

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 21 JULY 2021
6.00 PM

VENUE: SAND MARTIN HOUSE, ENGINE SHED

[THIS MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED ON THE COUNCIL'S YOUTUBE PAGE](#)

AGENDA

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| 1. Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | |
| At this point Members must declare whether they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, or other interest, in any of the items on the agenda, unless it is already entered in the register of members' interests or is a "pending notification " that has been disclosed to the Head of Legal Services | |
| 3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 March 2021 | 3 - 10 |
| The Committee to approve the minutes from the meeting held on 17 March 2021. | |
| 4. Update from Foster Carers | 11 - 22 |
| 5. Update from the Youth Voice Coordinator on behalf of the Children in Care Council (CICC) | 23 - 26 |
| 6. Appointment of Champion Members 2021/2022 | 27 - 30 |
| 7. Annual Fostering Service Report | 31 - 56 |
| 8. Annual Adoption Report | 57 - 60 |
| 9. Annual IRO Report 2020 - 2021 | 61 - 86 |
| 10. Performance Reports: | 87 - 94 |
| • Placements of Children in Care | |
| • Scorecard | |
| • Health Report | |
| 10.1 Health Report | 95 - 100 |

11. Members Issues

Members that are not part of the core CPC membership, but hold Corporate Parenting responsibilities, are invited to raise any issues they have with regard to the services provided to Children in Care.

12. Draft Work Programme 2021 – 2022 and Review of Work in 2020 - 2021 101 - 118

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<http://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s21850/Protocol%20on%20the%20use%20of%20Recording.pdf>

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact Karen S Dunleavy in the City Council's Democratic Services team on Peterborough 01733 452233 or by email at democraticservices@peterborough.gov.uk

Committee Members:

Councillors: Ayres, Bisby (Chairman), Bond, Howard (Vice Chairman), Hussain, Jones, S Lane, Robinson and Yasin

Substitutes: Councillors: Bond and Hussain

Further information about this meeting can be obtained from Karen Dunleavy on telephone 01733 452233 or by email – karen.dunleavy@peterborough.gov.uk

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING (FORMAL)
HELD AT 6:00PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 17 MARCH 2021
VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillor Bisby, (Chairman (Chair)), Lane (Vice Chairman), Councillors Ayres, Bashir, S Bond, Jones, Harper, Haynes, Robinson and Yasin.

Officers Present: Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Children's Services
Myra O'Farrell, Head of Service Corporate Parenting
Fiona Van Den Hout, Head of Service Fostering and Contact Service
Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director, Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist Children Services
Dr Aslam, Doctor for Looked After Children
Shalina Chandoo, Quality Assurance Lead (Participation and Independent Visiting)
Catherine York, Designated Nurse, Children in Care
Alison Bennett, Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Support Services
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Stephen Greene, Foster Carer Forum Representative
Sue Stepney, Foster Carer Forum Representative

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Update from the Foster Carer Forum

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to updates from the Foster Carer Forum.

The purpose of the report was to update the Committee about the activities of the Foster Carer Forum (FCF). The FCF representative thanked the finance team and asked for the

special occasion payments to be brought forward. In addition, COVID-19 vaccinations had been given to foster carers, which had made them feel very valued.

The Foster Carer Representative introduced the report and asked Members to note the contents and raise any queries they had with representatives.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that there were only three sets of carers that moved to Cambridge County Council (CCC), no others could be moved.
- The children in care and care leaver appointments with Social Workers and Personal Advisors would be better attended once they felt more included about decisions being made for them.
- Members were advised that although carers could move to CCC the offer was the same as Peterborough.
- There had better attendance at health appointments from CiC and CLs as a result of these being made virtual. Some however, remained difficult to engage with.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report.

5. Children in Care Council Participation Report

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the work of the Children in Care Council and the outcome of their discussions at meetings and events organised. In addition, Members were provided with feedback on the coming into care packs created by the CiCC.

The purpose of the report was to update Members on the Children in Care Council activities and participation services.

The Youth Voice Coordinator introduced the report and asked Members to note the update and raise any queries they had with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the CiCC had put together a proforma for Members to complete should they wish to attend their meetings. Members would be invited to attend a meeting once the CiCC receive the application. The Chair advised that he had attended a meeting and the experience was valuable.
- Members congratulated the CiCC on their work with mental health awareness for Children and Young People in Care.
- The CiCC had requested that Social Workers complete a proforma to produce a 'Getting to Know You' card for children in care. The idea was for the child to learn more about their new Social Worker.
- The Chair of Corporate Parenting commented that it was good to see that CiC and CLs had challenged Council services.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report.

6. Annual Health Report

The Corporate Parenting Committee received an annual report in relation to the Health Services for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems were in place to meet the health needs of the Looked after Children population in Peterborough.

The Designated Nurse, Children in Care introduced the report and asked Members to note the content and raise any queries they had with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that Health Assessments and GP (General Practitioners) consultations conducted virtually during the Covid 19 pandemic had been a part of the service that could continue. It would also be beneficial for CiC and CLs that had not lived locally.
- The team had emailed a word version of the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQs) to carers however, there were other pressures that impacted on the low return rates. There was a plan in place with social workers and other colleagues to improve these figures, however it was felt that face to face appointments would improve returns.
- Members were advised that dental appointments were impacted by Covid 19, but arrangements were returning to normal. There had been an issue pre Covid of getting children registered, however, there had also been an emergency service available for children in care. Members were also advised that there had sometimes been difficulty experienced with some practitioners not being fully aware of CiC needs and anyone with concerns should contact the Health Team.
- The drop in performance highlighted at 4.4.3 of the report, had been due to sickness with GP paediatricians and therefore capacity was not at its fullest position.
- Blood borne screening and vaccinations were in place for asylum seeking children. There would be an audit undertaken as standard practice, which would provide assurances to Members.
- Members were advised that CiC and CLs would only be sent to the Ely dental practice if their normal practice could not offer an appointment when needed. The service in Ely was a backup service, which was on offer through NHS England.
- Consent for treatment was integral to service provision for CiC and CLs and this was usually obtained from the corporate parent or whoever had responsibility for the child. This could be a Social Worker; however, the Health Team would also ensure that the child was asked if they agreed to the treatment.
- Unaccompanied asylum seeker children in care were always given clear guidance on treatment being offered and care was taken as they could be quite traumatised by their experience and therefore, reluctant to engage. There were no cases where UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children) had not received treatment or tests they needed. This process had also been added into their pathway plan.
- Interpreters were used for UASC, and their placements would be with families that shared their language.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to note the report.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report.

7. REPORT ON THE FINAL STRUCTURE FOR CLINICAL OFFER FOR CIC

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the structure for the clinical offer for Children in Care (CiC).

The purpose of the report was to update Members of the progress in the mobilisation of the clinical team and the offer available to children in care in Peterborough, following the service being brought in house. Members were also advised that recruitment had been initiated and it was hoped that permanent staff would be in post very soon.

The Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Support Services introduced the report and asked Members to note the contents and raise any queries with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that there had been several interim posts in place, however the job vacancies had only been placed recently. Members were also advised that the service was confident that they would receive several applications.
- Members were advised that the trauma-based approach outlined in 4.6.1 of the report involved support to carers to help a child in care in a sensitive and reflective way, in order to help them with their recovery and build resilience. For example, if a child misbehaved and was sent to their bedroom, the approach could initiate a feeling of neglect, which they had experienced in the past. The foster carer would be taught a different approach that encouraged them to find out why the child had displayed certain behaviour, therefore avoiding the feeling of neglect for the child.
- A plan would be developed with the foster carers to support the child and the most appropriate training would be offered such as a Foundation for Attachment Course.
- A holistic clinical and training package for children in care with trauma issues was being offered across both authorities to maintain resilience for foster carers. There had also been several experienced foster carers that could offer training and guidance to other foster carers that might experience very complex issues with children in their care.
- Members were advised that there had been funding expected from the Government to support CiC with mental health needs, whilst at schools and it was felt that this would provide a consistent approach to the children experiencing trauma issues such as neglect.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to note the report.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report and agreed that the Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Support Service would explore whether there was an opportunity to extend the trauma framework training approach to schools to ensure that there was a consistent approach to the methods being delivered and provide Members with an update.

8. REPORT TO CONFIRM NEW REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY AND FOSTERING STRUCTURES

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the new regional adoption agency and fostering structures.

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the new arrangements for delivering adoption and fostering services for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Councils.

The Assistant Director of Children's Social Care introduced the report and asked Members to note the report and raise any queries with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the Fostering Service changes had been met with the usual challenges such as with IT and putting together performance data sets. There had also been some challenges for carers and adopters however most had been fully receptive to the changes. Members were also advised that it was important to hear the voices of carers, as these would help shape the service going forward.
- Members were advised that there had been a good communications strategy to attract foster carers as well as adopters and that the offer had been the same for both.
- Members were advised that the figures for adoption for Peterborough were doing well compared to national figures and a report would be presented to the Committee in due course.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to note the report.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report.

9. PERFORMANCE DATA FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS JANUARY 2021

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to performance data in for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The purpose of the report was to update Members in respect of the numbers of children and young people being looked after by the Council as of 31 January 2021 by providing a breakdown of the types of placements in which they were living. The report also provided information about the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people. Members were also advised that caseloads were a little higher than preferred. In addition, there had been some delays in adoption orders through the courts.

The Assistant Director Children Services introduced the report and asked Members to note the contents and raise any queries with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that there had been a greater interest for adoption in both Peterborough and Cambridge authorities. This had been achievable due to a faster recruitment assessment. There were challenges finding the right adopters for children with additional needs of all ages. There had also been a slight delay on

processing applications for adoption due to staffing however, this was back on track. In addition, there had also been a delay in obtaining adoption orders through the courts. This combination of issues had contributed to the decrease in performance figures.

- The caseload figures would depend on the type of placement and how much work would need to be carried out by the social worker, however 18 cases would be an ideal target figure.
- Members were advised that the staffing vacancy figure was at 0.5 full time equivalent which was positive, and this was due to the efforts of a strong management team.
- Placement stability had decreased over the last year and work had been underway to hold stability meetings and increase recourses much earlier in these cases. There had been some young people in care that had experienced multiple breakdowns, due to their challenges. It was anticipated that this anomaly would improve in the next financial year.
- Members were advised that there had been some issues with the completion of Pathway plans over the last quarter and it was felt that this was due to holding these meetings virtually. Face to face meetings would be reinstated and the team were confident that the position would improve.
- There had been more CiC and YP (Young People) placed outside of the county with agency carers than preferred, however, there had been a range of circumstances such as carers that live just out of the Peterborough area. There had been a need to recruit new carers to avoid out of county placements and three new households for Peterborough had been recruited recently. It was felt that the new care offer and increase in rates would improve the recruitment figures.
- The Foster Carer Forum Representative commented that existing carers could be used to recruit to new carers. Members were advised that a greater incentive needed to be provided to increase new recruitment.
- It was preferred for children in care under the age of one years old to live with their birth families, however, where this was not possible, adoption would be included in their care plan.
- Members were advised that the family safeguarding model in Peterborough was successful, however there was a peak of 396 children and young people in the year. Despite the increase, the service had been considered good for the region. The team offered a coherent service through family safeguarding to avoid children having to be placed in care in the first place. It was also advised that child protection plans had increased during the pandemic. There was a concern about this increase, however this would be audited. In the main, Peterborough had positive results for safeguarding and other authorities had been in contact with Peterborough to learn this success.
- Members were advised that the YP in unsuitable care related to a small number and the reasons had been complexed such as placement in a custodial sentence, YP living outside of the area or were extremely hard to engage with. Members were also advised that the issue was being monitored.
- Members were advised that there were Blitz courts that were dealing with a backlog of children's care proceeding across the country and it was thought that these courts could look at adoption hearings to help clear that backlog. Peterborough was contributing to data on the issue to highlight where the blockage was in the court system, however, it was not seen as a significant enough issue to start using Blitz courts for adoption hearings.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to note the report.

AGREED ACTIONS

1. The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report.

10. Members Issues

Members that were not part of the core CPC membership, but held corporate parenting responsibilities, were invited raise issues they had with regard to the services provided to Children in Care (CiC).

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** that there were no issues to raise.

11. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting dates will be decided at the Annual Council meeting on 17th May 2021.

CHAIRMAN
6:00 – 7:27 PM

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| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 4 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Report of: | Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Fiona Van Den Hout, Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact | Tel. 01223 518739 |

Report from the Foster Carer Committee

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| FROM: Fiona Van Den Hout | Deadline date: N/A |
| <p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the content of survey ; and • Raise any queries they have with the lead officers | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform council of the themes and feedback collected through a Foster carer survey launched in June
- 2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.2 to receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes.
- 2.3 This reports to the Children in Care Pledge by focussing on respect for children in care and care leavers

3. TIMESCALES

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 survey outcome report is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The service requested the Foster Carer Association support service improvement and development through a survey asking for foster carer feedback for both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Local Authority foster carers.

4.3 Based on feedback previously received individually from foster carers, the service worked alongside both chairs to develop the following key questions which align to the overall service aims to improve the recruitment of carers who can provide safe and loving local homes for our children in care, the retention of foster carers and maximise the participation of foster carers in all the work that we do:

- Do you feel fully supported by the Fostering Service/Local Authority?
- What improvements or changes within the Fostering Service Department would assist you to reach your full potential in your role as a foster carer?
- As a foster Carer do you feel your thoughts, opinions and experiences are valued and taken into consideration when decisions/plans are being made for the child/young person in your care?
- What changes / strategies do you think would improve the lives of the young people in your care?
- Would you be willing/available to share your experiences/commitment to the young people in your care to others?
- There are a high percentage of children and young people; teenagers and those exhibiting challenging behaviour who are being placed with IFA's. In your opinion, what does the service need to do to encourage and empower in house foster carers to be more confident and step out of their comfort zone to care for these young people?
- As a Foster Carer, if you had a magic wand what would your three wishes be that you would like to see the Fostering Service implement?
- Would you recommend other potential carers to join the LA in their fostering journey? Whether this be new carers or others transferring from an IFA
- Do you feel satisfied with the way that your Fostering Service works to retain and support its existing carers?
- Please select ALL relevant criteria from the list below, you may fall into two categories e.g. Foster and Adoptive Parent.

4.4 Feedback received has been valuable in its challenge to the service and in identifying carers who wish to work alongside the Foster Carer Committee (FCC), for example on our training or mentorship scheme. Over the coming months we will continue to work in partnership with the Fostering Committee/Association Chairs and our foster carers to address the comments received.

4.5 The service anticipates that some actions will be easily addressed whilst others, the FCC will work towards. Responsive and regular communication channels with our foster carers is a priority and their voices are valued. Given this, we will reissue the survey in February/March 2022 to measure the progress made.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 N/A

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 Foster carer views will feed into the key priorities of the service

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Corporate Parenting Committee members have a duty to review the performance of Children's Social Care.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report

Legal Implications

9.2 There are no legal implications associated with this report

Equalities Implications

9.3 There are no equalities implications associated with this report

Other Implications

This report relates to the services provided for children in care and care leavers and ties into the Pledge and Charter that the local authority respects the differing wants and needs for all.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - Foster Carer survey

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Peterborough Foster Carer Committee Report

Foster Carers Supporting Foster Carers

Foster Carer Survey

June 2021



Report Prepared By: Kevin Arrowsmith [CCC Chair] & Steve Greene [PCC Chair]
on behalf of the CCC & PCC Foster Carer Association
Fiona Van Den Hout Head of Service Fostering

About our Foster Carers Committee

The main aim of our committee is for Foster Carers to provide support for all our carers, to enable them to provide the best possible care and outcomes for the children and young people we look after. The main objectives are to:

- Raise the profile of Foster Carers and ensure that carers are viewed as professionals, working within Children's Services to improve our support, services, remuneration.
- Work in partnership with the Fostering Service to improve the participation of foster carers in service developments and initiatives

Fostering Network offer a Regional Foster Carer Association support group for foster carer committees and associations. The chair attends the support groups bi-monthly where experiences are shared between our peers in neighbouring counties. For example, the last support group we attended included representatives from Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Thurrock. This has proved very useful in gathering ideas from other carers and their experiences outside of our local authority.

Since our last report we have seen challenges for our carers following a period of change within the fostering service. Having now moved through this, we are looking forward to working with the service to support developments in progress and planning for those to come. We are particularly keen to work with the service on the drive to engage foster carers in all key activity, whether this is recruitment, peer support and mentorship or training. We know our foster carers have a wealth of experience and knowledge about the foster task and celebrate the fact that this is recognised.

Over the past few months, the committee in Peterborough and Association in Cambridgeshire have begun to work more closely together. Both Chairs have attended meetings with senior managers during which we have shared ideas that will assist with communication and ensuring that Foster Carers voices are heard. As a committee and on behalf of all Foster Carers, we are thankful to the Corporate Parenting Committee for allowing us a voice in this forum. We are very committed and will endeavour to assist this committee in all aspects of improving outcomes for our children and young people in care.

Purpose of this report

The Chairs of both Cambridgeshire's Foster Carer Association and Peterborough's Fostering Committee worked with the fostering service to develop a foster carer survey which was sent out to all foster carers in June (312 households). With the changes that have taken place over the past year or two, it was agreed that now was the perfect opportunity for the views of foster carers to be sought to help shape a fostering service that we are proud to be part of.

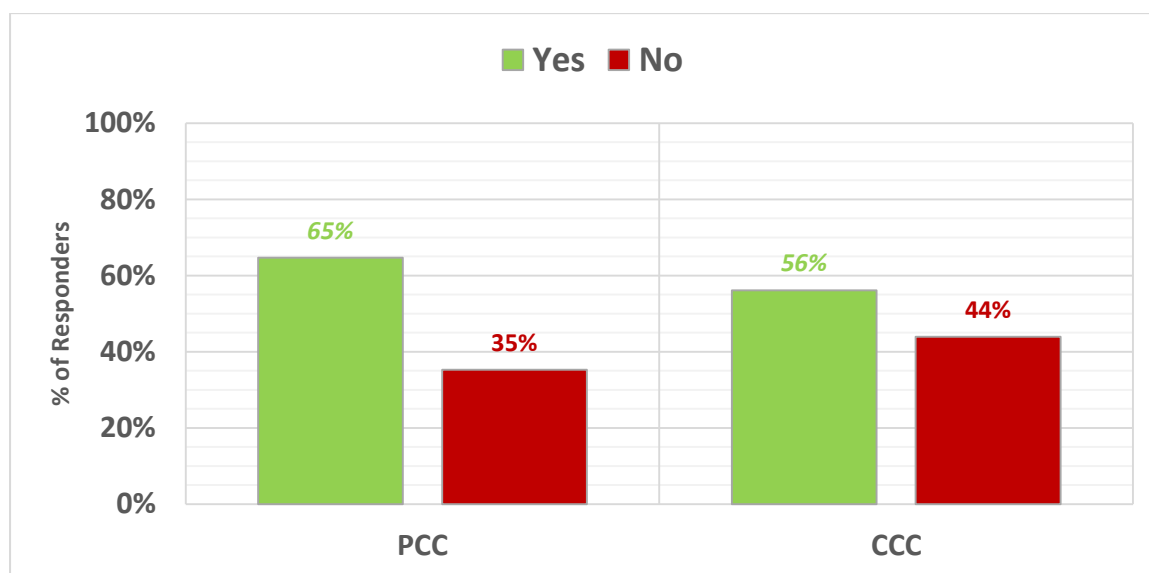
A total of 113 responses were received from individuals, capturing 36% of the cohort of registered Foster Carers, some of which could also be adoptive parents and including Connected Persons Carers from across both Local Authorities. Whilst less than half of our carers responded, this is an improvement of previous surveys and we would like to take the opportunity to thank foster carers for taking the time out of their busy schedules to provide feedback.

This report provides an overview of the responses received. The full detailed responses have been shared with managers in the service and over the coming months we will work with the service to collate and address themes as well as keeping foster carers informed of the impact their views have had.

Overview of responses

Question 1:

Do you feel fully supported by the Fostering Service/Local Authority?



In both authorities more carers felt fully supported than those who did not. Those who felt supported said that their supervising social workers supported them well and commented on the quality of training offered. Foster carers were most dissatisfied with changes in their fostering social worker or the child's social worker which impacted on

the relationships and communication they have with services. Other comments included carers asking for more support in challenging or crisis situations, an improvement in the information they receive when children come to live with them and for the fostering service to support them to be more prepared for the task ahead when first approved.

In response, the service has told us that an improved support offer is in development which includes the out of hours support line for foster carers. A review of the training offer for carers in assessment is underway to compliment the skills to foster training and an improved peer support/mentorship framework is also being developed.

Question 2:

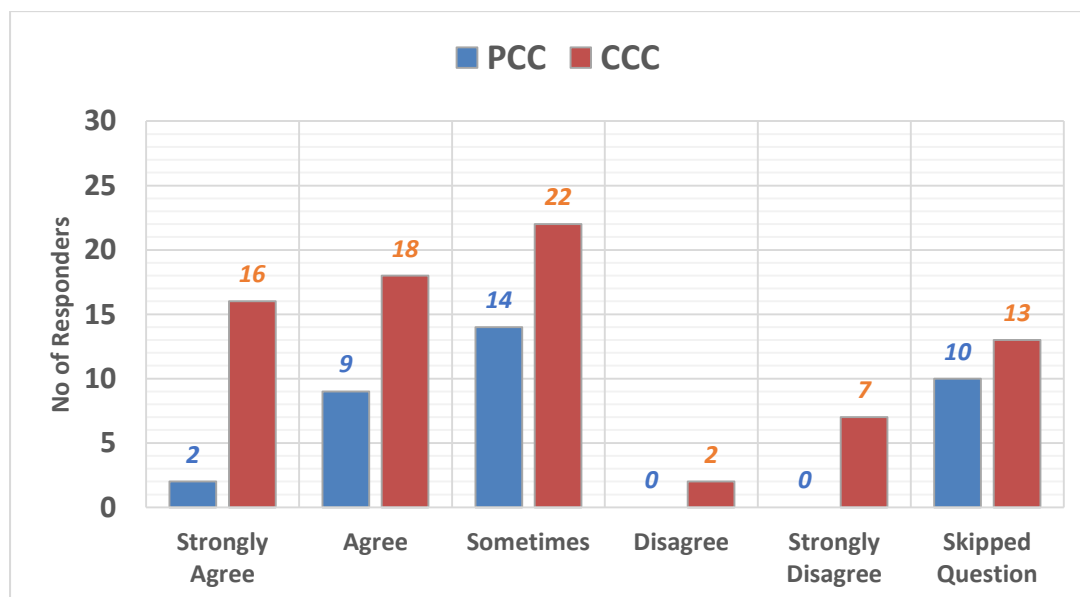
What improvements or changes within the Fostering Service Department would assist you to reach your full potential in your role as a carer?

Comments included: Foster Carers want to feel respected as professionals, more involved in decision making and feel part of a team. Foster carers would like more opportunities to meet other foster carers and training was identified as a key area. Foster carers would like to understand what support can be offered when it is needed.

In response, the service has told us that the new training programme has been launched and based on the positive feedback from foster carers, Foundations for Attachment training will also be available this year. The service will also be piloting membership to the National Association of Therapeutic Parenting for a cohort of foster carers, as recommended by foster carers. The fostering service will share views received via the survey with other areas within children’s services and we will work on advocating and improving the inclusion of foster carers, this being a key priority for us.

Question 3:

As a Foster Carer do you feel your thoughts, opinions and experiences are valued and taken into consideration when decisions/plans are being made for the child/young person in your care?



As the graph above shows, more foster carers told us that they strongly agreed, agreed, or sometimes agreed than carers who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Positive comments included some activity to support carers as being “excellent” and feeling valued when they are included in providing information about a child and invited to key meetings. Foster carers also told us that they would like to receive feedback from meetings about the child they are looking after, to feel listened to and their opinions and views taken more on board when decisions are made. Some foster carers also asked the service to improve the way children are matched to foster carers.

In response the service told us that they are keen to work with us on ideas to raise the profile of foster carers within the professional networks, this could for example be recorded question and answer sessions or foster carer involvement in induction programmes for new social workers joining the Local Authorities or as part of the training programme for newly trained social workers. We were also told that the service will be working with colleagues in the operational teams and commissioning services to improve the information provided about a child.

Question 4:

What changes/strategies do you think would improve the lives of the young people in your care?

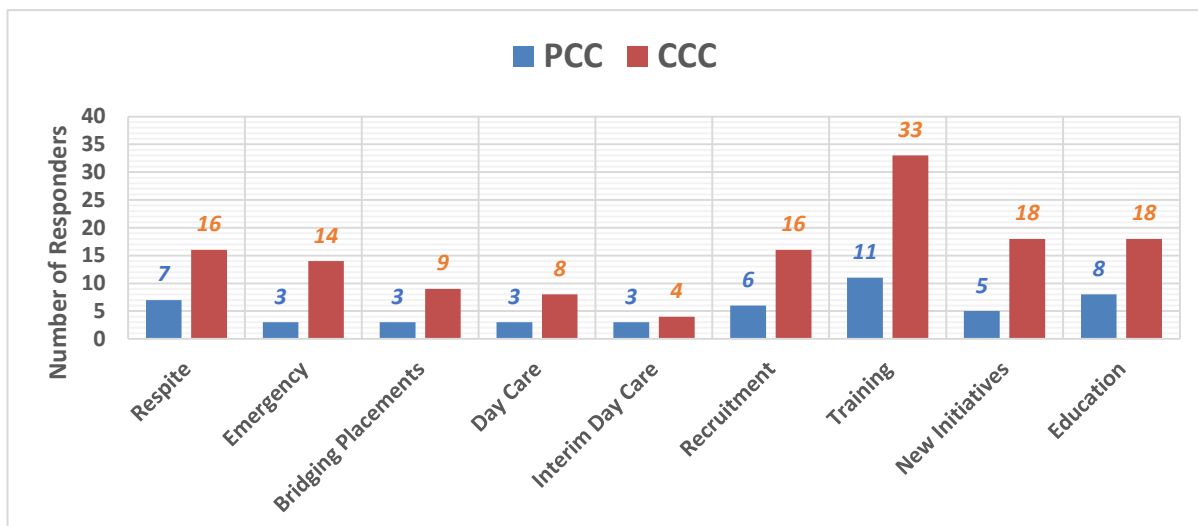
Most responses received were about the importance of having a consistent social worker and requests that visits to children are planned around both foster carer commitments and the child’s commitments. Foster carers asked for more training on disability and support for those who provide care for that cohort of children. We are welcoming the opportunity to work with the fostering service to ensure foster carers are aware of how and when to escalate any concerns they may have.

The fostering service told us that they will ensure foster carers views are shared with the relevant services and will continue to advocate on their behalf. The service will review the training and support for carers who look after children with disabilities.

Question 5:

Would you be willing/available to share your experiences/commitment to the YP in your care to others?

As shown in the graph below, a high number of carers confirmed their interest in working with the fostering service in a variety of ways. Where possible, the details of individual foster carers interested in specific areas will be shared with the fostering service. We believe this demonstrates the commitment of foster carers to children in care by offering their skills and experience.



Question 6:

There is a high percentage of children and YP; teenagers and those exhibiting challenging behaviour who are being placed with IFA's. In your opinion, what does the service need to do to encourage and empower in-house Foster Carers to be more confident and step out of their comfort zone to care for these YP?

Foster carers reiterated their comments that a 'buddy system', more targeted support and having the right information about children would support more children in care to live locally. Working as a team and more timely mental health support for young people was also felt important.

The fostering service has told us of their plans to clarify the peer support and mentorship programme, the review of the support offer and how they intend to work towards improving the information about a child with the relevant areas of the wider service. The service will also ensure that foster carers views regarding timely mental health services is shared with colleagues in health and the clinician services offered by the Local Authority.

Question 7:

As a Foster Carer, if you had a magic wand what would your three wishes be that you would like to see the Fostering Service implement?

Several comments reiterated foster carer views already detailed within this report. In addition, foster carers asked that the service ensures that their supervising social worker has the time they need to spend with them. Communication and working in an open and transparent way with foster carers were also themes. In addition, foster carers would like to see the service develop a network of foster carer support that could also include respite arrangements for carers when they need it.

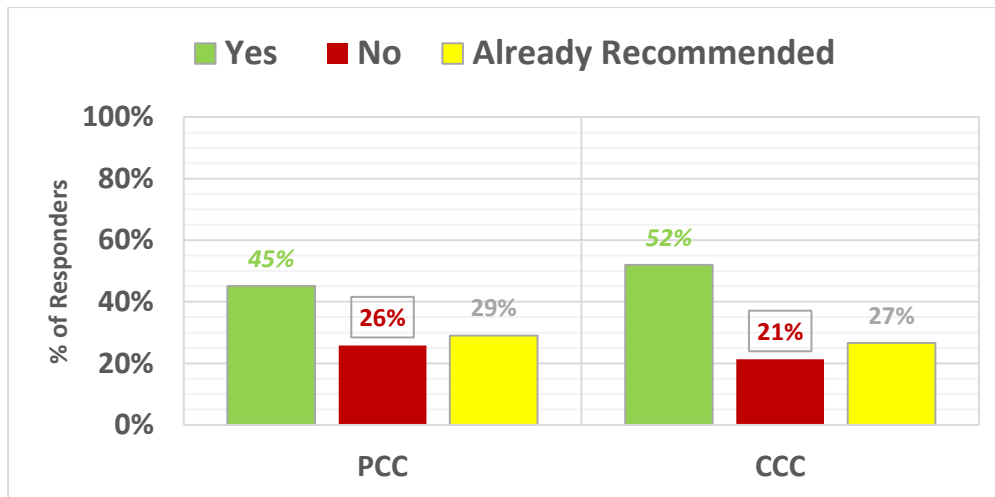
The fostering service told us that they appreciate the informal networks of peer support that fosters have built up between themselves and of the importance of these networks. The service is keen to work with us to explore how what some foster carers have built up over time can be replicated for others who may not have the same

opportunities and specifically for those who care for older children with more complex needs. There are social worker vacancies within the service and recruitment campaigns are underway as well as activity to ensure we have the right capacity as the number of new carers increases.

Question 8:

Would you recommend other potential carers to join the LA in their fostering journey?

Whether this be new carers or others transferring from an IFA



As highlighted in the graph above more carers would recommend the service than carers who would not:

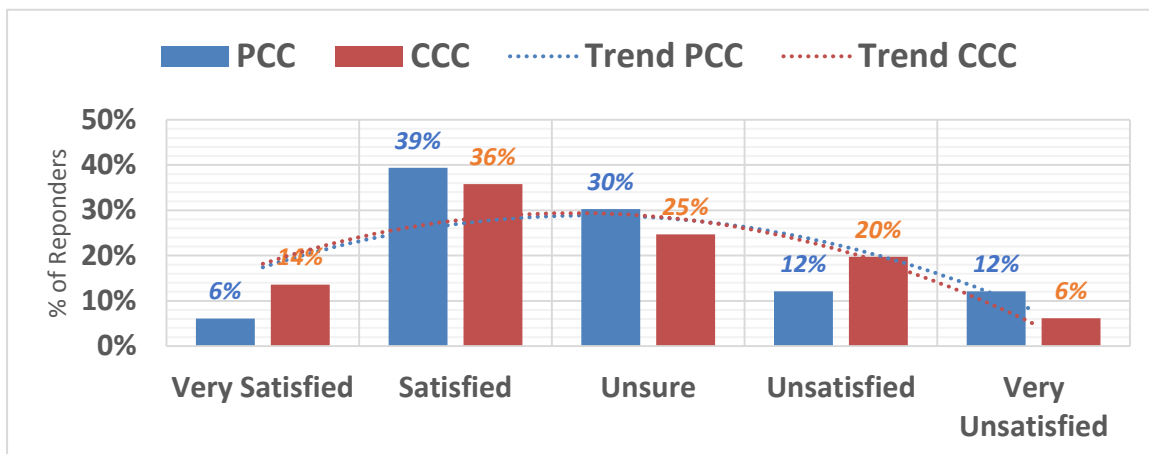
- 52% of CCC and 45% of PCC Carers who responded to the survey would recommend working for the Local Authority to others
- 29% of CCC and 27% of PCC Carers who responded to the survey have already recommended working for the Local Authority to others

The fostering service acknowledged this is positive but is also committed to improving the number of carers who would recommend the Local Authority to others.

Question 9:

Do you feel satisfied with the way that your Fostering service works to retain and support its existing carers?

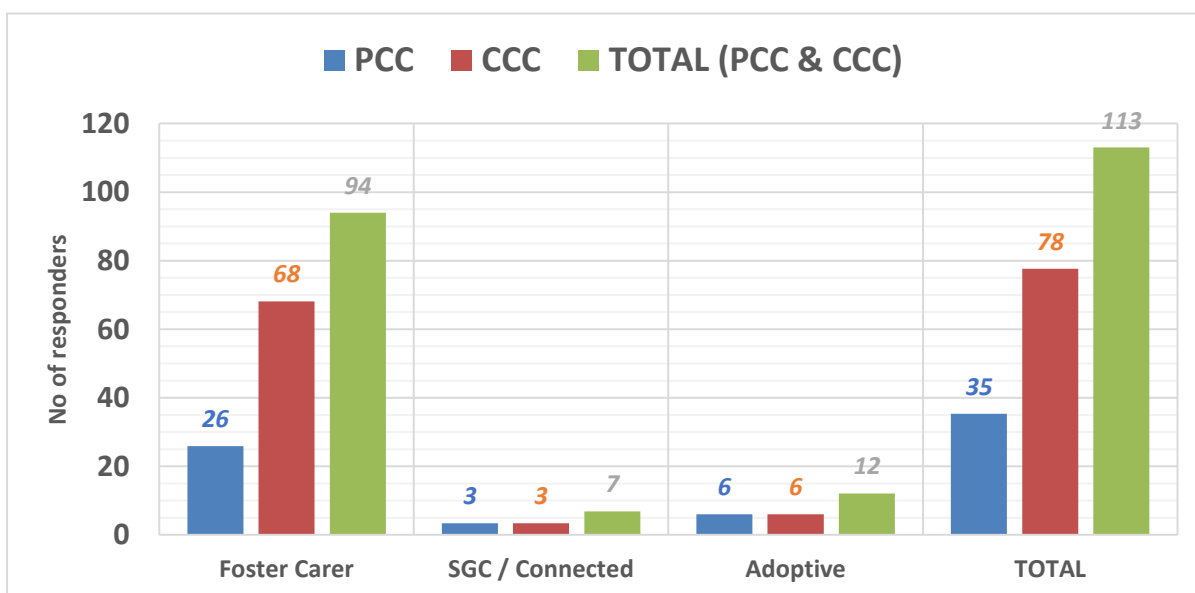
Overall responses from foster carers are shown in the graph below. Comments included a number that have already been detailed in this report, specifically around consistency of social workers, support to foster carers and the continuing need to improve communication. Foster carers felt that decisions about children could be made more quickly and suggested meetings are held when unplanned endings happen. Foster carers also commented on the difference between the amount external foster carers receive for looking after children and what their Local Authority pays them.



The fostering service told us that it acknowledges carers working for external agencies receive a higher payment than those providing foster homes for both Local Authorities. Payment fees were reviewed last year and benchmarked against the payments made by other Local Authorities. The service also told us that they are developing a process for reviewing unplanned endings that will involve foster carers so that lessons can be learned and shared with the fostering community as well as the workforce.

Question 10:

Please select ALL relevant criteria from the list below. You may fall into two categories e.g. Foster & Adoptive Parent



| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 5 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Report of: | Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Cllr Lynne Ayres; Cabinet Member for Children's Services | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Shalina Chandoo, QA Lead | Tel. 01733 452540 |

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL PARTICIPATION REPORT

| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| FROM: <i>Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Children's Services</i> | Deadline date: <i>N/A</i> |
| <p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Notes the content of the report.</i> 2. <i>Raise any queries they have with the lead officers.</i> | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update from the Children in Care Council and participation services.

- 2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference:

2.4.4.1 To act as advocates for looked after children and care leavers.

2.4.4.6 To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.

(a) Raise the profile of the needs of looked after children and care leavers through a range of actions including through the organising of celebratory events for the recognition of achievement.

(b) Ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our looked after children and care leavers.

(c) Promote the development of participation and ensure that the view of children and young people are regularly heard through the Corporate Parenting Committee to improve educational, health and social outcomes to raise aspiration and attainments.

(d) Hold meetings with children and young people in care, frontline staff and foster carers to inform the committee of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for looked after children.

2.3 This report links to the Children in Care Pledge under:

1. Respect - We will respect you as individuals, with differing wants, needs and beliefs and tailor the service you get to fit you.

5. Listen – We will support you to have a voice in your care plan and make sure you are listened to. We will ensure you know how to make a complaint or compliment about your care. You will have access to advocacy support to do this if wanted.

3. **TIMESCALES**

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|

4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The Participation Team has continued to adapt its offer throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with changing government restrictions and feedback from children and young people. Working with the Participation Team from Cambridgeshire City Council has increased resilience, allowed us to share learning and has provided more opportunities for children and young people.

4.2 Since the start of the pandemic the team has sent out newsletters with information and activities as well as updates on Participation events and opportunities to children in three age categories; 11 years and under, 12 to 17 years and 18 years plus.

4.3 Throughout the pandemic, the Participation Team has offered virtual events where restrictions have not allowed face to face activities. These have been refined in line with feedback from children and young people and as a result, numbers attending these sessions have increased significantly. Our offer will continue to incorporate virtual events after restrictions ease for children who are placed at a distance and those who prefer to engage with us virtually.

4.4 The Participation Team, in conjunction with the Cambridgeshire Participation Team, has published a summer programme for Children in Care across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This includes face to face activities including a visit to a farm, ice-skating and laser tag as well as two virtual sessions designed by our Out of Area Group. In addition, there will be a team building and outdoor adventure day for Children in Care, which will include canoeing and kayaking, problem solving games, bushcraft skills and team building challenges.

4.5 The Participation Team has launched the annual Virtual Art Exhibition which is open to all children and young people with Children's Social Care involvement across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Themes for this year's exhibition were chosen by the CiCC alongside their CCC Counterparts and are Wellbeing & Mindfulness, Animals & Nature and Sports & Activities. The deadline for submissions is 15 August and the exhibition will premiere on YouTube on 31 August.

4.6 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) continued to meet regularly throughout the pandemic, largely on a virtual basis. Face to face meetings resumed in May and the venue and opportunity to meet in person again have been well-received by members of the CiCC.

4.7 The CiCC continues to be consulted by Children's Social Care and other agencies to improve services for Children in Care. Recent consultations have included reviewing leaflets for children and young people from the Family Group Conference Service, looking at the Staying Put policy with the Leaving Care Team and giving feedback to the Virtual School on their logo.

4.8 The CiCC have been sharing their expertise and experience with their counterparts from Cambridgeshire. They met to present their coming into care packs to Cambridgeshire's children and young people and the Cambridgeshire CiCC plan to refine the information provided in the

Peterborough packs so they can be launched in Cambridgeshire. The CiCC have also shared their goodbye cards idea with Cambridgeshire CiCC who plan to implement the cards for their social workers to use in the coming months.

- 4.9 Members of the CiCC met with Ofsted inspectors and were able to present some of their recent work as well as give their feedback and views on services. The CiCC members were able to show inspectors their coming into care packs and goodbye cards and the inspectors said they were impressed by these.
- 4.10 The Participation Team has been working with the Awards Planning Committee, made up of children and young people, to plan the annual awards event for Peterborough's Children in Care. The Awards Planning Committee have decided on a family fun day in August, with games, art activities and a raffle, where each Child in Care receives a certificate of achievement. Social workers, IROs, teachers and carers have been asked to send in their nominations via an online form. The CiCC plan to present information about their work at the event.
- 4.11 The Participation Team launched a Young Recruiters initiative earlier this year, to encourage more recruiting managers to involve young people in their recruitment panels, so that they can contribute their views and expertise and ensure the selection of the best candidates. This has been extremely successful and young people have been involved in the recruitment of Student Social Workers, Social Work Team Managers, Independent Chairs and Family Group Conference Coordinators.
- 4.12 Training was arranged for all young people who have expressed an interest in becoming a Young Recruiter to equip them with the information and support they needed to carry out this role. Three training sessions have been held to date with further training dates planned. Young people have told us they enjoy being part of recruitment, that it shows them their experience and views matter and helps them improve their own interview skills for the future.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 This report was completed in consultation with members of the Children in Care Council.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 Improved engagement with Children in Care and Care Leavers.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 N/A

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 There are no changes required.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 *There are no financial implications.*

Legal Implications

- 9.2 *There are no legal implications, as the report is for information only.*

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 Participation is an essential service for Children in Care and Care Leavers and this report demonstrates the level of participation in various events and activities.

