

Appendix 1 Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report

1. Executive Summary

This report summarises the work on Looked After Children's service delivery in Children's Services in Central Bedfordshire. It includes a profile of the service and its delivery. It describes the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and Children in Care Council and outlines the partnership work ongoing to support the service to improve outcomes for children, particularly in the areas of health, education and the participation of young people. This report will be published on line on the Council's website at the end of the municipal year and will be reviewed by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the next municipal year for them to comment and make any suggestions to the Corporate Parenting Panel that they wish them to take account of in the ensuing year.

2. Activity of the Corporate Parenting Panel

The Corporate Parenting Panel has met regularly throughout the year according to the Council diary.

During the municipal year 2010/11, the panel has considered the role of the corporate parent in Central Bedfordshire; drawn up and agreed a pledge for a delivery to young people in consultation with children and young people; and considered the service information and status of delivery activities for Looked After Children alongside the Care Matters agenda. It has met its objectives set for this year. It particularly enjoyed the meetings where the Panel engaged with the young people themselves.

The Corporate Parenting Panel has been instrumental in supporting the successful "Looked After Children Achievement Awards" and has worked in championing the needs of Looked After Children across the Council.

The Corporate Parenting Panel has welcomed the advice of foster parents on the panel and their ability to reflect on day to day issues of concern and their comments on areas of improvement.

3. Profile of the Looked After and Leaving Care Service.

The Committee has considered the profile of the Looked After and Leaving Care Children and young people. It has noted performance information and has received a presentation on the rates of referral of young people and the impact on the Council's budget of this.

4. Profile of the Children and Young People

The Committee is aware of the age, ethnicity, and baseline data held regarding Looked After Children.

The numbers for April 2009 – March 2010 and April 2010 to February 2011 are shown below.

April 2009 - March 2010

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of LAC	136	141	151	156	151	160	162	162	162	155	157	160
Rate per 10,000	24	25	27	27	27	28	29	29	29	27	28	28

April 2010 - February 2011

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Number of LAC	167	169	176	180	176	176	178	180	169	170	174
Rate per 10,000	29	30	31	32	31	31	31	32	30	30	31

April 2009 - March 2010

Placement Type	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Foster	63	64	68	66	62	58	57	57	54	53	52	55
Residential	12	12	14	12	10	14	15	14	17	13	15	15
Externally Commissioned Placements	75	76	82	78	72	72	72	71	71	66	67	70
% of LAC in Externally Commissioned Placements	55%	54%	54%	50%	48%	45%	44%	44%	44%	43%	43%	44%

April 2010 - February 2011

Placement Type	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Foster	63	65	69	71	71	69	72	72	64	64	67
Residential	16	19	19	19	22	22	20	20	21	20	22
Externally Commissioned Placements	79	84	88	90	93	91	92	92	85	84	89
% of LAC in Externally Commissioned Placements	47%	50%	50%	50%	53%	52%	52%	51%	50%	49%	51%

Interim Care Orders:

1st April 2009 – 31st March 2010 – 30

1st April 2010 – 28th February 2011 - 26

5. Work of the Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council has undertaken a number of activities during the period covered by the report and the participation officer has worked to support this through the year. It has included national and regional events. They have held a joint meeting with the Corporate Parenting Panel.

6. Work done in line with Care Matters objectives

Preventative work for children on the edge of care has not been a particular focus of the panel this year and will form part of the work in 2011/12. The Council has agreed its Child Poverty and Early Intervention strategy. These strategies will be considered by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, early intervention for the young people on the edge of care will be considered by the Corporate Parenting Panel in the next municipal year.

7. Health

The health of Looked After Children has been considered. Areas for development, including improved access to health services and dentistry have been highlighted. The Director of Public Health will develop this work with the Panel in 2011/12.

8. Education

The education outcomes of Looked After Children have been considered. The Committee welcomes the work done by the "Virtual School" to support Looked After Children. It notes that the activity of the "Virtual School" has been transferred to sit within the School Improvement Teams in the Children's Services directorate and that the "Virtual School" will have an allocated school support partner to support it in Summer 2011. The Committee will consider the outcomes in education for Looked After Children in Autumn 2011 after the 2011 results are known.

9. Placements and Commissioning

The work on placements and commissioning of places for Looked After Children has been developed within Children's Services this year and will be a focus for next year. Data and trends in anonymised casework commissioning have been useful in broadening the knowledge of the Panel. Improved local quality measures on successful commissioning will be developed to enable the Corporate Parenting Panel to take a view on further improving outcomes for Looked After young people.

