

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 3 September 2012

PRESENT

Elected Members (voting)

Cllrs M A G Versallion (Chairman), A L Dodwell (Vice-Chairman), D Bowater, N B Costin, Mrs S A Goodchild, N J Sheppard and B Wells

Officers (voting)

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

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Mrs A Barker
Mrs C Freestone
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney
Mrs H Phillips

Members in Attendance: Cllr P N Aldis

Officers in Attendance: Ms Y Corden – Interim Assistant Director,
Children's Services Operations
Ms M Peaston – Committee Services Manager
Ms S Scholey – Team Leader for Looked after
Children Team

Others in Attendance: Mrs B Rooney – Public Health Manager, NHS
Bedfordshire
Representatives – Children in Care Council

CPP/12/11 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 2 July 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to some minor drafting amendments.

CPP/12/12 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman reminded the Panel that the Looked After Children's Awards Ceremony would be held on Friday, 28 September 2012 starting at 6.00 p.m. at the Council Offices, Priory House, Chicksands.

CPP/12/13 Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

CPP/12/14 Quarter One Report on the Fostering Service - April to June 2012

The Panel received a report providing details of activity in the fostering service during Quarter 1 compared with previous quarters.

The Panel was advised that plans to disaggregate the fostering service from its current shared delivery with Bedford Borough Council may be deferred for six months. The reason for the deferral was to ensure that staffing was set up appropriately to minimise any risk for the children. A consultation process with employees was currently being carried out.

The Panel noted that the recruitment campaign to secure more foster carers was proceeding successfully.

In response to a question, it was noted that independent fostering placements were used when an in-house placement was not appropriate because of particular circumstances. These might include the age profile of the child, or special needs. The Panel also noted that nationally, increasing numbers of children needed foster care placements and this was true of Central Bedfordshire. Whilst no studies had been published as to why more children were coming into care, comments were made that it was likely that authorities had improved their ability to identify long term neglect and, following the Monroe Report, were less tolerant of this than previously, making intervention more likely.

NOTED

the Quarter 1 report on the Fostering Service.

CPP/12/15 Children in Care Council - Presentation

The Panel took part in an ice-breaker introductions exercise run by the Children in Care Council (CiCC) representatives. This was followed by a presentation by the representatives on CiCC activities.

Following the presentation, points were made during discussion including:

- the Step up to Social Work campaign provided an opportunity for people interested in making a career as a Children's Social Worker to interact with children, enabling an assessment of their aptitude
- the CiCC website was deliberately kept separate from the Council's website but comparisons with other CiCC websites would be made to ensure it was young-people friendly
- the advantages of young children in care having older Looked After Children as mentors, who were in a good position to understand their anxieties, were acknowledged.

The Chairman thanked the CiCC representatives for their presentation.

CPP/12/16 **Children in Care Council - Workshop**

The Children in Care Council representatives ran a workshop in which all Panel members participated.

The theme of the workshop was:

“How would you encourage young people to ‘enjoy and achieve’?”

RESOLVED

that the points made through the workshop be captured and brought back to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel with some proposed actions.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 3.30 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Dated.....