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.4 There is an overall neutral impact identified in this report

9.5 Other Implications

This relates to all children in care and care leavers.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 N/A

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 6 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Report of: | Corporate Director People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University. | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Myra O'Farrell, Head of Service | Tel. 864391 |

CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPIONS REPORT - 2021 - 2022

| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
|---|-----------------------|
| FROM: Corporate Parenting Committee Chair | Deadline date: |
| <p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the content of the report, • Confirm the Corporate Champion Roles, and • Confirm the appointment of Corporate Parenting Champions | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee following the recent Cabinet and Committee changes made at Annual Council on 26 May 2021.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report will allow the Committee to review the current Corporate Parenting Champions positions and allocations, which is in line with the recent Cabinet and Committee changes made.

2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference 2.4.4.6 To appoint elected members as Champions for Children in Care, with the roles being decided and approved by the Committee at the first formal meeting of the municipal year. Suggested Champion roles are as follows:

- i) Housing, Finance and Benefits - Councillor Sandra Bond
- ii) Education Employment and Training and Access to Higher Education – Councillor I Hussain
- iii) Health - Councillor Robinson
- iv) Recreation and Leisure Activities – Councillor I Hussain
- v) Effective Care Planning - Councillor Jones

2.4 The report addresses all areas of the Children In Care Pledge and the Care Leavers' Charter. It specifically addresses the requirement to deliver effective support to Children In Care by validating and triangulating information to quality assure services.

3. TIMESCALES

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|-----|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | N/A |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|-----|

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 In November 2020 the Corporate Parenting Committee Champions for 2020 – 2021 were confirmed as:

| Champion Role | Councillor |
|--|------------------|
| Housing, Finance and Benefits | Cllr Sandra Bond |
| Education Employment and Training and Access to Higher Education | Cllr Bashir |
| Health | Cllr Robinson |
| Recreation and Leisure activities | Cllr Day |
| Effective Care Planning | Cllr Jones |

The Corporate Parenting Champion would be responsible for the following:

- a) Meeting with the Lead Officer
- b) Undertaking a site visit
- c) Meeting with a child in care / young person / service user / other officers and discuss their experience of the service for Children in Care
- d) Contributing to a brief report back to the Committee, jointly between Champion and Lead Officer

Key Issues

Following the Annual Council meeting held on 26 May 2021, changes to the positions of Champions have been reviewed at its informal meeting held on 16 June 2021. Corporate Parenting Committee members were asked if they wished to be considered as a Champion.

The following have expressed an interest:

| Champion Role | Councillor |
|--|----------------|
| Housing, Finance and Benefits | Cllr S Bond |
| Education, Employment and Training Opportunities within the Council Departments and Partner Agencies | Cllr I Hussain |
| Health | Cllr Robinson |
| Recreation and Leisure activities | Cllr I Hussain |
| Effective Care Planning | Cllr Jones |

The appointment of the Corporate Champions will be confirmed at its first formal meeting of

Corporate Parenting Committee on 21 July 2021.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Corporate Parenting Committee members were asked to express an interest in the Champion positions.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 Ensure there is a more robust approach to supporting the experiences of children and young people in order to improve their lives.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Statutory requirement.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 N/A

Legal Implications

9.2 N/A

Equalities Implications

9.3 N/A

Other Implications

9.4 The appointment of Corporate Parenting Champions provides an opportunity to ensure that the level of service provided to Children in care and care leavers is to the highest standard.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 N/A

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|---|----------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 7 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Report of: | Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Fiona Van Den Hout, Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact | Tel. 01223 518739 |

ANNUAL FOSTERING REPORT

| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
|---|---------------------------|
| FROM: Fiona Van Den Hout | Deadline date: N/A |
| <p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the content of the report; and • Raise any queries they have with the lead officers | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform council about the activity of the fostering service in 2020-21.

2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.2 To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes.

2.3 This reports to the Children in Care Pledge by focussing on respect for children in care and care leavers

3. TIMESCALES

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Please see attached Peterborough City Council Children's Services Fostering Annual Report 2020-2021.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 N/A

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 There is no significant impact anticipated as this is an Annual Report.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Corporate Parenting Committee members have a duty to review the performance of Children's Social Care.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report

Legal Implications

9.2 There are no legal implications associated with this report

Equalities Implications

9.3 There are no equalities implications associated with this report

9.4 There are no rural implications.

9.5 This report relates to the services provided for children in care and care leavers and ties into the Pledge and Charter that the local authority Respects the differing wants and needs for all.

Carbon Impact Assessment

No carbon impacts have been identified.

Other Implications

This report relates to children in care who are placed with in house foster carers.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Fostering Service Annual Report 2020-2021

Fostering Annual Report

Peterborough City Council

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Period Covered | 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 |
| Date Completed | June 2021 |
| Name / position of author | Head of Service Fiona Van Den Hout |

Report Context

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require that the Fostering Services provides written reports on the management, outcomes and financial aspects of the Local Authority's Fostering Service. This report provides an overview of activity from the last financial year, April 2020 to March 2021, and the plans from the service for the forthcoming year, April 2021 to March 2022.

Executive Summary

The delivery model for fostering services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has changed with the launch of a new Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fostering Service on 1st December 2020. The new service enables us to combine activity which opens up the possibility for us to do more, such as training for foster carers but also to improve the quality of and build resilience in our fostering service.

The core roles and functions of our fostering services have remained separate, for example Cambridgeshire staff supervise Cambridgeshire foster carers, and Peterborough staff supervise Peterborough carers. There is a combined recruitment and assessment function, supervision and support function and a combined dedicated team that undertakes household reviews ensuring that all work is underpinned by the National Minimum Standards.

During the year, the fostering service has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, and the detail of this is discussed below where relevant. The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 came into force on 24 April 2020, which provided easements to fostering regulations for fostering services, thereby changing the regulatory framework temporarily. Most of these easements ended on 25 September 2020.

In Peterborough, the service returned to the Local Authority in October 2019 and was part of the Corporate Parenting Service until 1 December 2020.

Key highlights include:

In this reporting period, the service recruited 6 new fostering households.

As of 31 March 2021, there are a further 10 assessments in progress and this activity will carry over to 2021/22.

In this reporting period, 6 foster families resigned from fostering leaving an overall net gain of no households.

No Foster Carer households transferred to an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA).

On 31 March 2021, 50% of children in foster care were living with in-house foster families.

A comprehensive on-line and virtual training offer was available to carers in assessment and existing foster carers.

Audits and inspections

Fostering service deep dive audit

Our self-assessment:

Since the new service became live in December 2021, it is clear that there are some critical areas of improvement required that will enable the service to meet the strategic priorities as outlined in the Statement of Purpose.

The culture and practice of the service needs to focus more widely on improving the offer to Foster Carers so that they feel better equipped to offer family-based care to our most vulnerable children and young people.

Children currently entering care are presenting with more challenging behaviours and are often entering care later in life, resulting in Foster Carers needing to provide care to children and young people with more complex needs as a result of their experiences. In order to meet this

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>need, the service needs to champion a “can do” attitude to the fostering task within the framework of offering high support and high challenge to our fostering community to support our Foster Carers to achieve their full potential.</p> <p>In addition, recruitment activity needs to be more focused on recruiting foster carers that are able to care for this cohort of children and young people. Foster Carers need a team around them and to feel part of the team around the child, to be able to successfully deliver on providing safe, secure and consistent care.</p> <p>Our Foster Carers resilience and ability to work through the ups and downs of the caring task will be celebrated and supported. Such an attitude will be held by the fostering workforce and we will share an ethos of not giving up on young people that can result in another change for them. This will be underpinned by a strong value base held by the Leaders and Managers of the service.</p> <p>Key areas of service improvement are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruiting more carers: improving sufficiency of local foster homes for local children and developing a strong pipeline of confident foster carers who meet the care needs of our children and young people in care.• Working with our current cohort of carers to extend the offer and enable them to care for our most vulnerable children and young people through extended offers of training, support, a clinical offer and the re-purposing of services.• Immediate Notice given by foster carers will be scrutinised and challenged. The service through Supervising Social Workers will manage Foster Carer’s expectations and identify how we can support carers more effectively and when they first ask for it.• By applying a consistent approach to the process of Household Reviews through the new dedicated Household Review and Practice Standards team, reviews will now be conducted independently providing high support and high challenge. |
|--|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are insufficient foster carers able to care and provide short breaks to children and young people with disabilities. Recruitment in this area is weak and this is a critical area of improvement. |
| Ofsted | There were no Ofsted inspections in this period. |
| SQA fostering service audit of Peterborough fostering service, December 2020. | <p>Good Practice Areas</p> <p>Good practice included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Children are consistently matched with carers who have the skills, knowledge and experience to meet their assessed needs. <input type="checkbox"/> The service has recruited carers representing a range of family structures, including same sex couples and single carers. <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive records are maintained in respect of the application and assessment process. <input type="checkbox"/> The service has provided a range of relevant online training opportunities during COVID-19. <input type="checkbox"/> Carer’s terms of approval are consistently reviewed on an annual basis. <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments and reports for annual reviews are comprehensive and of good quality. <input type="checkbox"/> The service has a robust system for ensuring regular safeguarding and health and safety checks are undertaken. <input type="checkbox"/> Carers receive regular supervision visits in accordance with agreed timescales. <input type="checkbox"/> Workers demonstrate close and effective working relationships with workers from Children’s Social Care. <input type="checkbox"/> Management oversight of the annual assessment review process is consistent and thorough. <input type="checkbox"/> The Foster Carers Committee provides carers with access to an effective means of consultation and can contribute to service development. <input type="checkbox"/> Children placed with foster carers have access to a range of consultation forums via the Participation Team |

where they can express their views and contribute to service development.

Areas for Further Development

Areas for further development included:

- Further work is needed to recruit more carers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, specifically carers with a South Asian heritage.
- Where additional support is identified as part of the decision to place children outside carers' terms of approval under an exemption, the additional support package must be robustly implemented.
- The service should ensure written agreement is secured prior to the placement of any children outside a carer's terms of approval.
- Where extensions in temporary approval were implemented in line with regulations following COVID-19, the rationale for this should be clearly evidenced on file and supporting documents uploaded.
- The service should maintain a central log of training undertaken by carers on an annual basis.
- The service should identify what training all carers are required to undertake, including the timescales for refreshing this mandatory training.
- The service should produce and implement a formal induction programme for all newly appointed carers.
- Members of the Fostering Panel should have the opportunity to attend an annual joint training day with the Fostering Service's fostering staff.
- A programme of internal audits is needed, as identified in the current service action plan.
- All carers should receive at least one unannounced visit as part of their programme of supervision.
- All carers should have an up-to-date written profile uploaded to their record.

Summary of Fostering Households

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|-----|
| Number of Foster Carers (Year End) | Total: 104 Including 81 mainstream 2 respite, 1 short break 19 connected carers. | Percentage of children in care fostered in house (Year End) | 50% |
|------------------------------------|--|---|-----|

Carer Recruitment and Retention

Comments on recruitment and retention strategy and performance:

The 2020-21 Recruitment, Marketing and Communication strategy outlined the key aims and priorities for the fostering service in respect of increasing the diversity, skills and experience of the foster carers. The key priority was to ensure children and young adults in care are cared for in a loving, secure and stable family household.

Dedicated campaigns moved from a mixed media approach to predominantly online due to face to face events being cancelled. Particular success was achieved over bank holidays, when activity was increased to capitalise on this.

The headline figures are detailed in the table below.

| Activity | Annual figure |
|---|----------------------|
| Enquiries | 161 |
| Initial Visits | 60 |
| Application forms sent | 26 |
| Attended Skills to Foster | 16 |
| End of year assessments in progress (Form F commenced) | 10 |
| Approved | 6 |
| Number of resignations and de-registrations | 6 |
| Net gain | 0 |

The conversion rate from enquiry to assessment was 14% with 22 assessments commencing in the reporting year.

For 2020-2021, the fostering services set aspirational targets to recruit 20 new fostering households. The target was not achieved but this does need to be viewed in the context of the pandemic which has been a challenge for Local Authority recruitment of foster carers nationally.

We know there is a need to recruit more carers for children aged 10 years and over, sibling groups and children with more complex needs and disabilities. We also know that we need to challenge ourselves and our carers to maximise utilisation of vacant beds to ensure that children and young people do not move to live in externally purchased provision at a distance from their support networks.

The engagement and retention of carers has been promoted through a number of approaches:

The Foster Carer Association (FCA) continues to be well attended and they have taken a proactive approach in reaching out to other foster carers to offer support to them. Staff members including senior managers have attended the meetings.

Payments and vouchers were given to foster carers and children in care, in lieu of social events which were not able to take place in person during Lockdowns, due to social distancing rules.

Foster carers received their vaccinations early in recognition of their critical role status and their value within the organisation.

Foster carers continue to be present at Council Corporate Parenting Committee to represent the views of the fostering households.

Regular newsletters were sent to all fostering households updating them about the service, government guidance around the pandemic and wider council news. It is an informal method to keep in touch and pass on key information.

The work to standardise foster carer allowances was completed and the new system was implemented in September 2020. No carers received lower allowances than previously. An additional 'thank you' payment was also given in recognition of the commitment and care our foster carers were providing during the pandemic.

Core functions of the Fostering Service

The fostering service's aim is to provide a high-quality responsive child-centred service in relation to its core functions and to recruit new foster carers from within our diverse community. We prepare applicants through training to be able to manage the range of issues that foster carers face when looking after children. The service assesses foster carer applicants i.e. Mainstream Foster Carers, Connected Persons Carers, LINK Carers, Supported Lodgings Carers and those who offer Private Fostering. The service undertakes comprehensive assessments and checks to ensure that prospective carers are suitable and able to carry out their role. We supervise, support and develop carer's skills and knowledge in order that they promote and achieve the highest standards of care, safeguarding and outcomes for children in care.

The types of Foster Care offered includes; Short Term/Time Limited, long-term; parent and child; short breaks LINK care for children with disabilities; respite, emergency, supported lodgings and PACE.

PACE: The Local Authority has duty to provide accommodation to children and young people under the age of 18 years who have been arrested and charged in relation to a criminal offence. PACE stands for Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which placed this duty. PACE transfers take place in order to limit the amount of time children and young people are required to spend in police custody with the young person being transferred to Local Authority accommodation overnight before being presented to court the following morning.

The service also supports young people to stay with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 years in a 'Staying Put' arrangement if this is considered the best plan for the young person. This is not regulated fostering activity, and the young person, having left care, no longer has a social worker but will receive support from a personal assistant employed by the Local Authority.

Safeguarding - allegations & standards of care

| Allegations against foster carers | |
|---|---|
| The number of allegations against foster carers made by fostered children | 2 |
| The number of allegations against foster carers made by other sources | 3 |
| | |
| The number of children who have made allegations against their foster carers | 2 |
| The number of foster carers who have been subject to allegations | 5 |
| Information about the categories of alleged abuse | |
| Physical abuse | 1 |
| Sexual abuse | 0 |
| Neglect | 0 |
| Emotional abuse | 4 |
| Information about the actions resulting from allegations against foster carers | |
| How many referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) did you make? | 0 |
| How many referrals to the local authority child protection team were made? | 5 |
| How many Section 47 enquiries were made? | 1 |
| Information about the outcome of investigations of allegations | |
| Concern(s) resolved - no further action | 1 |
| Continued monitoring for an agreed period | 0 |
| Concern remained, referred to fostering panel to review foster carer approval | 4 |
| Timescale for investigations | |
| less than 21 working days | 0 |
| 22-30 working days (4 - 6 weeks) | 0 |
| 31-50 working days (6 - 10 weeks) | 1 |
| More than 50 working days (> 10 weeks) | 4 |

The fostering service worked alongside the Local Authority Designated Officer, the local authority and the police to complete the S47 investigation. Approximately 5% of foster carers were subject to allegations during the year. In the year, no carers resigned due to the allegations or were deregistered although there were investigations in progress at the end of the year where this is the anticipated outcome.

The new Household Review & Practice Standards team have been involved in completion of all investigations since 1 December 2020, which bring independent scrutiny to the process. The learning from investigations is being incorporated into the service through regular thematic practice workshops as staff and foster carer development needs are identified

Complaints (not relating to children)

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Include complaints against the agency and carers not relating to care of a child.</i> | <i>Number received in period:</i> 3 |
|--|--|

Summary of any complaint and resolution/outcome:

| COMPLAINANT TYPE | SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT | OUTCOME |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|
| Young person | Disagreed how foster carer had spent clothing allowance | Not upheld |
| Foster Carer | Challenged rate of allowance | Upheld |
| Foster Carer | Delay in payment | Upheld |

There were three complaints all of which related to financial matters. Two were upheld and one was not upheld. A new financial payment system was introduced which caused some initial teething problems, these have since been rectified. The service always seeks to identify learning from the complaints to improve practice.

Compliments:

From colleagues about social workers:

These young ladies wouldn't be achieving in this way without your support, so thanks to you too!

H said what an excellent carer you are for J. I hear he has been saying how he feels part of a proper family and he has made tremendous progress in your care. H said that you go above and beyond for J, including making family contact with his siblings very natural. It was really nice to hear this and therefore I just wanted to thank you for all you are doing.

"I just wanted to say a very big thank you to N & M who always made me feel welcome, allowed meetings to take place in the family home and provided refreshments. They always completed reports for the children including extensive health reports, they were excellent at advocating for the children's needs. It's been a pleasure working alongside them"

I wanted to pass on a compliment in relation to J and F who worked tirelessly today to find a placement for a young man, and showed great creativity, professionalism and patience in a highly charged situation. They did not give up, and in the end their commitment resulted in a successful outcome.

Foster carers about their supervising social workers:

"We are incredibly lucky to have D as our supervising social worker who always helps us pick up the slack of any other professionals."

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for everything you've done to help me over the past few weeks. It's so much appreciated and I will be making contact with the head of the service in due course to say how brilliant you've been."

I would just like to acknowledge what a fantastic job is done by A. Truly, I'm not sure if we would still be fostering without her support. She has such a caring approach, thinks outside the box and always has the welfare of both the children and ourselves right at the front of her practice. I know that I can rely on her. The last twelve months of the pandemic have been incredibly hard for fostering families, with many of the children struggling with their mental health. I am just so glad to have a Support Social Worker who genuinely cares and supports our family, often picking up the jobs that should be done by others and generally ensuring that everything needed is in place.

Young person about their foster carers:

Reported by an IRO: 'H is so thankful for his foster carers about whom he said 'they transformed me into what I am now' and he is extremely grateful for them.'

Carer training and other development opportunities provided:

The annual foster carer training programme was initially impacted by the Covid pandemic, as it relied on the traditional face to face delivery method. However, to bridge the gap, the training coordinators were able to identify online training opportunities from organisations such as the Open University and AIM to complement the electronic training providers (ME learning) which had already been commissioned. This ensures that foster carers could keep up to date with their learning whilst juggling the home schooling of children. The service acquired Zoom which allowed a range of courses to be offered virtually and was well received. The list of courses and attendance figures are below.

| Session | Date | Time | Duration | Number of spaces | Spaces booked | Spaces waiting |
|---|------------|---------|----------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Contact Workshop | 26/05/2020 | 1:30pm | 90 | 10 | 4 | 0 |
| Contact Workshop | 09/06/2020 | 6:00pm | 90 | 10 | 7 | 0 |
| Safer Caring - A New Approach | 23/06/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| Building Attachments Part One - The Secure Base | 30/06/2020 | 10:00am | 180 | 12 | 11 | 0 |
| Allegations and complaints: Understanding the Procedure | 02/07/2020 | 10:00am | 180 | 12 | 10 | 0 |
| Fostertalk Tax | 03/07/2020 | 10:00am | 90 | 25 | 6 | 0 |
| Allegations and complaints: Understanding the Procedure | 09/07/2020 | 10:30am | 180 | 12 | 10 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------|---------|-----|----|----|---|
| Life Story Workshop | 14/07/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 12 | 9 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Play and Theraplay Ideas | 16/07/2020 | 11:00am | 120 | 12 | 6 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Recording Workshop | 17/07/2020 | 1:00pm | 120 | 16 | 15 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Play and Theraplay Ideas | 23/07/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 12 | 3 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| First Aid for Fostering | 12/09/2020 | 9:30am | 360 | 12 | 12 | 2 |
| | | | | | | |
| First Aid for Fostering | 15/09/2020 | 9:30am | 360 | 12 | 10 | 4 |
| | | | | | | |
| TSD Workshop | 22/09/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 10 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Staying Put | 29/09/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 7 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Safer Caring | 01/10/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 13 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| First Aid for Fostering | 03/10/2020 | 9:30am | 360 | 12 | 10 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Supporting Children in Education (Primary) | 07/10/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 9 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| TSD Workshop | 08/10/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 5 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Online Safety | 14/10/2020 | 10:00am | 150 | 16 | 14 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| First Aid for Fostering | 15/10/2020 | 9:30am | 360 | 12 | 11 | 6 |
| | | | | | | |
| Fostering and Drugs & Alcohol | 19/10/2020 | 10:00am | 150 | 18 | 8 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Supporting your Child in Education | 21/10/2020 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 10 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------|---------|-----|----|----|---|
| (Secondary) | | | | | | |
| First Aid for Fostering | 24/10/2020 | 9:30am | 360 | 12 | 13 | 7 |
| Building Attachments - The Secure Base | 03/11/2020 | 10:00am | 180 | 18 | 6 | 0 |
| Reunification | 19/11/2020 | 10:00am | 240 | 16 | 7 | 0 |
| Impact of Adult Substance Misuse on Children | 23/11/2020 | 10:00am | 150 | 18 | 9 | 0 |
| Allegations and Complaints: Understanding the Procedure | 24/11/2020 | 10:00am | 180 | 16 | 12 | 0 |
| Communicating with Children | 03/12/2020 | 10:00am | 180 | 16 | 7 | 0 |
| Impact of Adult Substance Misuse on Children | 11/01/2021 | 10:00am | 150 | 18 | 7 | 0 |
| Working together workshop | 12/01/2021 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 8 | 0 |
| Working with Contact | 15/01/2021 | 10:00am | 270 | 16 | 12 | 0 |
| First Aid for Fostering | 16/01/2021 | 9:30am | 360 | 12 | 16 | 9 |
| Neglect the Bigger Picture | 19/01/2021 | 10:00am | 180 | 16 | 9 | 0 |
| First Aid for Fostering | 10/02/2021 | 9:30am | 360 | 14 | 17 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------|---------|-----|----|----|---|
| Impact of Abuse | 11/02/2021 | 10:00am | 180 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| Reunification | 02/03/2021 | 10:00am | 240 | 18 | 7 | 0 |
| Supporting your Child in Education - secondary | 04/03/2021 | 10:00am | 120 | 18 | 5 | 0 |
| Staying Put Workshop | 16/03/2021 | 10:00am | 120 | 16 | 12 | 0 |
| Allegations and Complaints: Understanding the Proc | 19/03/2021 | 10:00am | 180 | 18 | 16 | 0 |
| SEND Workshop for Foster Carers | 23/03/2021 | 10:00am | 120 | 20 | 19 | 0 |
| Domestic Abuse | 25/03/2021 | 10:00am | 180 | 18 | 16 | 0 |

E-Learning

722 virtual modules on the ME learning platform were completed between April 2020 and March 2021 with peaks in June 2020 and January 2021, with 98 modules being completed in June and 101 modules being completed in January 2021. In August 2020 the service commissioned the Foster Carer Training Hub, for additional e-learning. To date 242 modules have been completed, showing the value in online course provision. Given the good level of engagement, the service plans to continue a hybrid programme of virtual and face to face training courses.

Carer consultation, engagement and support:

Support groups have operated for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foster Carers separately throughout the year with some changes made to take account of social distancing rules.

Going forward, it is anticipated that a hybrid model of some face to face and some virtual support groups would be beneficial. Virtual support groups have reached

some carers who previously struggled to attend for example because of their work commitments.

In Peterborough the support groups have operated in two formats since COVID. The Foster Carer Committee has held virtual meetings which they have opened to all carers. These are attended by the fostering team manager who is supported by other staff including service managers, Head of Service and the marketing manager. This has increased the core number of attendees and offered greater participation from carers who otherwise were not involved in committee activity. Additionally, one of our Level 4 carers has provided an informal support group which carers appreciate.

All new carers are buddied with an approved foster carer prior to approval to offer peer support in the early stages of their fostering career and as needed.

Foster Carers were consulted on the review of fostering payments. This exercise was completed in September 2020.

Fostering Panel:

The Peterborough City Council fostering panel has continued to operate and consider foster carer's suitability of approval as foster carers and annual and post-allegation reviews of fostering households. It has also noted resignations of fostering households.

The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 were not utilised by the service in relation to panel activity apart from the following:

- Panels were held virtually via 'Teams.'
- Panel accepted the service's use of the extension of the length of time of regulation 24 and regulation 25 placements for children, when needed due to late checks and references.

Mick Cunningham is the Fostering Panel Chair and Fernley Copping is Vice Chair and 12 panels sat in the reporting year.

Myra O'Farrell, Head of Service for Corporate Parenting was Agency Decision Maker for fostering panel and in her absence Simon Green, Head of Provider Services & Change Management Adviser completed the role.

Sue King, as Head of the Permanency Service, acted as the Nominated Officer for regulation 24 placements, until 1 December 2020 when the role was completed by Jo Foster, Head of Service for the Family Safeguarding Service.

The Fostering Panel Adviser role was held by Sue King.

Panel's medical adviser is Dr Maizey, General Practitioner.

Due to the pandemic the joint annual training for panel has not taken place. This is scheduled for September 2021.

Appraisals of the chair, vice chair and panel members have taken place in this period in line with requirements.

Staff Team

The management of the service was carried out by Lou Williams, Director of Children's Service; Nicola Curley, Assistant Director; Myra O'Farrell, Head of Service for Corporate Parenting; a Head of the Permanency Service and 3 Consultant Social Workers (managers). One of the managers left in June 2020 and was not replaced.

On 1 December 2020, Fiona Van Den Hout became Head of Service for the Fostering Service in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The three service areas each have a service manager as follows, these arrangements continue beyond the reporting year:

Supervision and Support: Despina Kaoura

Household Review & Practice Standards: Sue King

Recruitment and Assessment: Vacant, Anita Hewson was appointed with start date of 1 June 2021.

The structure for the service from 1 December 2020 changed following staff consultation, resulting in three Recruitment and Assessment teams, three Supervision and Support teams and one Household Review and Practice Standards team.

Alternatively qualified staff include Recruitment Officers, Placement Officers, a Training Lead and a Training Coordinator.

All staff receive monthly supervision and yearly appraisals which due to the pandemic took place in September last year.

Team consultation / engagement:

Team meetings for staff and managers are held monthly. During the period of the pandemic when staff have worked both at home and in offices, most teams have held weekly catch-up meetings to support staff wellbeing.

Fostering service staff have been consulted twice around the structure of the service.

The councils have provided corporate support opportunities for staff including monthly wellbeing sessions and weekly briefings called 'Covid Conversations.' Monthly staff surveys have been carried out to capture views on engagement and wellbeing.

**Children in Foster Care
Consultation and participation**

Children in foster care give their views about the care they receive in their foster homes in a variety of ways. They are asked to contribute to the annual reviews of their foster carers. Children can also use the 'Mind of My Own' app to give their views and these are also sought by their Independent Reviewing Officer and in most cases their advocate.

All children and young people in care are given information about how to make a complaint about the care that they receive.

The Participation Team supports the Children in Care Council to provide feedback about specific subjects as requested by the wider service and areas of interest they also raise. Consequently, children and young people in care, through the Children in Care Council, sourced and provided welcome packs for children who come into care in an emergency.

The service will continue to identify opportunities to engage with the Children in Care Council and Participation Team as we are committed to hearing the voice of children in care as we shape and improve the service in the coming year.

Percentages of children in Local Authority foster carer compared with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)

| % of all children fostered living in IFA foster care at month end | | % of all children fostered living in LA foster care at month end |
|--|-------|---|
| April 2020 | 51.5% | 48.5% |
| May 2020 | 51.3% | 48.7% |
| June 2020 | 51.1% | 48.9% |
| July 2020 | 51.9% | 48.1% |
| August 2020 | 50% | 50% |
| September 2020 | 50.2% | 51.8% |
| October 2020 | 49.4% | 50.6% |
| November 2020 | 47.8% | 52.2% |
| December 2020 | 48.9% | 51.1% |
| January 2021 | 49.4% | 50.6% |
| February 2021 | 50.6% | 49.4% |
| March 2021 | 50% | 50% |

The percentage of children living in local authority foster care has remained broadly similar throughout the year with a slight improvement on the position at the same time the year before. There have been challenges due to the pandemic as a greater

number of fostering carers were on hold for periods due to a household member shielding, being in a high-risk group or due to social isolating. Other foster carers took children outside of their terms of approval to ensure that Local Authority foster homes were used where possible.

Private Fostering

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to monitor the safety and wellbeing of children and young people living in Private Fostering arrangements. Private Fostering arrangements are made between parents or carers who have parental responsibility for that child and another individual in order that they can take on care of their child for a period of longer than twenty-eight days. This arrangement should be reported to the Local Authority for a safeguarding assessment and monitoring. However, this is not well understood by the public and children living in these arrangements are often under reported.

There are low numbers of children in Peterborough who are privately fostered and work has been undertaken with the local independent schools to make them aware of parental responsibilities which has seen a slight improvement.

During the year, 5 children were living in private fostering arrangements.

Development and Targets for 2021-22

Customer Service Timescale Targets set for 2021/2022:

- All enquiries from prospective foster carers into the Recruitment Team will be responded to on the same day or the very next day (within 24hours)
- Initial Home visits to take place within 3 working days of receipt of enquiry
- Registrations of Interest (applications to foster) to be progressed within 5 days and allocated to an assessing social worker

Foster Carer Recruitment Targets set for 2021/2022:

- Mainstream new approvals
10 new households of which 3 are for children aged 12 years and over
- Link household new approvals
4 new households

Assessment timescale targets set for 2021/2022:


- Timeframe for completion of Form F (Home Study) assessments is 4 months
- Conversion from enquiry to application:
 - 21/22 - 20%
 - 22/23 - 25%

Percentage of children living in in –house provision targets set for 2021/2022:

Year-end 45% of all children fostered are living in in house foster homes

Other key areas for development:

- A refreshed and revised recruitment campaign targeting the types of carers who can meet the needs of our children
- A revised website that is attractive to members of the public and encourages them to foster for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- Our fostering campaigns for 2021-2022 include: Thank you Campaign in July (children thank foster carers for the amazing things they do), 1,000 voices Campaign in September (raising the profile of foster caring), Sons and Daughter month in October (celebrating foster carers birth children and the contribution they make to fostering), Emergency Appeal in November (urgent call for action for foster carers), Christmas Wishes Campaign in December, New Year Campaign in January (calling for our partners involvement) and LGBTQ + week in March.
- Continue to learn from our foster carers and maintain a close working relationship with both foster carer committees – The Foster Carer Partnership.
- Involve our foster carers in all aspects of our service: in recruitment activity, training, mentorship of newly approved carers and providing peer support to approved carers.
- Provide training to prospective carers that equips them during the assessment process with the skills they need to care for the children we know we will need foster homes for.
- Explore the offer of diploma courses and foster carer mentorship qualifications.
- Implement an audit framework bringing the National Minimal Standards into sharper focus in all we do including Household Reviews.
- Develop our support offer to prospective and approved foster carers to increase their confidence and skills.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Signature |  |
| Head of Service (Name) | Fiona Van Den Hout |
| Date | 2 July 2021 |

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| | |
|---|----------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 8 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Report of: | Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Lynne Ayres Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Joanne Banks Head of Regional Adoption Agency | Tel. 01223 699216 |

REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| FROM: Ricky Cooper Assistant Director Fostering, Regional Adoption and Specialist Young People’s Services | Deadline date: N/A |
| <p>It is recommended that Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <p>1. Corporate Parenting Committee are asked to note the detail of the report and raise any questions with Lead Officers</p> | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report was requested by the Corporate Parenting Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee Members with an update on the new arrangements for delivering adoption for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Councils.

3. TIMESCALES

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Regional Adoption Agency

On the 1 December 2020 the Regional Adoption Agency for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough went live with Cambridgeshire being the host. Even though we may only be 6 months in there have been a lot of positive achievements that can be built on.

4.2 The aims of the service have continued to be:

- Have a key role in the early permanency planning agenda within both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire and be instrumental in the care planning for children who have a plan for adoption
- Recruit adopters who can meet the needs of the children with adoption plans (specifically older children, sibling groups and children with additional vulnerabilities)
- Offer high quality support to adopters, birth parents and carers and all parties involved with the children
- Ensure a culture of continuous challenge, innovation and improvement
- Provide an accessible service to all parties affected by adoption and special guardianship (adopters, adoptees, birth families, foster carers, guardians and children in their care)
- Develop a coherent and robust 'Local Offer' that provides the right support, at the right time to Adopters and Special Guardians

4.3 The current structure for the Regional Adoption Agency has continued in line with the proposals in the consultation where there are four distinct teams dedicated to delivering key focussed activity.

4.4 **Recruitment and Assessment:**

4.5 This service area recruits, assesses and supports prospective adopters to meet the needs of children waiting in each authority in line with their developed recruitment and marketing plan. In addition, the service undertakes annual reviews as required, assesses and supports parents or partners and family relatives who wish to adopt a child on a non-agency basis and foster carers who are seeking to adopt a child in their care. The team have 3 Senior Practitioners and 6 Social Workers.

4.6 Having seen the success of the Recruitment Office role in Fostering the team have appointed successfully to a post in the Regional Adoption Agency. Lottie Ettling took up the post in April 2021 and takes a lead on the new enquiries whilst working with Tony Darnell, Communications Manager Fostering & Adoption, to develop promotional and marketing material to enable a further increase in those coming forward to adopt, in particular for the harder to place children.

4.7 The team have seen a consistent increase in enquires (155 enquires in 6 months) and applications to adopt (24 in 6 months) leading to a high number of adopters in assessment (49 as of the 31st May 2021). This gives the Council the opportunity to increase the number of children for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be placed with adopters within the Regional Adoption Agency. The key moving forward is to understand the profile of the children needing adoptive parents so the team can adapt the profile of the adopters being assessed. This may need to be explained further

4.8 **Family Finding:**

This part of the service continues to take the lead responsibility for all aspects of the linking and matching of children with adopters. The service also provides support and advice to the child's Social Worker about the adoption process, coordinates other family finding activities and crucially increases the opportunities for children to be adopted who are older, have additional vulnerabilities or who are within sibling groups. Tracking children with a potential or actual adoption plan and reporting on adoption timescales against national and local indicators also takes place within this part of the service. The team is tracking 111 children with 59 children having an active family finding plan for adoption. Over the 6 months they have supported the presentation of 24 children to be presented at Adoption and Permanence Panel who have been subsequently successfully matched with their adoptive parents.

4.9 **Adoption and Special Guardianship Support:**

This service area undertakes assessments of Adopter and Special Guardian support needs or commissions these if required, undertaking applications to the Adoption Support Fund for children. The team also takes lead responsibility for reviewing financial allowances provided to families to inform what future allowances should be provided. The core offer also includes: social events for children and young people, social/training events for adoptive parents, advice and signposting for adoptive families, independent support and advice to birth relatives, counselling

and information to adopted adults post 18 years and independent support to birth parents including a letter box exchange service.

4.10 **Panel and Quality Assurance:**

This service area administers and supports Adoption Panels which recommend the approval of prospective adopters, matches between children and adopters and provides professional advice on best practice and regulations to the Agency Decision Makers within both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. The Agency Advisor plays a key role in maintaining a high standard of practice and performance through the quality assurance of all services areas within the Regional Adoption Agency. The panel have remained a very active part of the Regional Adoption Agency having had 14 panels sit in the first 6 months in which they have heard 13 Adopter Approval Applications and 17 applications to match children with their adoptive parents. There have been positive steps towards joining Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption Panels together. The Regional Adoption Agency currently has 3 Panel Chairs and 1 vice chair with a broad range of panel members who have supported the continued success in approving adopters and adoptive matches. There is an awareness of the need to recruit new members to panel and particular focus on social workers. We are pleased that we have recruited one additional panel member who is planning to start to sit on panel in August 2021. Following the retirement of the Agency Advisor, Andy Cussell, attempts were made to recruit a permanent Agency Advisor. Unfortunately, we have been unsuccessful. However the Acting Head of the Regional Adoption Agency is temporarily fulfilling this role whilst continued attempts are made to secure a permanent person into post.

4.11 **Management Team**

The team has now successfully recruited to all management posts within the Regional Adoption Agency with Ricky Cooper taking the Assistant Director post to develop the strategic vision. The team has appointed an interim to the Head of the Regional Adoption on an acting up basis with Joanne Banks having recently moved into post on the 10th June 2021. The team has been successful in appointing a permanent Team Manager to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Team in which Kelly Johnson took up this post on the 10th June 2021. More recently the team has also been able to appoint the Team Managers for the Recruitment and Assessment Team as well as the Family Finding Team on an acting up basis. Christine Clipston is the Team Manager for the Recruitment and Assessment Team and Kat Heath is the Team Manager for the Family Finding Team both of whom will take up these posts on the 5th July 2021. I would like to welcome all of the new Team Managers who will support the evolution and delivery of the Regional Adoption Agency.

4.12 There has already been some initial evaluation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough approaches to adoption, both of which have 'Good' services and they will join together practice and processes to work towards achieving an outstanding service. The new management team will come together to develop a clear strategic vision and plan for the Regional Adoption Agency for the coming 6 months.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultations with the Regional Adoption Agency for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough regarding harmonisation of terms and conditions was launched on 23rd March 2021 and concluded on the 29th April 2021.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 It is anticipated that new models of service delivery across adoption will have a positive impact on the recruitment and assessment of, and support to, adopters which will improve the lived experience of children in adoptive placements.

We are already seeing an increase in the number of enquires for those interested in adopting as well as those starting the journey to become adoptive parents.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 There are no recommendations made within this report

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial Implications

9.2 No financial implications.

9.3 Legal Implications

9.4 No – the report is for information.

9.5 Equalities Implications

9.6 Carbon Impact Assessment

There is a neutral impact indicated in this report

9.7 Children in care

This reports relates to children who are placed for adoption, and then adopted.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 9 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Report of: | Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Lynne Ayres Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Marie Saunders – Deputy Safeguarding Lead | Tel. 07730613958 |

ANNUAL REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) REPORT

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| FROM: <i>Alison Bennett – Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance</i> | Deadline date: N/A |
| <p>It is recommended that The Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members are asked to note the report and raise any queries with the lead officers. | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee by The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Department, Peterborough City Council (PCC) in line with annual requirements.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 a) The purpose of this report is to provide statutory review and analysis of the Independent Reviewing Service.

b) The report shall be presented to Members of The Corporate Parenting Committee as requested on 20 March 2019 for their work programme.

2.2 This report is for The Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference 2.4.4.2 To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes.

2.3 *How does this report link to the Corporate Priorities?*

This links to all areas of the Children in Care Pledge and Care Leavers Charter.

2.4 *How does this report link to the Children in care Pledge?*

As above

3. TIMESCALES

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | N/A |
| Date for relevant Council meeting | | Date for submission to Government Dept. (Please specify which Government Dept.) | |

4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in Peterborough as required by statutory guidance. This report covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.
- 4.2 The appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is a legal requirement under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. In March 2010, the government issued the 'Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and Statutory Guidance.' They also published the 'IRO Handbook, Statutory guidance for IROs and Local Authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review of looked after children.'
- 4.3 In respect of this report, the IRO Handbook states: 'The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting panel. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed.' (IRO Handbook 2010, page 48, paragraph 7.11.)

5 **Children in Care Reviews**

- 5.1 Between April 2020 and March 2021, 99.9% of reviews took place within statutory timescales which continues to be excellent. The majority of reviews took place virtually during the year in response to restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 5.2 A total of 1021 CIC reviews were held in 2020-21.
- 5.3 The effectiveness of the IRO service and the difference they make to children's experiences of being in care in Peterborough is monitored through the activity of the Quality Assurance Team including the ongoing thematic audit programmes. In addition, team and senior managers undertake a programme of case file audits and use Ofsted judgements to grade cases. All cases where remedial actions are identified and monitored by the QA Team to ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner. Audit themes and areas for development inform service improvement plans for each service.
- 5.4 All IROs complete a monitoring form after each statutory meeting. This is sent to the social worker and responsible team manager. If the IRO identifies an immediate cause for concern they will raise a case alert. They will always discuss their concern with the case responsible manager/senior manager and agree a course of actions with timescales. This will then be followed up with an email to the responsible manager and Head of Service and any other managers as appropriate. This ensures that immediate action is taken to safeguard and protect the child.
- 5.5 During 2020/21, the Independent Chairs raised 102 case alerts. Thirteen formal DRP cases were active throughout the year; most of which were addressed within timescale and two are outstanding with further discussions taking place. Of the 13, 3 were escalated to Stage 3, 3 were escalated to stage 2 and 7 were resolved at stage 1.