10. Adoption Activity Municipal Year 2010/2011

The Corporate Parenting Panel is aware that the Adoption Panel has met throughout the year and 7 Central Bedfordshire children have been recommended to be placed for adoption. The Adoption Panel recommended that Placement Orders should be sought in relation to all of these children.

On approvals, the Adoption Panel recommended that 9 households were suitable to adopt a child (of these applicants, all attended the panel personally).

In terms of matching young people to placements, the Adoption Panel recommended that 5 Central Bedfordshire children should be placed with selected adopters.

3 children have moved into adoptive placements but are not yet adopted.

11. Fostering Activity

The Corporate Parenting Panel is aware that the Fostering and Permanence Panels met through the year and recommended that 24 households should be approved as foster carer households.

Of the 24 newly approved foster carers, 3 were approved for the Family Link Scheme, 1 for the Family Link Fee Paid Scheme, 7 as short-term carers, 5 as long term or permanent carers and 8 as "Family and Friends" carers. There were no carers approved for the Youth Care Scheme.

There were 23 fostering households de-registered during 2009/10. The reasons for de-registration varied and included personal circumstances, ill health, retirement and re-location. 12 of the carers who were de-registered were Family and Friends carers who had either secured Special Guardianships for the children and young people in their care or, the young people had reached the age of 18 and were therefore no longer termed "Looked After".

On "In House" placements: 37 new placements were arranged. 32 placements were ended.

Independent Fostering Arrangements: 28 new placements (all either sibling groups or teenagers), 15 placements were ended.

12. Transition into Adulthood

In consultation with the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, who is a member of this Board, we will consider in 2011/12 how to further improve plans for young people's transition into adulthood.

13. Statutory review process

The Corporate Parenting Panel has noted that the statutory independent review process is in place and challenge or trends noted through reviews of young people are monitored through the year. Any necessary changes arising out of reviews have been made.

14. Notifications to Ofsted.

These notifications are made in any cases where there is significant harm to a

Looked After Child, or there is significant media interest in respect of a Looked After Child's case.

There have been no notifications made during the period covered by the report.

15. Inspection

There has been no announced inspection in the period. On going operational work has been undertaken by the Children's Services staff to continue to build on the learning from the previous inspection and to ensure that the service is "inspection ready" for the future.

16. Key areas for improvement and particular focus for next municipal year for the monitoring work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

1. Consider how to improve the educational attainment for Looked After Children.
2. Consider, with the Director of Public Health, how to improve access to Health provision for Looked After Children.
3. Further improve service user participation both for Looked After Children, foster carers and existing and potential adoptive parents.
4. To be an early point of reference to inform a review of provision for disabled young people scheduled to go to Scrutiny and Executive in November 2011/January 2012.
5. To monitor the implementation of the Care Planning regulations and Guidance that are due to be implemented nationally from April 2011.
6. To hold the Lead Member and the Director of Children's Services to account on how they are working with the Children's Trust partners to deliver good outcomes for Children and Young People Looked After.
7. To receive a report towards the end of the municipal year 2011/12 on what improvements have been made on commissioning for good outcomes for children who are looked after.

17. Priorities and forward plan for the links between Corporate Parenting Panel and the Children in Care Council

To be agreed with the Children in Care Council at a meeting early in the municipal year 2011/12.

Appendix A

The Corporate Parenting Panel will, on behalf of the Members and officers of the Council, provide challenge and support the working of the Council in:

- Improving the life chances of children in public care, so that they develop into healthy, active, participating and contributing citizens.
- Working with Health and other services to ensure that services are of a high standard.
- Raising the profile of Looked after children and young people across the Council and ensuring that their needs are taken into account in the decision making processes.
- Ensuring young people's participation in and the functioning of the Children in Care Council.
- Ensuring that the pledge for Looked after children is in place and meaningful.
- Making sure that looked after children know what to expect, that the relevant statutory requirements are fully met and that they have access to advocacy, support and complaints processes.
- Overseeing quantitative and qualitative data in relating to looked after children and to pass any comments on the performance to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Ensuring that an appropriate range of placements is available.
- Holding the Executive Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Service to account for operational provision for looked after children.
- Receiving and acting upon any request from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding matters that fall under the remit of that Committee.
- Referring to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee any matters that are under the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee