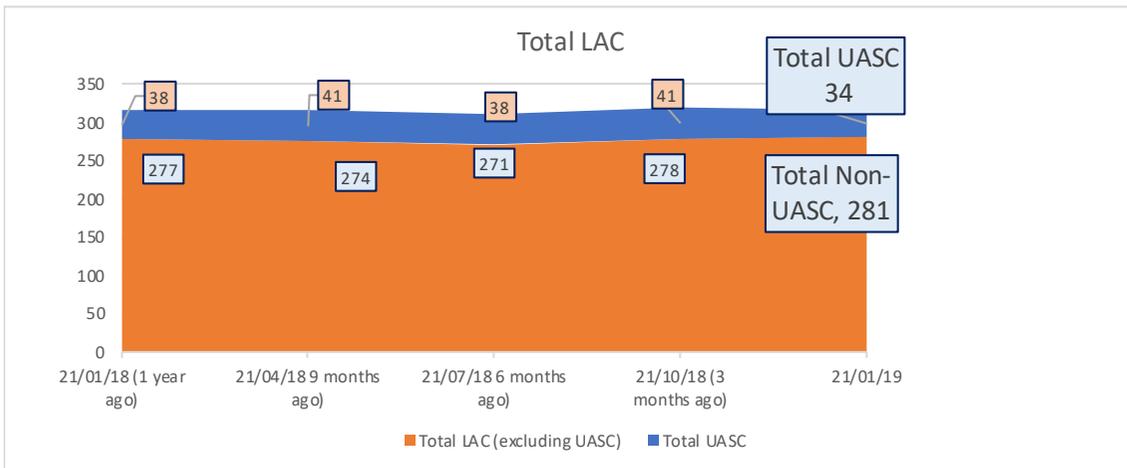
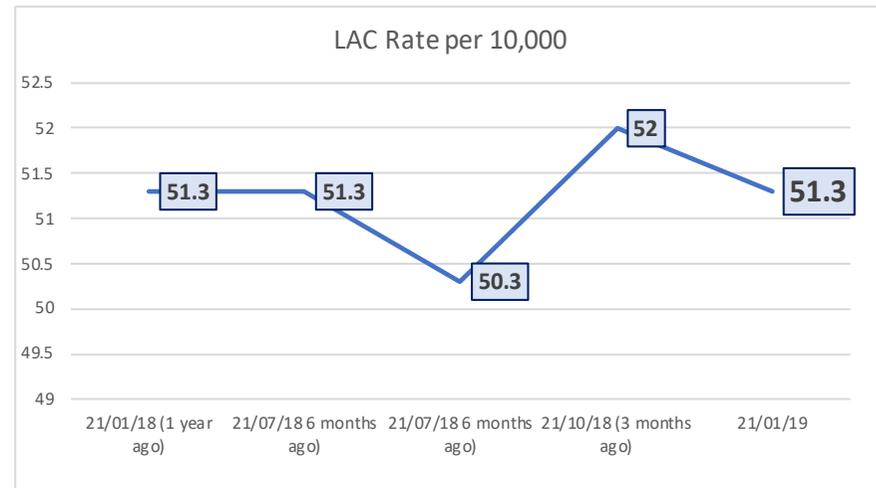
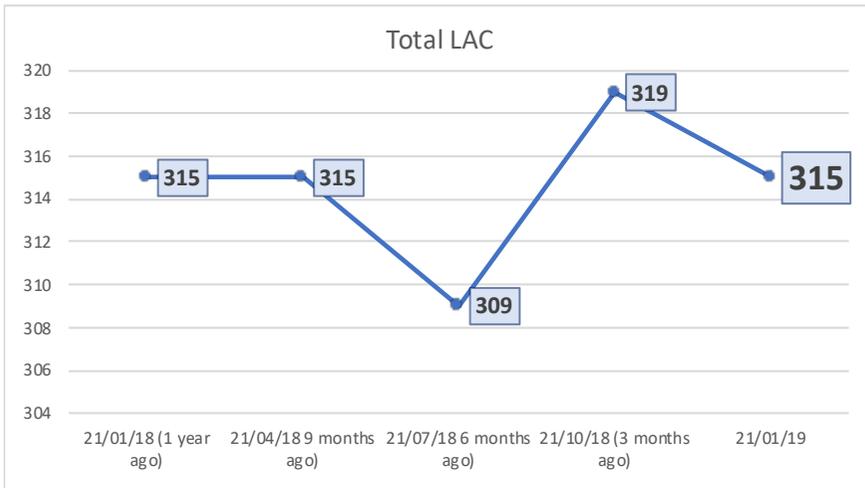
**Standing agenda items**

- **Understanding our LAC population**
- **Children in Care Council update**

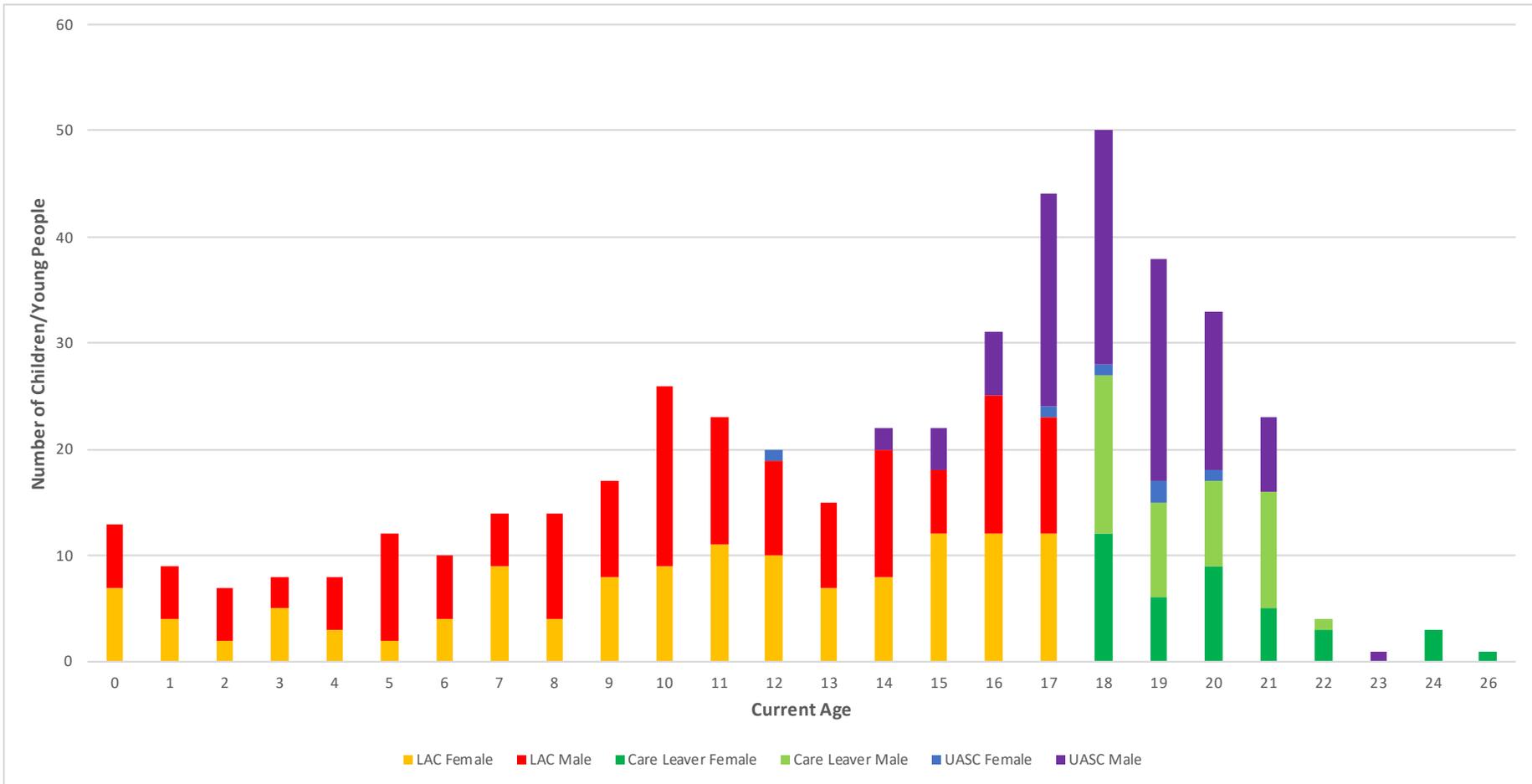
(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.30 p.m.)

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1) Understanding our population of Looked After Children and Young People: **SUMMARY**



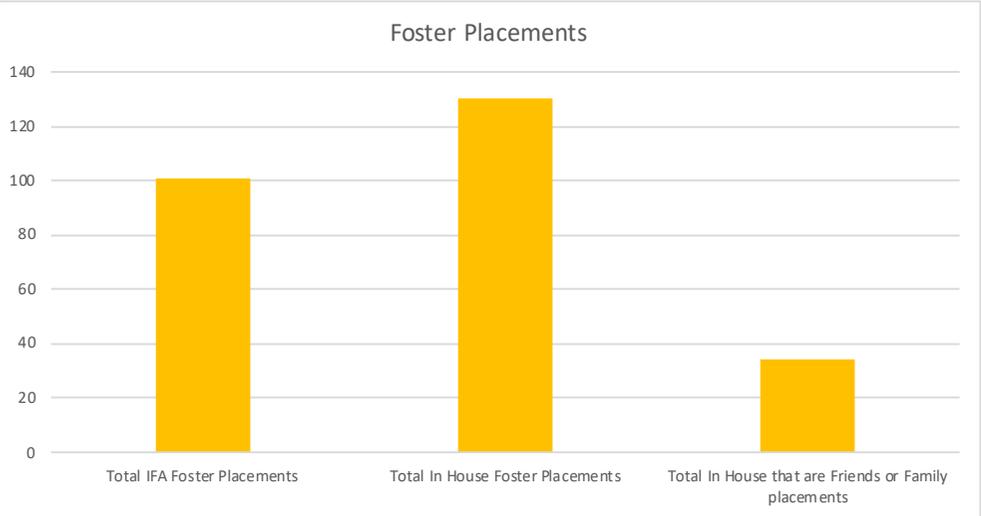
2) Understanding our population of Looked After Children and Young People: AGE AND GENDER, UASC, m & f



3) Understanding our population of Looked After Children and Young People: a) **TURNING 18**; b) **FOSTER PLACEMENTS**

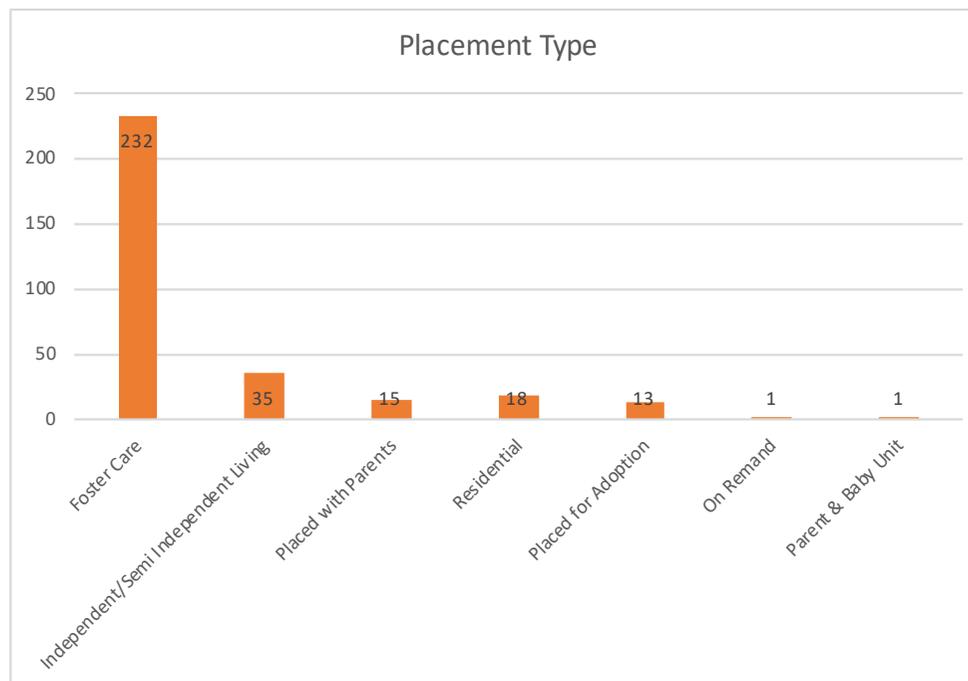
**a) Total LAC Turning 18 in Next 6 Months**      21

<b>b) Foster Placements</b>	<b>Total LAC</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Of which are UASC</b>
<b>Total LAC in Foster Placements</b>	233	73.97%	12
<b>Total IFA Foster Placements</b>	101	43.35%	5
<b>Total In House Foster Placements</b>	130	55.79%	6
<b>Total In House that are Friends or Family placements</b>	34	14.16%	0



4) Understanding our population of Looked After Children and Young People: **PLACEMENT TYPE SUMMARY**

Foster Care	232
Independent/Semi Independent Living	35
Placed with Parents	15
Residential	18
Placed for Adoption	13
On Remand	1
Parent & Baby Unit	1
<b>Total LAC</b>	<b>315</b>



5) Understanding our population of Looked After Children and Young People: **YOS and Remand**

	Total Children	of which; Total UASC
Young Offender Institution or prison	1	1
Total LAC Open to YOS:	5	

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# Children in Care Council



# The Children in Care Council

There is a core group of young people who attend the CiCC meetings.

The latest meeting of the CiCC welcomed 2 new members.

The CiCC meeting welcomed Alan Caton Chair of the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board who discussed a number of topics.

There were discussions about the pledge, the Corum Voices Competition, Fostering Team support and activities as well ad catching up with one another.

# The Leaving Care Group

There will be a new Leaving Care Group specifically for young people over the age of 16, this group will focus on Leaving Care support.

CiCC Ambassadors will continue to support the CiCC and act as peer mentors.

# Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) Recruitment

Members of the CiCC and Ambassadors have supported the recent recruitment days.

Two of the members sat on the interview panels and one member facilitated a group activity.

# Local Government Chronicle Awards

One of our CiCC Ambassadors supported Central Bedfordshire's application for the Children's Services Award.

The young person wrote her own part of the presentation which looked at the support she has received and why she thought Central Bedfordshire should win the award.

# CiCC Discussions

Mobile phone use and rules

School communication

Social worker changes

Thank you for listening.

Any Questions?

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## Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

11 February 2019

### Six Monthly Report in respect of the Adoption Service 1 April – 30 September 2018

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**Report of:** Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Children's Services ([steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

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

#### Purpose of this report

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

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Panel is asked to:**

**Consider, note and comment on the content of the report.**

#### Issues

1. Information Evenings continue to be held on a monthly basis. Enquiries can be received from an online enquiry form on the Central Bedfordshire website, via social media, email to the Adoption Team or telephone call via a duty Social Worker service.
2. We have had 45 enquiries in this period of which 5 related to Step Parent Adoption. Many enquiries are for the provision of advice and information only. All those enquiring about becoming a prospective adopter are invited to attend an information evening.

3. As of 30 September, 5 households were in stage one of the process and 6 in stage two (the final assessment stage before Adoption Panel approval).
4. 4 new adoptive households completed their assessment and were approved as prospective adopters.
5. As of 30 September, Central Bedfordshire had 3 approved adopters where no link had been identified and family finding was in progress.
6. 2 prospective adopters withdrew in Stage 2 following agency advice.
7. 2 approved adopters withdrew post approval due to a change in circumstances.

### **Adopter Recruitment and Placements for Children**

8. Central Bedfordshire year to date performance:

	2018-19 activity to date
Adult Approvals	4
Adoption Plans	19
Matched	6
Adoption Order	5

9. As of 30 September 2018, there were 15 children placed in adoptive placements pending the granting of an Adoption Order. 8 children have an application to adopt submitted to court with orders expected to be granted in the next few months. In addition, there were 3 children placed in a Foster for Adoption placements pending the outcome of Care Proceedings.
10. Of the 6 matches made in this period 3 children were matched with Central Bedfordshire approved adopters and 3 with external agency providers.
11. 5 Adoption Orders were granted in this reporting period.
12. There have continued to be no adoption disruptions of children placed by Central Bedfordshire within this period.
13. One non-agency adoption order was granted following a step parent adoption application.

### **Interagency:**

14. During this reporting period 4 children from other local authorities were placed with 2 prospective adopter households approved by Central Bedfordshire.
15. 5 adoption orders were granted to interagency placements provided by CBC adopters. This has a positive impact on national performance and reflects the successful recruitment of adopters for children requiring adoption nationally.

### **Adoption Support**

16. 18 requests for adoption support were received. These include 4 requests for an intermediary service.
17. 10 Adoption support assessments have been completed.
18. Applications to the Adoption Support Fund have significantly increased in this period compared with the same period in 2017-18 with 19 applications completed and agreed. This has enabled the provision of therapeutic intervention to identify families.
19. Support also continues through post adoption contact arrangements (sometimes referred to as indirect contact) for each individual child placed for adoption. It seeks to ensure a secure and consistent record of contact between birth family and adoptive family. This often includes letters and occasional photographs that are often of high significance to the adoptee later in life.
20. Support events have continued to be held such as the annual summer barbeque which was attended by over 100 adults and children.

### **Key Events**

21. Central Bedfordshire continue to be a partner within the Central East Regional Adoption Agency. CBC are the lead authority and following the completion of an outline and full Business Case are progressing to implement an RAA with Milton Keynes Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.
22. The Adoption Panel has continued to remain a shared service with Bedford Borough hosted by Central Bedfordshire. A new Panel Chair was appointed and attended Team Meetings to discuss panel matters and practice development with both services.

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

23. 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**

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

## **Staffing (including Trade Unions)**

25. Not Applicable.

## **Community Safety:**

26. Not Applicable

## **Sustainability**

27. Not Applicable

## **Procurement:**

28. Not Applicable

## **Council Priorities:**

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

## **Corporate Implications**

32. Not Applicable

## **Legal Implications**

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

34. The National Adoption Leadership Board continues to monitor performance and drive change. The quarterly survey reports on all significant data for children with a plan for adoption and adults who have expressed an interest in adoption.
35. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

36. Adoption within Children's Services has an annual budget including costs of other Adoption Agency placements and provision on behalf of Bedford Borough Council under the Shared Adoption Panel. The report is an update on the Adoption service and does not have financial implications.

## **Equalities Implications**

37. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization 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. Adoption services provided to Looked after Children affects all sectors of communities. Central Bedfordshire Council consider adopters from a wide range of backgrounds and the matching process carefully considers individual needs and characteristics.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

38. Since April 2018, 57 young people ceased to be looked after and of these 5 children were adopted – this shows that our year to date Adoption performance stands at 8.8% of children leaving care do so through adoption.
39. The total numbers of adoptions during this year are expected to improve significantly due to the number of children currently placed for adoption and the timetable when adoption orders are expected to be granted.
40. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family in days (Adoption Scorecard Indicator) continues to improve.
41. Q1 (April to June) rolling 3-year average was reported at 390 days. This was maintained for Q2 (July-September 2018 - rolling 3-year average ending 30<sup>th</sup> September). This is an improvement when compared to our 2016/17 (443 days) and 2017/18 outturn (430 days).
42. National average target for 2014-2017 is 417 days and we will continue to work to achieve permanence through adoption for our children in timescales that are better than the national target.

43. Adoption Support activity remained stable in this period with 18 assessments being undertaken to date (the same number completed in 2017/18). The adoption support offer continues to be reviewed alongside the implementation of the RAA.

**Appendices**

None

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

None

**Report author(s):** Nickie Phillips, Practice Manager –  
Corporate Parenting Service - Adoption

[Nickie.Phillips@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Nickie.Phillips@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Central Bedfordshire Council

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

**11 February 2019**

**Support for Care Leavers - Personal Advisor**

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**Report of:** Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Children's Services ([steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

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

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### **Purpose of this report**

This report considers the new extended statutory legislation and demographic growth pressures on the support available to young people leaving care in Central Bedfordshire from their allocated Personal Advisor.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Panel is asked to:**

**To note the proposal for additional Personal Advisor support to “meet legislative changes bringing extra statutory duties for Care Leavers aged 21-25” for which a budget has been built into the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2019/20 subject to approval by full Council in February 2019.**

### **Issues**

1. Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires each local authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its Care Leavers. The local offer provides information about all the services and support that is available to Care Leavers from the local authority, including information about both their statutory entitlements (such as appropriate accommodation, staying put, financial support to meet their education, training and employment needs, help to pay for things such as accommodation, food and clothing) and any discretionary support that a local authority provides (such as careers advice or public health services).

2. Central Bedfordshire's offer to Care Leavers includes details of services aimed at supporting young people with
  - a. Education and training
  - b. Health and Wellbeing
  - c. Relationships
  - d. Employment
  - e. Accommodation
  - f. Participation in Society
3. This report highlights the impact the statutory increase in the scope of eligibility, will have on demand and the subsequent statutory support that will need to be provided to young people leaving care by the Personal Advisors.
4. In Central Bedfordshire, eligible young people leaving care receive support and advice from a Personal Advisor (PA).
5. The Personal Advisor is the person appointed to work with the young person when they leave care and occupies a key role in providing support. They hold a pivotal role in the assessment, planning and review of the young person's needs as set out in the Pathway Plan; The Pathway Plan sets out the ambitions and route to the future for the young people leaving care and states how their needs will be met in their path to independence, including what support is available to them from the local authority.
6. The extent to which the Personal Advisor becomes the main source of advice and support to the young person varies according to individual circumstances and the young person's wishes.
7. In Central Bedfordshire, all eligible young people leaving care receive a multi-agency assessment of their needs including: the need for advice, assistance and support they need when leaving care. This informs the Pathway Plan.
8. All eligible young people have a Pathway Plan in place by their 16th birthday.
9. The Pathway Plan is reviewed with the young person and relevant professionals at least every 6 months.

### **Impact of new legislation on Personal Advisor (PA) support**

10. Under previous legislation, Local Authorities were required to only provide Care Leavers with support from a Personal Advisor until they reached the age of 21, with that support continuing up to the age of 25 if a Care Leaver was engaged in education or training. This support was not available to Care Leavers aged over 21 who were not in education, training or employment.

11. Based on the current cohort of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, the forecast of our child population indicates that in the next 3 years the number of young people receiving support from a Personal Advisor will continue to increase.
12. These figures take into account the fact that the Care Leavers who are now over the age of 21, have become entitled to Personal Advisor support under the new legislation.

Date	Number of young people entitled to receive PA support
31/03/2019	259
31/03/2020	254
31/03/2021	258

13. Current establishment in the Corporate Parenting Service is of 7 PAs (at the cost of just over £200k per year - £28,500 per Personal Advisor). At the time of this report (January 2019), the average caseload for each Personal Advisor is approximately 23 young people. This sits just under national average of 24-25 young people per Personal Advisor (*Source: DfE's new burden assessment, Comment of Mark Ridell, Leaving Care Adviser to Minister to eastern region leads*) and enables good quality direct work with this vulnerable group.
14. Manageable caseloads also allow for the best possible transfer of responsibility for working with the young person from their Social Worker to their Personal Advisor. Currently this takes place close to the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Best practice will be for this to take place with a period of joint working between the ages of 17 and a half and 18.
15. Taking into account the projected figures above, if the establishment remains at 7 Personal Advisors, the caseload in the following years will look as follows:

Date	Ave Caseload 7 PA's
31/03/2019	37
31/03/2020	36
31/03/2021	37

16. The increase in caseloads above is not a sustainable model as one Personal Advisor is unable to provide relational intervention and a good quality service and to 40 young people. The most up to date figures indicate the following average caseloads below if we meet the need for all those young people, with their newly established statutory entitlement, require a service (January 2019):

Date	Caseload per 7 PA	Caseload per 8 PA	Caseload per 9 PA	Caseload per 10 PA	Caseload per 11 PA
31/03/2019	37	32	29	26	24
31/03/2020	36	32	29	25	23
31/03/2021	39	35	31	28	25

### How many young people will this new statutory requirement affect?

17. On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018 all young people aged 21-25 newly entitled to receive a service from a Personal Advisor were written to and advised of their new statutory entitlement.

18. When the full detail of Central Bedfordshire's Leaving Care Offer is concluded including the level of financial and other support, the Leaving Care Offer will be formally launched. This will involve our CICC, partners, significant publicity and assertive outreach to all those your people entitled to a service. This outreach will include Personal Advisor's visiting young people. This high impact promotion is in line with our statutory commitments.

19. Three out of four of our care leavers who have turned 21yrs old since the change in the statutory entitlement, continue to be supported by the Leaving Care Service.

20. Based on the assumptions:

- All current Looked after Children/Young People who turn 18 before 31/03/22 will become care leavers
- Any of the above who don't qualify as a care leaver will be replaced by new LAC that do qualify.
- Three out of every four Care Leavers turning 21 receive services (take-up rate since April 18, 72%)
- Young people stop receiving services at 25
- Three out of four Care Leavers on 31<sup>st</sup> March 18 with whom we are not currently in touch seek further support

21. The total number of care leavers whose statutory entitlement to support from a Personal Adviser will be:

Date	Care Leavers requiring statutory support form PA
31/03/2019	162
31/03/2020	232
31/03/2021	230

22. An establishment of 11 Personal Advisors will allow an average caseload of 21.1 young people and the additional statutory responsibilities:

- Proactive follow up including visits to young people entitled to a service who have not responded so far. This will be a major piece of work in the first 6 months of the new financial year.
- High quality support to young people in the transition from working with their Social Worker to working with their Personal Advisor. This is a commitment of 6 months extra work for the Personal Advisor with every care leaver that they support.
- The ability to respond to increases in the number of care leavers in total
- The ability to be agile and respond to increases in the number of those in the cohort entitled to support taking it up (e.g. due its success, publicity or word of mouth) We intend to increase the percentage of young people returning to the service and staying with the service to 100%. This will be a commitment to support young people for the first 7 years of their adulthood to the age of 25.
- The ability to respond to the increasing complexity of this group of young people whose needs and demands can be high but often they do not meet the threshold for adult services.
- The provision of an Outstanding service to the children for whom we are corporate parents and have statutory responsibilities.

23. Over the last 18-24 months young people leaving the care of Central Bedfordshire Council have achieved good outcomes as Social Workers and Personal Advisors have manageable caseloads and they are providing relational social work and support to the young people. This is reflected in the fact that in this period the percentage of our Care Leavers in education, employment or training has consistently been very close to or exceeded 70%. This compares favourably with local (48.5%) and national (50%) figures.

24. Central Bedfordshire Council is fully committed in our offer to our Care Leavers and to achieve this, the caseloads and the support offered should be maintained at the same level going forward to ensure the best outcomes for our young people. In the recent inspection OFSTED found that in Central Bedfordshire

***“Care Leavers are safe and feel safe. They are confident young adults who have pride in themselves”.***

Furthermore, it was noted that ***“Personal Advisors support Care Leavers very well and help them to understand their choices”.***

The full OFSTED report can be found here:

<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50004395>

25. These positive outcomes have been achieved with caseloads between 21-23 (October 18 – January 2019). It is important to maintain these very positive outcomes. It is also necessary to take into account the new statutory duty to support the larger number of care leavers for longer and to meet the additional demands outlined in points 21.1. It is for these reasons that we have set the recommended caseload as outlined above.

26. In response to the new legislation, the Department for Education have allocated £10k to Central Bedfordshire under the New Burden Funding for the current financial year. This is a nominal amount which will not fully cover the needs of the service.

### **Funding for the additional Personal Advisor support**

27. In order to meet the new extended statutory legislation and demographic growth pressures of our young people leaving care, Central Bedfordshire Council currently allocates a budget of just over £200k per year for the employment of Personal Advisors.

28. In order to continue offering good quality support to our Care Leavers, the caseloads need to be maintained in line with national averages. To achieve this for our young people, whilst taking into account the increase in demand detailed above, this report updates the Panel that subject to approval of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in February 2019, the base budget will be increased by £245K of which £114k, will fund the equivalent of 4 Personal Advisors.

### **Council Priorities**

29. Leaving care support is a key statutory service to Looked After Children between the ages of 16 and 25. The efficient and effective delivery of this service is aligned with the Council's priorities to offer great resident services, to improve education and skills of young people leaving care, to protect the vulnerable; improving wellbeing whilst at the same time creating stronger communities and being a more efficient and responsive Council.

## **Corporate Implications**

### **Risk Management:**

30. Regulatory Risks: The provision of suitable support for Care Leavers is a key activity monitored by Ofsted during inspections, forming part of their judgement about services for Looked after Children.
31. Child Protection Risks: Failure to effectively support young people is a child protection risk.
32. Reputational Risk: Good support and good outcomes for young people leaving care has a positive impact in the way the council delivers its statutory duties as Corporate Parent for children looked after.
33. Financial Risk: there is a financial implication to delivering support to young people leaving care. Should young people not have access to timely support and their issues escalate then there is a far greater financial risk for example if a young person enters the criminal justice system.

## **Legal Implications**

34. National regulations and legislation outline the way in which the council delivers statutory duties for young people leaving care.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

35. The proposed funding of £245K in the MTFP includes £114K for additional Personal Advisers from 7 to 11 is built into the MTFP for which approval is being sought by Council in February 2019.

## Equalities Implications

36. 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.
37. Looked After Children are not a protected group under the Equality Act, however the effective support of looked after children requires consideration of a range of issues related to their protected characteristics. Consideration of mental health and wellbeing can be particularly important and has been highlighted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Children who have been in care:
- are between four and five times more likely to attempt suicide in adulthood
  - have a fivefold increased risk of all childhood mental, emotional and behavioural problems
  - have a six to sevenfold increased risk of conduct disorders
  - 60% of Looked After Young People have some level of mental health problem

The proposals in this report will increase support for young people when they leave care and help to promote their equality of opportunity.

## Conclusion and next Steps

38. To note a proposed pressure in the 19/20 MTFP to “meet legislative changes bringing extra statutory duties for Care Leavers aged 21-25”

## Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

11 February 2019

### Eastern Region Peer Review Looked After Children and Permanence

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**Report of:** Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Children's Services ([steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

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

**This report relates to a decision that is Non-Key**

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#### Purpose of this report

This report provides members with detail on the outcome of the November 2018 Eastern Region Peer Review of Looked After Children and Permanence.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to:

1. Note the contents of the report
2. Agree that a plan will be formulated in response to the findings of the Peer Review

#### Background to the Eastern Region Peer Review

1. Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services is part of an Eastern Region network of Children's Services. The purpose of the network is to support peer led continuous improvement through collaboration and challenge. Peer Review is part of the Eastern Region offer to the sector. After the Ofsted Inspection in July 2017, Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services requested that a Peer Review was undertaken focusing on our looked after children services and achieving permanence. This area of the service was a key element of the Ofsted Action Plan, developed in response to the July 2017 Ofsted Inspection. The November 2018 Peer Review provided Central Bedfordshire with an opportunity to test the impact of the Ofsted Action Plan in terms of services to looked after children and young people and permanence, and to help identify how services might be progressed from good to great.

## Process of the Eastern Region Peer Review

2. The Peer Review Team was composed of an Assistant Director and Head of Service from Cambridgeshire and a Head of Service from Hertfordshire. The Peer Review team were provided with key data on relevant services in advance of the Peer Review. The Peer Review team undertook field work for three days beginning 27 November 2018. The field work involved meetings with service leaders and colleagues from health, observing Resources Panel, meeting with social workers to consider in detail the work they are undertaking with families, and meeting with representatives from the Children in Care Council. The discussions with Social Workers included reference to the electronic case records for children.

## Focus of the Eastern Region Peer Review

3. Central Bedfordshire Council asked the Peer Review group to consider in detail the quality of services to children up to the age of 16 years in five Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs). The KLOEs were informed by the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework and the elements of the Ofsted Action Plan that related to looked after children and permanency. The five KLOEs were:
  - i. Children subject of letter before proceedings and the quality and impact of pre-proceedings interventions
  - ii. Quality of decisions about entering care
  - iii. Quality of matching and decision making for children in care
  - iv. Permanence planning and achieving permanence
  - v. Quality of management and leadership

## Findings of the Eastern Region Peer Review

4. **KLOE 1** considered pre-proceedings work. The Peer Reviewers concluded that there had been effective dedicated activity in respect of pre-proceedings work since the July 2017 Ofsted Inspection. The Peer Review team concluded that the workforce has a clear and accurate understanding of their roles and responsibilities in this area of work, underpinned by clear guidance (written and from managers) and attendance at action learning sets.
5. Letters for parents were clear and SMART and in a format that is accessible to families and staff. Social Workers are well placed to consider early permanence for children from the onset of the process, if not before, with the support of routine complex case discussions between Social Workers and managers to decide on the right plan for the child. These discussions agreed which assessments would be required. Identifying assessments at an early stage and having these endorsed by the Resources Panel allows for focused and timely interventions for children.
6. This 'front loading' of activity suggested better outcomes are being achieved in Care Proceedings, with Court proceedings average timescales being lower than the national and regional average (28 weeks), Court decisions mainly (80%) matching the request of the Local Authority, and adoption timeliness for children.
7. Senior Manager and Legal Services oversight was judged to have been transformational, by embedding real time tracking of the plans for children in pre-

proceedings and Care Proceedings. Effective processes had resulted in themes and trends being identified so that planning for potential demand was possible.

8. The Peer Review Team recommendations:

- Use the insights from the pre-proceedings and legal tracking processes with Early Help services to further inform the targeted offer
- Identify a more consistent drug and alcohol support service
- Guard against over optimism with some children and families who could have a permanence decision made at an earlier stage
- Take planning for early permanence to the next stage by including the adoption service as soon as possible in planning and decision making, such as Resources Panel and pre-proceedings processes

9. **KLOE 2** considered the quality of decisions about children entering care. The Peer Reviewers advised that the weekly Resources Panel allows for consistency and timeliness of decision making in respect of children entering care, assessments and resources to support care planning. Representation on the Panel is reflective of services that are important to children and members are of appropriate seniority to make decisions and commit resources.

10. The Peer Reviewers concluded that the Panel is well led by the Assistant Director and understood by the workforce. Requests to panel are clear, thoughtful and child focused, supported by the complex case discussions that take place prior to Panel. As a result, good and timely decisions are made for children. Regular Lead Member attendance and participation at the panel confirms investment from the Council in understanding in 'real time' not only the demand for services and impact of these for children but a good investment in corporate parenting responsibilities.

11. The Peer Reviewers advised that the reach and influence of the Virtual School was apparent at the time of the decision for children to enter care and in some cases prior to this. Social Workers were found to have a sound understanding of the importance of stability in children's education and how they could influence this through the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and working with the Virtual School.

12. Plans and reviews for children were judged to be responsive and child focused.

13. The Peer Review team recommendations:

- Consideration be given to widening the membership of the Resources Panel to include Commissioning and Early Help key decision makers
- Genograms are presented in a consistent format
- Greater clarity as to the purpose of complex case discussions and how these build on supervision
- Consider opportunities to delegate some Resource Panel decisions to Heads of Service

14. **KLOE 3** considered the quality of matching and decision making for children in care. The Peer Reviewers concluded that Social Worker really knew their children and were advocating effectively on their behalf, supporting them to achieve their full

potential. Permanency Planning Meetings were timely and well informed. The footprint of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was evident throughout the planning for children.

15. Child Permanence Reports were found to be written sensitively, with information to support children throughout their lifetime to know and understand their story.
16. A whole system approach to matching children for permanency was found by the Peer Reviewers. Social Workers reported confidence in the Placement Resources Team and a good relationship was found between these teams of colleagues. The child's profile, including a pen picture, were found to be used when searching for placements for children and long-term matches. Social Workers felt matching was more successful for children as the process is managed carefully and the pen picture allows the foster carers to get a sense of the child before being provided with their detailed profile.
17. The Peer Reviewers reported that comprehensive sibling assessments are completed by Social Workers that fully inform the care planning for children. Team Managers have clarity regarding Court time frames and when papers need to be ready for the Agency Decision Maker to complete the best interest decision. Social Workers showed the Peer Reviewers evidence of how this is discussed in supervision to support their planning, avoiding drift and delay for children.
18. The Peer Reviewers noted that the Senior Management Team scrutinise Court outcomes on a monthly basis, and this activity supports learning for practitioners when making applications to the Court. The Peer Reviewers saw evidence that in the main, the Order requested by the Local Authority at the initial Court Hearing is the Order granted. This supports timely care planning for children.
19. The Peer Review team recommendations:
  - The knowledge and experience of the Adoption Service is used earlier on in care planning for children
  - Greater consistency in Permanency Planning Meetings
  - All practitioners are able to articulate the timeframes for matching for all permanency options and the quality assurance framework around these
20. **KLOE 4** considered permanence planning and achieving permanence. The Peer Reviewers saw evidence of Life Story Work being collected by Social Workers from a wide range of people and sources. The Peer Reviewers judged this to be impressive and supported Social Workers really knowing their children and their story.
21. The Peer Reviewers found evidence of creativity in permanency planning, including thinking outside of the box for a sibling group to be placed together by using legislation to support an early match. This was an example of focused and child centred planning.
22. The Peer Reviewers noted that placement stability figures indicate children are not experiencing unnecessary placement moves. The Peer Reviewers concluded that this is due to careful planning and matching for children, as highlighted in KLOE 3.

23. Relationship based social work was judged to be 'taken to the next level', with relationship based work evident across the partnership. The investment made by Social Workers and managers in supporting partners to understand their role as corporate parents was judged to be very effective.
24. Service provided by the Virtual School, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Looked After Health Team were considered to be strong and impressive. Services were found to be timely and responsive for children. The Virtual School was found to be demanding of all involved in the care of the child so that children are effectively supported.
25. The in-house fostering service was judged to be good, with evidence of strategic planning to enable growth in the service.
26. The Peer Reviewers concluded that the high levels of placement stability are a result of the activity detailed in KLOE 4.
27. The Peer Review team recommendations:
- Adoption Social Workers are included in the induction of newly qualified social workers, to reinforce the importance of timely adoption planning
  - Promotion of the impact of the IRO role in quality assurance
  - Placement stability data matches Social Workers' narrative and that it is reflected in case tracking
  - The Permanency Tracking Meetings are reinstated
28. **KLOE 5** addressed the quality of management and leadership. The Peer Review team found that Social Workers valued the attention of the leadership team to keeping their caseloads realistic and manageable, reflecting their levels of experience. The Peer Reviewers noted that the Council has invested in 'growing your own' workforce, through opportunities to gain a social work degree and continuous formal and informal training opportunities for Social Workers. This is allowing the workforce to reach their full potential, with the knowledge and skills to undertake their work. Social Workers were reflective and able to confidently share practice and articulate how missed opportunities for children can inform learning. Relationship based practice was recognised as the 'golden thread' throughout the organisation.
29. The Lead Member for Children's Services and the Head of the Virtual School are integrated into the senior leadership team and as such promote the role of corporate parents across the Council.
30. The Peer Review team recommendations:
- The relationship based approach of the organisation is promoted in opening presentations and in Central Bedfordshire Council literature
  - Checks and balances are revisited to ensure over optimism is challenged, particularly for younger children

- Opportunities are identified for Team Managers and Practice Managers to act into positions that stretch their potential through safe delegation of some decision making tasks

## **Legal Implications**

31. The report does not have specific legal implications. However, the Council has a statutory obligation towards its looked after children and this report provides information as to how some of those obligations are being met.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

32. This report does not have specific financial implications. However timely, considered and effective care planning in pre-proceedings work and for looked after children is an efficient use of resources and for this reason contributes to good budget management.

## **Equalities Impact**

33. 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 timely, considered and effective care planning enables Central Bedfordshire Council to achieve better outcomes for children and young people who are additionally vulnerable.

## **Conclusion and next Steps**

34. The Eastern Region Peer Review that took place for three days beginning 27 November 2018 concluded that pre-proceedings work and services for looked after children up to the age of 16 were sound. This is a positive outcome for children and families in Central Bedfordshire and indicates that the Ofsted Action Plan has supported effective service development.
35. The Peer Reviewers made a number of considered and helpful recommendations for further service development, as detailed in the body of the report. It is proposed that these recommendations form the basis of a further action plan, drawing on the consultation with managers that took place in December 2018, and that this plan is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background Papers**

None

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## Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

11 February 2019

### Ofsted Action Plan Update

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**Report of:** Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Members for Children's Services ([steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk))

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

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### Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to update elected members on the Ofsted Action Plan 2017-18 and to propose next steps.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to:

1. To note the contents of the report
2. To agree that the Ofsted Action Plan is now completed

### Issues

#### The purpose of the Ofsted Action Plan

1. The Post Ofsted Action Plan (Action Plan) was 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 nine recommendations were made.
2. The Action Plan is informed by the nine recommendations in the Ofsted Inspection report published on 25 August 2017. The Action Plan is attached as an appendix to this report. The Action Plan was co-produced with managers and practitioners in Central Bedfordshire Children's Services, led by the Director of Children's Services.

3. The Action Plan was agreed as appropriate by Ofsted in December 2017. From January until September 2017, the Action Plan has been subject to frequent progress monitoring by the Director of Children's Services and other senior leaders. This has meant that progress on actions and impact measures have been subject to close and continuous scrutiny.

4. The nine recommendations of the Ofsted Inspection report are, in summary:

- I. Improve the effectiveness of frontline managers
- II. Ensure that pre-proceedings work is initiated promptly when children's circumstances do not improve
- III. Provide rigorous oversight and tracking of children's plans when children become looked after so that permanence is formally approved in a timely manner
- IV. Strengthen performance management and the quality assurance framework to provide managers with a clear line of sight to practice quality
- V. Ensure that 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
- VI. Improve the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- VII. Ensure that the physical and emotional needs of looked after children are considered earlier when plans being made for them to be placed at a distance, so that they can access any services they need in a timely manner
- VIII. Ensure that 16 and 17 year old homeless children are provided with clear information about their entitlements to accommodation
- IX. Ensure that the agency decision maker provides a coherent rationale for all adoption decisions and that this is recorded on children's files

5. The recommendations primarily relate to looked after children although some are broader, specifically the recommendations on improving the effectiveness of frontline managers (Rec 1) and strengthening performance management and the quality assurance framework (Rec 4). Recommendation Two in respect of pre-proceedings is not directly in relation to looked after children but relates to the statutory requirement for timely intervention and planning for children at all stages in their journey.

6. Each of the nine recommendations has a series of actions and outcomes in the Action Plan. The recommendations and related actions vary in terms of complexity. For example, the recommendation that the agency decision maker provides a coherent rationale for all adoption decisions and this is recorded on the child's file (Rec 9) is relatively straightforward to complete and evaluate. The other eight recommendations are more complex and have required multiple action points and evaluation measures. Auditing has been built into the action points to check progress. All the agreed actions have been completed as planned. Impact measures are ongoing, with further audit work and regular but less frequent oversight of the Action Plan progress. The Eastern

Region Peer Review of Looked After Children and Permanence in November 2018 provided further independent evaluation of the progress and impact of the Action Plan.

### **A summary of progress against the Post Ofsted Action Plan**

7. Recommendation One, is in respect of improving the effectiveness of front line managers and review managers, to ensure that children's assessments are updated in response to change. Training has been provided to frontline managers (team managers and review managers) and practitioners as agreed and is ongoing. Revised supervision and assessment procedures have been put in place, through a process of consultation and collaboration and integration of research findings on best practice. Monthly case file audits indicate that overall practice is sound and further improvement opportunities are clearly identified, actions agreed and progress and impact of actions evaluated. The number of children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan for over two years has reduced significantly as a result of considered, child safety and welfare focused action.
8. Recommendation Two addresses the need to ensure and evidence that pre-proceedings work is initiated promptly when children's circumstances do not improve. The agreed training has been provided and well received on pre-proceedings work. Monthly data and the audit of pre-proceedings practice shows that timely action is being taken for children entering and in the pre-proceedings process. Clear and impactful data is also available about the timeliness and outcomes of legal care proceedings.
9. Care proceedings for Central Bedfordshire are mainly completed within the national target of 26 weeks. In a small number of unusually complex cases a longer timescale is required, bringing the average to completion within 28 weeks. This is significantly below the national and regional average and is indicative of prompt decision making for children so that their legal status is secured in a timely way. In most (88%) cases the application requested to the Court by the Local Authority is granted and close scrutiny of the outcomes in all cases ensures that appropriate action is taken to safeguard children if an alternative outcome arises. Learning is secured through reflection on the most complex and challenging situations for children in care proceedings. The Eastern Region Peer Review concluded that practice in respect of PLO was exemplary.
10. Recommendation Three is in respect of rigorous oversight and tracking of children's plans when they are looked after. Whilst we know that looked after children in Central Bedfordshire continue to have stable placements, the issue of formal matching and agreement of permanence continues to be a particularly high profile area of our recent and current work. Permanency tracking and formal matching processes have been revised as agreed in the plan.

11. The number of children who are matched with long term foster carers is clear. Currently 59% of our looked after children who have been living with foster carers for 12+ months are formally matched with their carers. This is an increase from 39% in February 2018. We anticipate that this number will continue to increase as a result of the robust processes that have been put in place as a result of the Action Plan. A process also is in place to ensure that children with other types of permanence have this formally agreed. This continues to be a high profile and particularly active area of work. Further actions include refining the Permanency Planning Meeting process to ensure consistency, and re-introducing the regular Permanency Tracking Meetings that were temporarily suspended in the autumn 2018 to allow managers to focus on ensuring formal matching activity (the 13+ Matching Panels).
  
12. Recommendation Four addresses performance management and the quality assurance framework. The quality assurance (audit) process has been subject to extensive change as agreed in the Action Plan. The second quarter of the revised case file audit process was completed in October 2018. Audit completion rates are high and the collated findings provide clear service strengths and development areas. Development activity from audits results in agreed actions and these are closely monitored by the senior leadership team. Emerging indicators of practice improvement as a result of learning and actions from audit is apparent in the most recent quarterly audit report.
  
13. Practitioners and managers report that the revised audit process is clear and helpful, supporting them to reflect on practice quality effectively. A themed audit programme is running in parallel to the monthly case file audit process. This includes planned progress and impact update audits going through 2019.
  
14. Recommendation Four also addresses actions in respect of return home interview practice. This was promptly streamlined to ensure that the Return Home Interview Service (RHI) secures all missing notifications within 24 hours so that all children are offered a return home interview so that an understanding of their needs can be secured and help offered as promptly and as required. An audit is nearing completion to check compliance and impact in respect of practice and reporting in the consistently effective use of child sexual exploitation screening and risk assessment tools.
  
15. Recommendation Five addresses the need to ensure and evidence that the Corporate Parenting Panel is routinely informed about issues and areas from 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. Agreed actions and deep dives have been agreed and followed up on as planned. Elected members attended open sessions with Corporate Parenting colleagues in January 2018 to further enhance their understanding of their role, the journey of the child and the role of the Corporate Parenting Service in a child's life. The session involved members exploring how they can further utilise their role as Corporate Parents to drive change and seek the views of children to inform committees and communities.

16. Since July 2018, a Children in Care Council member has co-chaired as well as attended the bi-monthly Corporate Parenting Panel and all Corporate Parenting Panels now take place in school holidays to make attendance by children easy.
  
17. Recommendation Six is in respect of the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for looked after children. Improvement activity was based on challenging and comprehensive quality assurance processes for the completion of PEPs by the Virtual School Team Leader and Head Teacher as well as additional guidance to education and social work colleagues who complete PEPs. PEP quality has shown a marked improvement following this improvement activity.
  
18. Recommendation Seven is about ensuring that the physical and emotional needs of looked after children are considered early when plans are made for them to be placed at a distance. A tracking process has been established with health colleagues to ensure good oversight and prompt action to support the needs of children. An audit of practice in May 2018 showed that overall the physical and emotional needs of children are being met. Practice in respect of this area of work was judged to be sound by the Eastern Region Peer Review team in November 2018.
  
19. Recommendation Eight is in respect of making sure that 16 and 17 homeless children had clear information about their entitlements to accommodation and support. Training has been provided to practitioners, homeless interviews are put on the child's electronic case record and practitioner compliance is checked through file audits. Children's Services managers ensure that it is exceptional for children to remain in emergency homeless accommodation for more than the agreed maximum of 28 days.
  
20. Recommendation Nine requires that the agency decision maker for adoption decisions provides a coherent rationale for the decision. This is evident on all case files, evidenced in routine audit activity.

## **Legal Implications**

This report does not have specific legal implications. However, the Council has a statutory obligation towards children and this report provides information as to how some of those obligations are being met in terms of the Ofsted regulatory framework.

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

This report does not have specific financial implications. However timely, considered and effective service delivery for children and their families is an efficient use of resources and for this reason contributes to good budget management.

## **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. Ensuring that children are provided with timely, considered and effective services enables Central Bedfordshire Council to achieve better outcomes for children and young people who are additionally vulnerable.

## **Conclusion**

At our request, The Eastern Region Peer Review in November 2018 provided a timely independent review of the quality of service provided to our children who are looked after or on the edge of care, central issues in the Ofsted Action Plan. The successful Peer Review confirms that the Action Plan has been completed and that it has been impactful in terms of practice development and service quality.

It is imperative that we continue to retain focus on the practice development areas steered in the nine Ofsted Inspection recommendations that informed the Action Plan. This because many of the recommendations are challenging and complex, requiring both process and cultural shifts. This focus needs to go alongside a keen attention to continuing to the basics right - timeliness, collaboration, statutory requirements, - whilst attending to emerging priorities also.

## **Recommendations**

- That the Ofsted Action Plan is formally signed off as completed by the Director of Children's Services
- A progress review is undertaken as part of the annual Eastern Region Self Assessment in May-June 2019
- Continued rigour in audit practice, informed by the ILACS framework, as well as emerging national priorities (for examples, intrafamilial child sexual abuse, (a current Joint Targeted Area Inspection theme) and criminal exploitation of children) and Central Bedfordshire Children's Service priorities such as reunification of children from care and children at home and subject of Care Orders.

## **Appendices**

The following Appendix 1 is attached - Post Ofsted Action Plan September 2018

## **Background Papers**

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 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
- 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 Assistant 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.

Key to RAG status:

	The action is achieved
	The action is on track to achieve
	The action is not yet on track

**Document history**

Date issued	V. no	Summary of changes	Author
27/11/17	1.0	Action plan following pilot the SIF inspection in 2017	Ruth Coals Head of Professional Standards
28/11/17	2.0	Reviewed at Senior Management Team (SMT)	Gerard Jones Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
30/11/17	3.0	Reviewed at Children’s Senior Management Team (CSMT)	Sue Harrison Director of Children’s Services
9/1/18	4.0	Reviewed at Senior Management Team (SMT)	Gerard Jones Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
18/1/18	5.0	Reviewed at Children’s Senior Management Team (CSMT)	Sue Harrison Director of Children’s Services
6/3/18	6.0	Reviewed at Senior Management Team (SMT)	Gerard Jones Deputy Director Safeguarding and Early Help
8/3/18	7.0	Reviewed at Children’s Senior Management Team (CSMT)	Sue Harrison Director of Children’s Services

19/4/18	8.0	Reviewed at Children's Senior Management Team (CSMT)	Sue Harrison Director of Children's Services
29/5/18	9.0	Reviewed at Senior Management Team (SMT)	Sacha Rymell Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help
31/5/18	10.0	Reviewed at Children's Senior Management Team (CSMT)	Sue Harrison Director of Children's Services
28/6/18	11.0	Reviewed at Children's Senior Management Team (CSMT)	Sue Harrison Director of Children's Services
6/8/18	12.0	Reviewed at Senior Management Team (SMT)	Sacha Rymell Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help

**OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS –Single Inspection Framework (SIF) 2017**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action / Required Outcomes</b>	<b>Timescale and Lead</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>	<b>RAG</b>
<b>1</b>	<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><b>1.1 Action</b></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><b>Outcomes</b></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>	<p>September 18</p> <p>Head of Learning and Development</p>	<p>A Learning and Management programme has been designed which has been informed by a learning needs analysis and it will include a manager’s self-assessment survey in line with the recently published knowledge and skills statements and will begin imminently.</p> <p>A whole council senior management programme is also under development to complement this.</p> <p>A pilot of peer observed supervision has been completed led by the HoS for Referral, Assessment and Intervention. Peer observed supervision will be introduced from September 2018 as part of the amended Supervision Procedures.</p> <p>The learning from a survey of the experience of practitioners of supervision (Nov 17) and the outcomes from an audit on supervision quality (April 18) have been integrated into the Learning and Management programme.</p> <p>Community Care Inform (CCI) and how to use this resource was effectively presented at our Feb 18 PSMT and has resulted in a 208% increase in the use of CCI on line learning resources. CCI will attend PSMT in October 2018 as part of a six-monthly updating learning cycle.</p> <p>Managing Risk training delivered to 12 Team Managers in Feb 18 was well received and has led to amended practice in Core Groups</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
				<p>and supervision in Family Support, child outcomes focused gradings have been introduced.</p> <p>Team Managers and Audit Managers attended the making Research Matter lecture by David Wilkins at UoB on recent research into effective supervision – ‘Supervision and the Golden Thread’.</p> <p>Intrac Team Manager supervision 3 day training occurred in May 18. The impact of this training will be evaluated through audit and self-evaluation in October 2018.</p> <p>NAIRO training planned for new Review Managers – October 18.</p> <p>RiP training for all Review Managers is taking place in October 18.</p> <p>More Team Managers are accessing a Masters at University of Bedfordshire.</p>	
		<p><b>1.2 Action</b></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>July 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>The new procedures were uploaded to TriX on 21 March 18.</p> <p>Assessments are updated as and when necessary and appropriate as outlined within the updated policy.</p> <p>A presentation on learning from the thematic audit on the quality of supervision, planning and review was presented at PSMT on 20 June 18.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p><b>Outcomes</b></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>			
		<p><b>1.3 Action</b></p> <p>Best practice in assessments learning events will be delivered to practitioners and managers by Consultant Social Workers and Audit Managers.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Impact will be evidenced through a thematic audit.</p>	<p>May 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>The “best practice in assessments” final workshop took place in March 18. A further programme of events is being developed and will start in Sept 18.</p> <p>A thematic audit on assessment practice is currently underway and is due to report in August 18.</p>	
		<p><b>1.4 Action</b></p> <p>Child Protection Chairs will ensure that plans are progressing for children between review meetings, with a particular focus on children who have</p>	<p>April 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>The Practice Manager for FS and the Practice Manager for C&amp;R meet bi-monthly to review and action plan for all children who have been Subject Of A Plan (SOAP)for +9 months and children who are the subject of the Public Law Outline process, prioritising those children who have been SOAP for the longest periods and SOAP for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent time.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>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> <p><b>Outcome</b> Case file audit will evidence that effective and timely action is being taken for children.</p>		<p>All children who have been SOAP for +9 months and children who are subject of the Public Law Outline process are discussed with the Family Support Head of Service as part of supervision.</p> <p>Weekly Family Support surgeries with the HoS are in place across the localities.</p> <p>Additional Head of Service oversight through collaboration between the Heads of Service for Family Support and Professional Standards is being applied to children who have SOAP for + 2 years. This has resulted in effective resolution on a number of cases.</p>	
		<p><b>1.5 Action</b></p> <p>The Independent Reviewing Officer Dispute Resolution process will be strengthened.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Consistent recording of evidence of resolution of the issue of concern and collated learning and updates to managers on the successful</p>	<p>February 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>A programme of regular reports to senior managers is in place, reporting on the number and nature of Disputes and CP Escalations, and evidencing remedial action that has taken place.</p> <p>Thematic strengths and development areas have been highlighted for management attention and action. The next update will be presented in July 18.</p> <p>Compliance and impact will be reviewed through case file audit, with a themed audit re IRO challenge planned to take place in September 2018.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>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><b>1.6 and 1.8 Actions</b></p> <p>Social Workers and managers will be provided with additional guidance and support to produce consistently high-quality reports and plans for Looked After Children Reviews, to ensure sufficient information about the child's progress is understood and consider where their needs have changed. The focus will consistently be on whether the outcomes for the child have been achieved and the timescales.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>The impact of the learning events will be evaluated through feedback from workshop attendees, their managers and an audit of case files.</p>	<p>September 18</p> <p>Head of Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>A series of learning events led by an audit manager, IRO and Corporate Parenting Head of Service have begun for all practitioners in Corporate Parenting and will continue in early September 2018.</p> <p>The events look at the quality of the reports presented at the review and the quality of the children's' plans. This will ensure the voice of the child is clear in reviews and the plan focusses on outcomes for the children. This will be monitored going forward by the IROs and a thematic audit will be commissioned within 3 months of learning events being completed to evidence improvement in the quality of reports and plans.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p><b>1.7 Action</b></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><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>An audit of quality in supervision was undertaken in March 2018, to evaluate progress in supervision practice standards and identify further practice development needs.</p>	<p>September 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>The supervision survey has been completed with strengths and development opportunities identified to inform the supervision practice standards and procedures review.</p> <p>Learning from the supervision survey was shared with all managers at the June 2018 PSMT.</p> <p>The recommendations have contributed to the updated draft supervision procedures, alongside the supervision training and University of Bedfordshire supervision event.</p> <p>The draft policy will be presented for consultation at July 2018 PSMT then September 2018 CSMT for sign off.</p>	
		<p><b>1.9 Action</b></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>June 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>The Conference and Review Quality Assurance meeting RAG rating system has been revised but further work is in hand to ensure there is a relentless focus on outcomes and impact for children. The learning quarterly collated learning will be integrated into the quarterly audit report, next due in October 2018, to provide managers and practitioners with a broader understanding of quality issues in our service delivery.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p><b>Outcome</b></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>			
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><b>2.1 Action</b></p> <p>Practitioners and managers will be provided with Legal Planning Meeting training, guidance and support on outcomes focused practice.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></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>	<p>April 18</p> <p>Head of Family Support</p>	<p>Action Learning sets commenced in May 2018. These are facilitated by Family Support Managers, an LGSS Law Solicitor and a Cafcass Guardian. The four Action Learning sets will address improving balance options analysis, statements – dos and don’ts, presenting analysis in statements, outcomes and the PLO process.</p> <p>There is clear senior management oversight of cases where legal advice is needed.</p> <p>Cases that are in PLO are reviewed monthly in addition to supervision – this has resulted in timely interventions and progress being evident.</p> <p>From April 2018, Legal Services are present for Strategy Meetings when new information is received on PLO/proceedings cases to support timely action in response to new information.</p> <p>An internal Family Support audit is currently underway to evaluate the effectiveness of PLO. An audit findings analysis will be completed shortly and shared at SMT for action planning.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p><b>2.2 Action</b></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><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Legal processes are completed in a timely way and for all children consistency is evident in data and feedback from the court.</p>	<p>March 18</p> <p>Head of Family Support</p>	<p>This arrangement is now embedded.</p>	
		<p><b>2.3 Action</b></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>March 18</p> <p>Head of Family Support</p>	<p>Performance reports now include legal activity and provides a good tool to track cases.</p> <p>PLO scrutiny takes place monthly and involves the PM, a Team Manager and the Senior Legal Representative reviewing case progress. This is evident on the children’s records and is reviewed by HoS. Cases in pre-proceedings or in proceedings are also tracked in supervisions. This is now embedded in practice and part of usual practices.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>There will be no delay in the progression of cases in pre-proceedings.</p>			
		<p><b>2.4 Action</b></p> <p>The Senior Legal Representative will prepare a monthly report to SMT as part of our Performance Framework.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Greater visibility of legal proceedings will be provided to senior managers.</p>	<p>February 18</p> <p>Senior Legal Representative</p>	<p>Monthly updates and a report are shared with SMT by a Senior Legal Representative who works closely with HoS Family Support.</p>	
3	<p>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>	<p><b>3.1 Action</b></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>February 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>A highlight report was shared at SMT and CSMT in Feb 18. This provided an update on the amended permanency tracking process and outcomes for children in terms of permanency timescales. Permanency tracking is now embedded in Mosaic, providing performance data.</p> <p>Permanency planning meetings are taking place for children before their second Looked After Child Review in Family Support and for children for whom the plan is adoption. Formal permanency planning meetings for children who are placed with foster carers commenced in May 2018.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<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> <p>All children in residential care will be reviewed at SMT and CSMT every six months.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>All looked after children will be provided with permanence in a timely way. Performance will be closely monitored.</p>		<p>The Director will be kept apprised of pertinent issues in respect of children in residential care by the Assistant Director as part of the weekly briefing provided from Resources Panel.</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</p>	<p><b>4.1 Action</b></p> <p>An annual review of audit processes will be undertaken to ensure that it meets best practice standards.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></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>	<p>January 18</p> <p>Head of Professional Standards</p>	<p>A revised audit programme began on 1 April 2018. The revised process considers the OFSTED ILACS framework in determining whether we are a good authority. The revised process has also involved the introduction of second auditing, to measure consistency in our auditing. Parental feedback and practitioner self-assessments are being introduced to support enhanced focus on quality and impact.</p> <p>Thematic audits are being utilised to audit the developmental areas identified within our OFSTED action plan. So far, the quality of PEPS, health of LAC placed at a distance, supervision, children subject to a child protection plan and the use of PLO have been subject to thematic audits.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
	exploitation screening and risk assessment tools.				
		<p><b>4.2 Action</b></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><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>All missing children will be offered a return home interview promptly. Oversight of performance data on return home interviews is provided quarterly at SMT and at the CSE Pan Bedfordshire Group.</p>	<p>February 18</p> <p>Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention</p>	<p>The RHI Service are receiving all missing notifications in a timely manner since the change to the work flow. Contact is now being made within 24 hours of the missing report being received.</p>	
		<p><b>4.3 Action</b></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</p>	<p>March 18</p> <p>Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention</p>	<p>CSE Co-ordinator is working PAN Bedfordshire to develop awareness training workshops.</p> <p>CSE Co-ordinator has met with the performance team to progress performance reporting development.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p>and enhanced performance management processes.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></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>		<p>NSPCC has undertaken briefings with service areas. (05.02.18 and 07.03.18)</p> <p>A briefing was given to the whole management service on 20 June 2018 at PSMT, this was to increase awareness and usage and to follow up from an email briefing sent on Jan 18.</p> <p>An audit is planned for October 18 post the summer when missing incidences usually increase.</p> <p>Link to Change have been commissioned to undertake direct work with young people commencing June 18. The referral pathway is the CSE risk assessment tool.</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><b>5.1 Action</b></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><b>Outcome</b></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>	<p>January 18</p> <p>Head of Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>To increase awareness of elected members role as Corporate Parents an open session took place in January 18. It was attended by 6 elected members (4 of whom are members of the Corporate Parenting Panel). Representatives from the Corporate Parenting Service took members through an interactive briefing regarding the journey of the child and the role of Corporate Parenting in the child's life. The session involved members being asked how, in their role as corporate parents, they can drive change and seek the views of children to inform committees and communities.</p> <p>The Assistant Director and the Head of Corporate Parenting are meeting the chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the lead member for children on a regular basis to review the issues presented at the CPP and to review the work plan for the Panel.</p> <p>In order to strengthen the voice of the child in the panel, it was agreed that the Children in Care should have a key role in the meeting. As a result, the Panel agreed that the CICC representatives</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
				will co-chair the panel. The panel dates and times have been rescheduled to match school holidays starting on 26 July 18.	
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><b>6.1 Action</b></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.</p> <p>The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be invited to a PEP meeting in the spring term 2018.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>The percentage of PEPs that are outstanding and good will increase. Progress will be reviewed at half term moderation meetings.</p>	<p>June 18</p> <p>Team Leader Virtual School</p>	<p>April 2018 out of 204 Section Bs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>79% are good or better</li> <li>21% are satisfactory</li> <li>0% are unsatisfactory</li> </ul> <p>Meeting held with Corporate Parenting management team to discuss the PEP process following actions agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meeting with VS manager and a team manager from Corporate Parenting to discuss the quality of Section A.</li> <li>Virtual School is part of the induction of new social workers</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>6.2 Action</b></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>	<p>June 18</p> <p>Team Leader and Virtual School Head</p>	<p>The Virtual School Manager and Head Teacher attended five PEP meetings in total in the Spring Term. Verbal and written feedback was given to Education Advisers within 24 hours of the monitoring. A marked improvement in quality of the PEP meeting was observed following this feedback.</p> <p>Monitoring visits will continue in the Summer Term.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		<p><b>Outcome</b></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><b>6.3 Action</b></p> <p>Training was provided on effective PEP practice at the Designated Network meeting in the autumn term 2017.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></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>	<p>Jan 18</p> <p>Team Leader Virtual School</p>	<p>Full PEP analysis for Spring Term completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 99% of PEPs were returned.</li> <li>• 93% returned within 10 working days.</li> <li>• 79% rated good or better.</li> <li>• 95% contained SMART targets.</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>6.4 Action</b></p> <p>Targeted support to identified designated teachers on writing SMART targets has been delivered.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p>	<p>March 18</p> <p>Virtual School Team Leader</p>	<p>95% of the Spring Term Section Bs contained SMART targets – 79% rated good or better.</p> <p>Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel have observed PEP meetings.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		All PEPs will be judged good or better.			
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><b>7.1 Action</b></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><b>Outcome</b></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>	<p>March 18</p> <p>Head of Corporate Parenting</p>	<p>A tracker was produced and checked by Health and Children's Services. The performance data is being collected and the first quarter data will be available in July 18.</p> <p>CBC CAMHS are investigating appointing a psychologist who would visit CBC children in OLA placements to ensure their assessments are up to date and they receive the right therapy.</p> <p>An audit of 25% of looked after children placed at a distance was completed in May 2018. Overall, these children’s physical and emotional needs are being met but a number of recommendations have been made and a re-audit will be completed in January 2019 to measure the impact of these recommendations.</p> <p>IROs have been briefed on the learning and required actions from the audit in respect of additional attention</p>	
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><b>8.1 Action</b></p> <p>Social work and Early Help staff to be provided with refresher training on best practice for homeless 16 and 17 year olds by the Homeless and Mediation Service.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p>	<p>March 17</p> <p>Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention</p>	<p>Training has been provided to Social work and Early Help staff. Training to new starters will be provided by the HAMS worker. The new HAMS worker has been appointed.</p>	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		All practitioners will provide 16 and 17-year old homeless children with accurate and effective information. Case file audits will evaluate service quality.			
		<p><b>8.2 Action</b></p> <p>Homeless interviews will be placed on children’s Mosaic electronic case files.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Practitioners working with homeless children can trigger and complete required actions.</p>	<p>December 17</p> <p>Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention</p>	The new HAMS worker is now in post and is overseeing the quality of the completion of homeless interviews.	
		<p><b>8.3 Action</b></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><b>Outcome</b></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</p>	<p>March 18</p> <p>Head of Referral, Assessment and Intervention</p>	Since January 2018 two young people have remained in emergency homeless accommodation for more than 28 days. In both cases there has been Head of Service oversight to ensure that a robust plan is in place to prevent drift and delay.	

	Recommendation	Action / Required Outcomes	Timescale and Lead	Progress Update	RAG
		all children. A progress review will take place in March 2018, and quarterly thereafter.			
9	Ensure the agency decision-maker provides a coherent rationale for all adoption decisions and that this is recorded on children's files.	<p><b>9.1 Action</b></p> <p>The agency decision maker will provide an explanation for all adoption decisions, with regular QA provided by the Panel Advisor.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>The Assistant Director, as agency decision maker, is now ensuring that a summary rationale is provided in all sign off of adoption decisions.</p>	<p>March 18</p> <p>Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Early Help</p>	An explanation is recorded on children's files by the agency decision-maker.	

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## Central Bedfordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Panel

11 February 2019

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### Work Programme

Advising Officer:

Sharon Griffin, Committee Services Officer  
(Sharon.griffin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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### Purpose of this report

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

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

1. To assist the Corporate Parenting Panel a work programme is attached at Appendix A to this report. The work programme contains the known agenda items that the Panel will need to consider.
2. Additional items will be identified as the municipal year progresses. The work programme is therefore subject to change.

### Council Priorities

3. The activities of the Corporate Parenting Panel are crucial to ensuring that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent of Looked After Children. By considering, approving and following its work programme the Panel helps support the Council's priorities of providing improving education and skills, protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing and being a more efficient and responsive Council.

### Corporate Implications

#### Legal Implications

4. There are no legal implications.

#### Financial and Risk Implications

5. There are no financial and risk implications.

### **Equalities Implications**

6. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
7. Report authors will be encouraged to work with the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) in order to ensure that relevant equality implications are identified.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

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

### **Appendices**

The following Appendix is attached:

Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme

### **Background Papers**

None

## Corporate Parenting Panel work programme – 2019

Date of meeting	Agenda items
08 April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding our Looked After Children population</li> <li>2. CiCC updates</li> <li>3. Spotlight Report – LAC Transition to Adults’ Social Care (Ken Harvey &amp; Ruth Coals)</li> <li>4. Spotlight report – Children with disabilities as LAC (Ken Harvey)</li> <li>5. Leaving Care x 1 (Nigel Stock) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial support for young people leaving care</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Looked After Children SW Stability update report (Ruth Coals)</li> <li>7. Fostering Q3 (Annie Craig)</li> <li>8. Presentation on the overview of the process of a Health Passport (LAC Health Team)</li> <li>9. Placement Sufficiency Strategy (Toni Badnall)</li> <li>10. Update on children’s services as part of transformation (Sue Harrison)</li> <li>11. Verbal update from the Director of Children’s Services on matters of interest to the Panel</li> </ol>
30 May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding our Looked After Children population</li> <li>2. CiCC updates</li> <li>3. Adoption annual report including (Nickie Philips) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. National Adoption fund</li> <li>b. Chairman of the Adoption Panel Annual report</li> <li>c. Adopters’ Recruitment Strategy</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Fostering Annual report including (Annie Craig) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Recruitment and retention strategy (Jenny Howard)</li> <li>b. Chairman of the Fostering Panel Annual report</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Walking Alongside You (WAY) project update (Tracie Collins)</li> <li>6. Fostering Q3 report (Annie Craig)</li> <li>7. Verbal update from the Director of Children’s Services on matters of interest to the Panel</li> </ol>
29 July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understanding our Looked After Children population</li> <li>2. CiCC updates</li> <li>3. Fostering Q1 report (Annie Craig)</li> <li>4. CiCC Participation Annual report (young people)</li> <li>5. LAC annual report (Nigel Stock)</li> <li>6. Verbal update from the Director of Children’s Services on matters of interest to the Panel</li> </ol>

24 October	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understanding our Looked After Children population</li><li>2. CiCC updates</li><li>3. Fostering Q2 report (Annie Craig)</li><li>4. Adoption 6 months report (Nickie Philips)</li><li>5. Looked After Children SW Stability update report (Ruth Coals)</li><li>6. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) annual report</li><li>7. Children’s Commissioner annual report on the stability of the lives of children in care.</li><li>8. Verbal update from the Director of Children’s Services on matters of interest to the Panel</li><li>9. Interim Virtual School report (Jackie Edwards)</li></ol>
19 December	

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