6. **Summary**

6.1 The IRO Service has continued to provide effective provision for reviewing and monitoring the Care Plans for children in care. It contributes to improved outcomes for children in care through increasing participation of children and young people in the decision making about their care, as well as making independent representations to operational teams and management on planning and practice issues. The independent scrutiny provided by the team is valued by social workers and management. IROs have shown continued strength and resilience throughout a very difficult year and have contributed to a creative and high delivering service.

7. **Independent Reviewing Officer Achievements in 2020/21**

7.1 IROs have:

- Ensured robust oversight of all vulnerable cohorts in light of COVID-19 through enhanced audit activity.
- Maintained oversight of all key decision making and milestones in the child's journey.
- Worked to ensure all essential meetings were able to go ahead via virtual meetings, providing additional support to families where required.
- Remained proactively responsive to the changing situation by leading the way and developing creative solutions.

7.2 Caseloads – Independent Reviewing Officers' caseloads have remained within the recommended guidelines of between 50 and 70. This has enabled the IROs to meet expectations for a high-quality service whereby all aspects of their role are undertaken.

7.3 Oversight and Quality Assurance – IROs have actively addressed concerns, poor practice, and non-compliance in a systematic and professional manner to promote the improvement of standards amongst social work teams and partner agencies. They have challenged as denoted within the IRO Handbook and ensured that timescales are adhered to.

7.4 IRO footprint – There has been clear evidence obtained throughout case audits, supervisions and dataset analysis of the consistent presence and oversight of the IRO and clear demonstrations of the IRO footprint on their caseloads.

7.5 Children's voices – There has been a consistent approach by IROs to maximise the engagement of children and the evidence within reports demonstrates an awareness and objective to ensure that the voice of the child is heard achieving 100% in the year.

7.6 Themed audits – the Quality Assurance team continues to undertake a significant number of thematic audits across Children's Social Care and a number of audits across the IRO service have evidenced robust systems and competent and effective practice and established performance.

7.7 Learning and development – The IRO service continues to promote good practice and to develop and embed learning and supportive relationships within the wider sector. IROs take responsibility in organising and managing meetings with operational team managers to identify impacts and issues within the service and to recognise areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement. They work together in maintaining a respectful, transparent, and learning-abled forum within which to identify and design models of ideal working.

7.8 The IROs also take turns to represent Peterborough City Council at the Eastern Regional IRO network. Unfortunately, the annual IRO conference due to take place in May 2021 has been postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak but discussions are ongoing in relation to setting a new date in 2022.

- 7.9 The IROs have contributed to the increase in dental checks and health assessments for children in care due to increased monitoring. They have also been instrumental in the increased oversight of children at risk of CSE or Missing episodes.
- 7.10 The IROs have shown remarkable professionalism, dedication, and creativity since the outbreak of Covid-19 and have risen to the challenges of the virtual world, engaging young people in care, carers, parents, and professionals in timely and effective reviews. No reviews were cancelled as a result of implications caused by the pandemic in 2021.
- 7.11 Full detail and information can be found in the appendix 1 of the Annual IRO Report.

8. **CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Parents, carers and children were consulted as part of the review process.
- 8.2 Further consultation with Health colleagues in order to agree a plan to move forward in terms of maximising outcomes for children.

9. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

- 9.1 *Consider the anticipated outcome of consideration of this report.*

To ensure there is a more robust approach to supporting the experiences of children and young people in order to improve their lives.

10. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 Statutory requirement

11. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 *N/A*

12. **IMPLICATIONS**

12 **Financial Implications**

- 12.1 *None*

Legal Implications

- 12.2 No direct implications, as the report provides factual information about a statutory role.

Equalities Implications

- 12.3 *None*

- 12.4 *None*

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 12.5 I have considered the Carbon Implications in respect to Carbon Impact and this is considered to be neutral for the report.

Other Relevant Implications

- 12.6 Child Care Reviews are held for all children in care.

The purpose of the Child in Care Review is to bring together the child, parents, carers and other professionals to plan for the child and review the Care Plan. This ensures that everything that needs to be done to enable children to achieve the best outcomes and not drift in the care system is identified and being undertaken.

14. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

14.1 *None*

15. **APPENDICES**

15.1 Appendix 1 - Annual IRO Report

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Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Unit

Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report

2020/21

Author: Marie Saunders
Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Peterborough City Council

Executive Summary

This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence in relation to the IRO service in Peterborough as required by Statutory guidance. This report covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The key highlights of this report are:

- The number of children in care fell slightly by 6 this year (from 370 at the end of March 2020 to 364 at the end of March 2021)
- A total of 1021 Child in Care Reviews were held this year
- Timeliness of Reviews continues to be excellent at 99.9%
- The IROs Escalation Protocol continues to be fully embedded across the service

The report concludes with the highlights of the IRO Service for 2020-21 and outlines areas for further development for 2021-22.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in Peterborough as required by statutory guidance. This report covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.
- 1.2 The appointment of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is a legal requirement under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. In March 2010, the government issued the 'Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and Statutory Guidance.' They also published the 'IRO Handbook, Statutory guidance for IROs and Local Authorities on their functions in relation to case management and review of looked after children.'
- 1.3 In respect of this report, the IRO Handbook states: 'The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting panel. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed.' (IRO Handbook 2010, page 48, paragraph 7.11.)

2. Legal Context

- 2.1 The appointment of an IRO for every looked after child is a statutory requirement of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 2004, the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.
- 2.2 The IRO Service sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit with its core functions consisting of reviewing plans for children in care and monitoring the Local Authority in respect of its corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities. Independent Chairs in Peterborough operate a dual role and undertake both the role of the Independent Chair Person for child protection conferences (CPC) and Looked after Children responsibilities. For the purpose of this report, we will refer to the Independent Chair as the IRO.
- 2.3 Every child who is looked after by Peterborough City Council must have a Care Plan, which details the long-term plan for the child's upbringing, and the arrangements made to meet the child's day-to-day needs. All Local Authorities have a statutory duty to regularly review that Care Plan within legislative timescales (Care Planning and Case Review Regulations 2010).
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of Local Authorities to develop Care Plans and provide care that gives children in care positive life experiences and the best short and long-term life opportunities. The Children Act 1989 [amended 2004] and the Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, set out

the duty of the Local Authority to appoint an IRO when a child first becomes looked after.

- 2.5 The IRO should ensure that the Local Authority gives due consideration to any views expressed by the child and the IRO has a responsibility to monitor the Local Authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case. Statutory guidance and regulation clearly defines circumstances when the Local Authority should consult with the IRO; for example, proposed change of placement, change of education plan, or serious incident. The actions that the IRO must take if it is felt that the Local Authority is failing to comply with the regulations, statutory guidance and/or is breaching their duty to the child are also clear.
- 2.6 Every Local Authority is required to have a dispute resolution procedure that reflects the process for effectively resolving areas of disagreement raised by the IRO in respect of care planning. This includes access to independent legal advice for the IRO and referral to the Child and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass).

3. Structures and Management of the Team

- 3.1 The team sits within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit and is accountable to the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. There are two Deputy Safeguarding Leads within the service who are responsible for the team of Independent Chairs who are all permanent staff. The Deputy Safeguarding Leads line manage the Independent Chairs and will be referred to as Managers throughout this report.
- 3.2 All IROs are qualified social workers with the required knowledge and experience to fulfil the requirements of the role.

4. Supervision and Quality Assurance

- 4.1 IROs receive monthly supervision and have access to informal supervision as and when needed. Managers remain committed to ensuring the level of supervision and support to IRO is effective, supportive and of a high standard.
- 4.2 The IROs attend team meetings twice a month. The meetings alternate between Practice Meetings and Business Meetings. Focus within business meetings is placed upon emerging legislative/ organisational changes and issues, and implementing processes which impact on the service, current themes and expectations and organisational agenda. The practice meetings give the IROs opportunities to identify, analyse and discuss practice issues, present research, and professional information, give feedback from individual

meetings with partners and social workers, identify areas of learning and development and define and support the implementation of good practice. Partner agencies and organisations such as Cafcass, NYAS and the Lead for UASC in the eastern region are regularly invited as well as others.

- 4.3 At the end of 2020 SQA was the subject of a formal consultation. This concluded in February 2021 with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire SQA services becoming one aligned service.

5. Workload Demand

- 5.1 The IRO Handbook recommends that a caseload of 50-70 children in care for a full time equivalent IRO is appropriate. This means the IRO is able to fulfil all of their statutory functions to the best of their ability, thus providing a high-quality service for all children in care. During 2020-2021 the average caseload per FTE IRO was consistently between 60 and 67 cases.
- 5.2 Effective business support staff use established systems to support the IROs; this does not include the typing of minutes, which the IROs complete themselves. All IROs ensure that they distribute the decisions from Children in Care (CIC) review meetings to the responsible Team Manager within five working days of the review; this is in accordance with the IRO Handbook and enables the responsible manager to identify any areas of disagreement and use the provision for challenging the decisions of the meeting in accordance with the IRO Handbook.
- 5.3 The IROs monitor the performance of the Local Authority, the progress of the plan and any decisions made at the review between reviews. This will include oversight of initial health assessments and other general health check-ups, missing episodes, and other key issues, so as to mitigate risk of drift and promote timely and optimum outcomes for children.
- 5.4 The IRO will also aim to complete a young person's care plan audit bi-monthly. This is completed in conjunction with the young person and the findings sent to the Quality Assurance Team looking at themes and areas for improvement.

6. Quantitative Data up to 31 March 2021

- 6.1 The table below details the *total* number of children in care per 10,000 in the last three years for PCC:

| Year | PCC Result |
|---------|------------|
| 2018-19 | 72.0 |
| 2019-20 | 73.0 |
| 2012-21 | 71.2 |

6.2 Peterborough City Council’s rate per 10,000 children in care for 2020-21 was 71.2, which is lower in comparison with last year. There were 364 children in care during 2020-21.

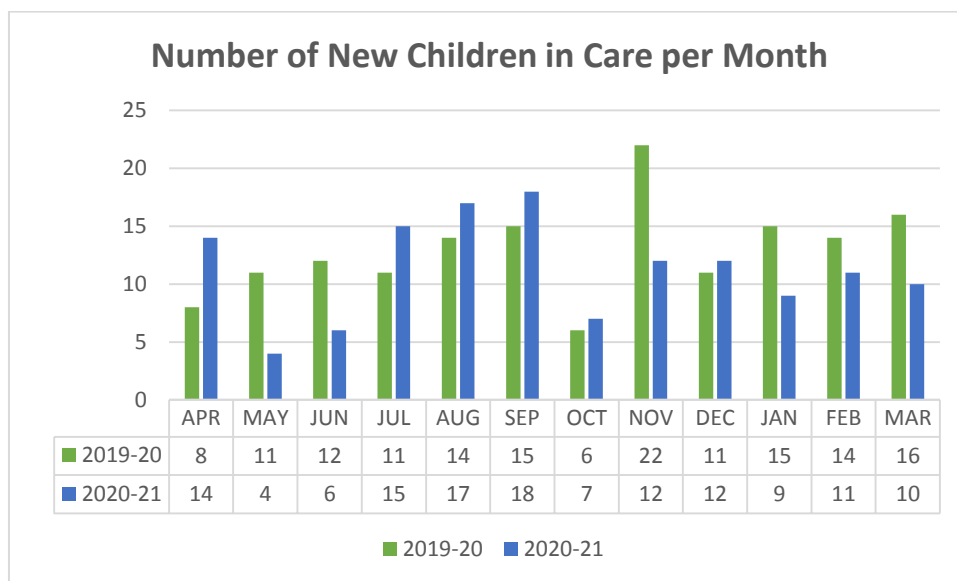
6.3 The table below details the number of *new* children in care in the last three years for PCC:

| Year | PCC Result |
|---------|------------|
| 2018-19 | 34.0 |
| 2019-20 | 30.0 |
| 2020-21 | 26.4 |

6.4 Peterborough City Council’s rate of *new* children in care for 2020-21 was 26.4 per 10,000 children, which is significantly lower than the previous two years.

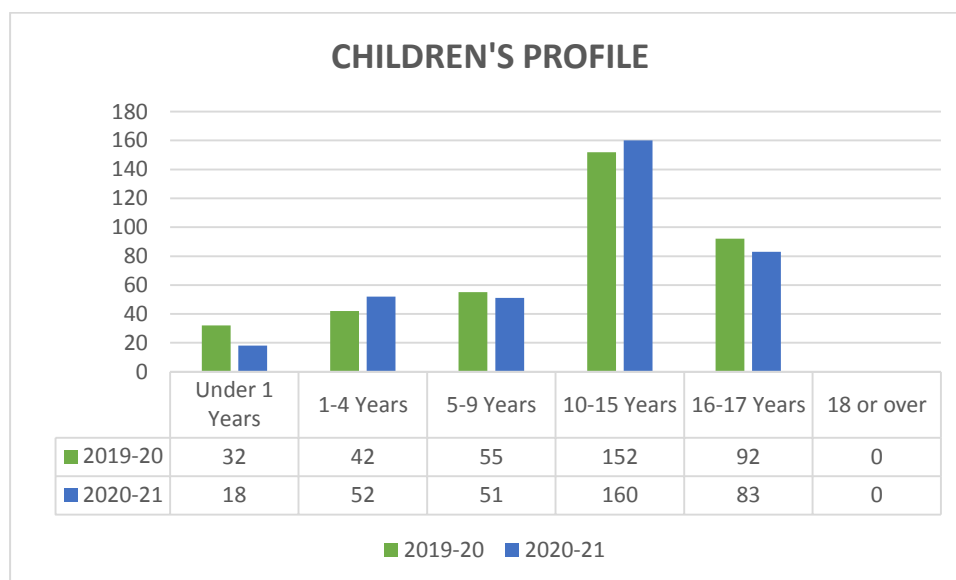
6.5 There were 135 new children in care during 2020-21. It could be assumed that the Family Safeguarding model implemented in 2017 is responsible for the decrease over the period. There were a total of 140 children who ceased to be looked after during the year.

6.6 The graph below shows the number of new children in care per month:



7. Children's Profiles

- 7.1 The graph below shows the age of children in care covering 2020-21 in comparison to 2019-20. There was a total of 364 children in care in 2020-21 of which 212 were male and 152 female compared to 370 in 2019-20 where 223 were male and 150 were female.



- 7.2

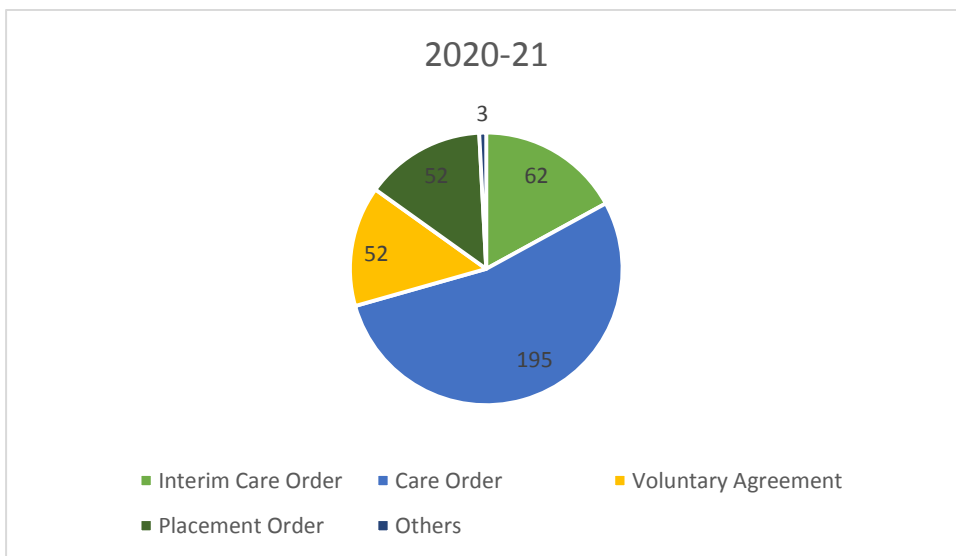
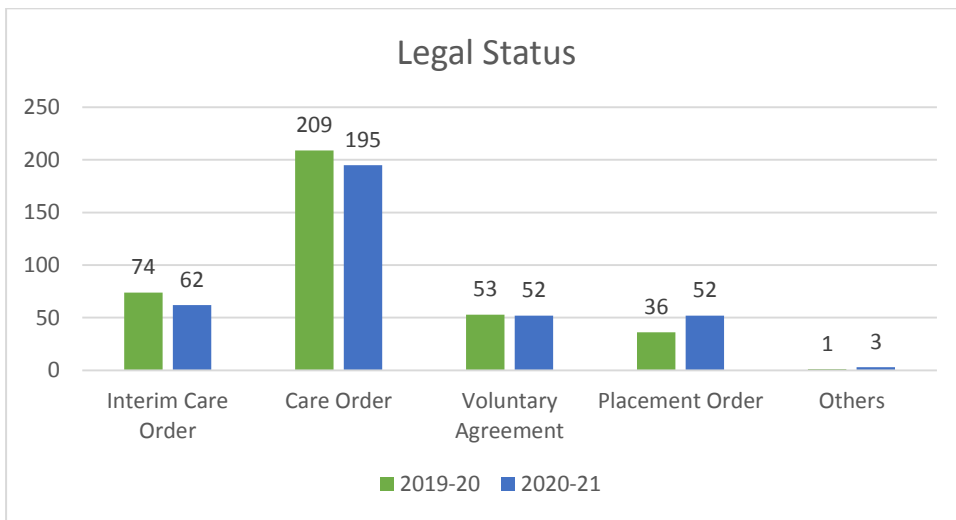
| Age at 31 March 2021 | Boys | Girls | Total |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Under 1 year old | 10 | 8 | 18 |
| 1 – 4 years old | 30 | 22 | 52 |
| 5 – 9 years old | 30 | 21 | 51 |
| 10 – 15 years old | 90 | 70 | 160 |
| 16 – 17 years old | 52 | 31 | 83 |
| 18 years and over | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 212 | 152 | 364 |

There continues to be a larger population of boys looked after in Peterborough which reflects similar consistencies within other Local Authorities.

There were 8 unaccompanied children seeking asylum (UASC) looked after during 2020-21 which is 5 less than 2019-20.

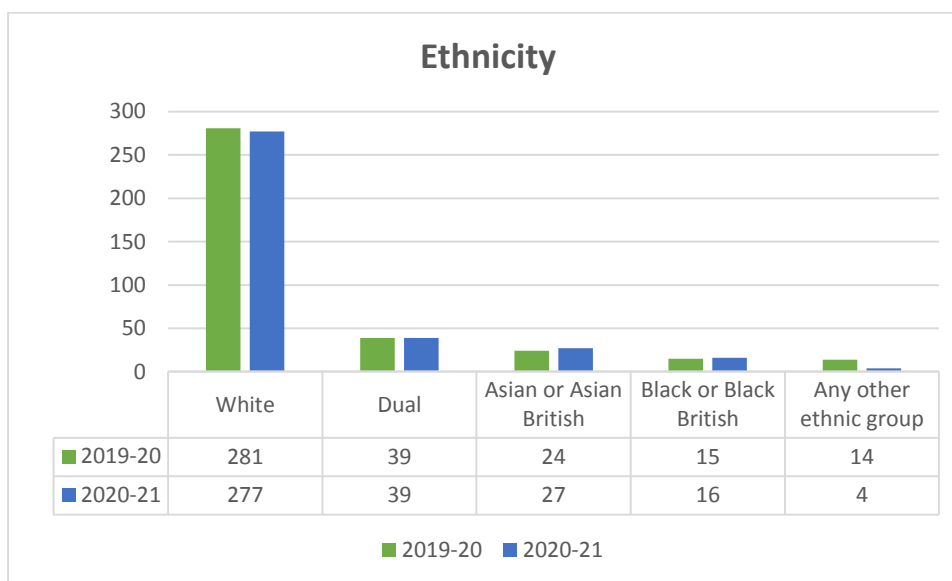
During the year, 3 young people were remanded in custody and one young person was supported in a Secure Accommodation Unit.

7.3 Legal Status



The number of Interim and Full Care Orders obtained for children has decreased over the year compared to 2019-20 whilst Voluntary Agreements and Placement Orders have decreased. The decrease is reflected in the lower numbers of new children coming into care during the year.

7.4 Ethnicity



The graph above indicates a consistent reflection in the ethnicity of children in care across the last two years.

- 7.5 At year end March 2021, 9 children were subject to Placement Orders where adoption was no longer the plan with the Placement Order needing to be revoked, which is 4 more than reported for 2019-20. Effective tracking is in place to monitor these cases.

8. Children in Care Reviews

- 8.1 Between April 2020 and March 2021, 99.9% of reviews took place within statutory timescales which continues to be excellent. The majority of reviews took place virtually during the year in response to restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

A total of 1021 CIC reviews were held in 2020-21.

| CIC Reviews held within timescales | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 99.8% | 99.3% | 99.9% |

- 8.2 The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit has systems in place, which enable CIC reviews to be held within timescales. These are as follows:
- At the beginning of each calendar month, business support staff send out the statutory due date for all CIC reviews. This means that responsible operational team managers, the manager of the conference and review service and IROs can monitor and ensure reviews do not go out of timescale.

- Only the managers can authorise a change in a CIC review date. This endeavours to ensure that if a change of date is unavoidable, the new date is scheduled within statutory timescales. Where necessary and appropriate, meetings are adjourned, or the review held over more than one meeting to ensure the review is child centred and involves all of the necessary professionals.
- 8.3 IROs focus on the steps taken to progress adoption and permanency planning at CIC reviews. They address delays by raising their concerns with social workers, responsible team managers and heads of service using the well-established case alert process and where appropriate the Dispute Resolution Process – see also section 12.
- 8.4 IROs complete and update a spreadsheet record of remedial actions and the Deputy Safeguarding Leads monitor this for timely completion. Where remedial actions are not completed in a timely manner, IROs commence the dispute resolution process where appropriate.
- 8.5 IROs will arrange for CIC reviews to take place more frequently in certain circumstances, such as for children who live at a significant distance from Peterborough; and ‘where permanence planning is not being progressed in a timely manner’. These reviews include a high level of scrutiny and monitoring of decision-making and actions. This ensures they are in the best interests of the child and that there is minimal delay.
- 8.6 There is an ongoing arrangement between the Local Authority children’s Social work teams and IROs. This helps to ensure that IROs receive copies of all documents including statements and reports that are filed with the court as part of care proceedings relating to children in care.
- 8.7 All IROs continue to deliver culturally competent practice and the child’s individual needs, wishes and feelings are central to all reviews. IROs closely monitor the integration of a child’s identity including culture, religion, ethnicity, and birth family values to care planning.
- 8.8 IROs continue to fulfil their responsibility to children remanded into youth detention accommodation (YDA). The key to this role is to ensure that all of these children have active individual care plans that meet their needs. In developing the care plan for children who become looked after solely as a result of being remanded, the IRO will be aware that some children will only be looked after for the period they are remanded. In many cases this period will be relatively short. However, consideration will be given to what longer term support or accommodation the child will need following the remand episode should the young person continue to be looked after at the end of the remand period.

9. Children in Care Reviews – Participation

- 9.1 It is the role of the IRO to encourage and promote the participation of children aged four years and over on the review process. IROs record the method at the end of each CIC review, and these are coded in line with national guidance.
- 9.2 During 2020-21, 1,021 Child Care Review meetings were held. The vast majority of these were conducted via virtual platforms such as Microsoft Teams due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A small number were held in a hybrid manner wherever they could be held safely in a placement or other venue deemed safe, with the IRO and the child present and the majority of others joining virtually. All children over the age of four participated in their CCR to inform the shaping of their plan, in the way that best suits them, attending part or all of their meetings, using the paper consultation booklet, the Mind of My Own app, or sending their views through their IRO or another trusted adult. 34% of children over the age of four years attended part or all of their meeting in person which is 10% less than the previous year. Of the children who did not attend their review, 69% sent their views in advance and 30% briefed their advocate with their views.
- 9.3 During the period, 360 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) consultation/visits with children and young people were held. During 'lockdown', face to face consultations were reduced and risk assessed on a case-by-case basis. Face to face consultations increased as restrictions eased and IROs endeavoured to consult with their young people via Teams, telephone call or other virtual methods during periods where a face-to-face visit was not possible. The service continues to encourage older children to chair or co-chair their CCRs. This has been particularly effective with young people planning their transition to independence, in empowering them and helping them to take increased ownership of their independence. However, during the year, there was a reduction in the number of children chairing and co-chairing their reviews. This is an area for improvement following lockdown restrictions easing as more reviews occur face to face.
- 9.4 The Mind Of My Own 'One' App is an app that helps young people communicate their views in a way that suits them. Young people create their own account, which can be used on any device at any time. The Mind Of My Own 'Express App' is a co-designed, innovative, and user-friendly app that helps children with learning disabilities and younger children express their views, wishes and feelings in a fun digital way that's easy for workers to understand and evidence.

The Mind Of My Own 'One' App was launched in Peterborough in April 2016 and the Mind Of My Own 'Express' App was introduced in December 2017.

- 9.5 There are currently 118 young people with Mind Of My Own accounts. 115 members of staff have Mind Of My Own accounts which are used to support children to use the system. A total of 183 statements were received in the year.

- 9.6 Young people sent in 47% of statements received and the remaining 53% statements were sent in by workers. The One app was used to send statements in relation to a variety of situations in the year, the most popular being in relation to 'my life', 'worker visit' and 'preparation' for a meeting.
- 9.7 The feedback from the consultation forms provide valuable information about the experience of children in care. In the main, the information suggests that most feel safe, listened to and well cared for. The consultation document is discussed with the child and with their consent, the IRO shares it with review participants.
- 9.8 IROs will always aim to spend time individually with children prior to a review to determine their wishes and feelings to identify if they have any concerns; and find out how they would like to participate in the meeting. This includes the time, venue, and attendance at their meeting though it should be noted this remains primarily the social worker's responsibility. It is noteworthy that many young people do not want their reviews to disrupt their school day or leisure activities for example. Each child is given the opportunity to engage with an advocate, particularly if this maximises the young person's contribution to their reviews.
- 9.9 Whilst face to face visits to children have been restricted throughout the year, records show a 48% increase in monitoring and consultation activity by the IROs.
- 9.10 The Children in Care Participation Officer coordinates and facilitates the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and liaises with the Corporate Parenting Panel and Cabinet Members to facilitate dialogue between all parties. Peterborough City Council's Looked after Children's Strategy reflects the council's priority for children in care. This strategy lists priorities for the children and young people ensuring that good outcomes are pivotal to processes. Children in care in Peterborough benefit from the continued robust commitment of elected members of the council.
- 9.11 Parental participation is noted within the minutes of the review and monitored by the IRO manager. There were a total of 1,021 CIC reviews completed in 2020-21. The level of participation by parents has remained fairly consistent over the year; 40% for mothers and just 20% of fathers. In accordance with the Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2010, IROs offer to meet with parents outside of the main review meeting. This is particularly evident where a parent is prevented from attending. A number of parents have commented that they felt more able to attend meetings when permitted to join virtually as they would not have ordinarily been able to physically attend.

10. Feedback on the IRO service

- 10.1 Ordinarily, professionals would be asked to complete a feedback form upon the conclusion of a CCR. However, owing to increased pressures on capacity and adjustments required during the Covid-19 pandemic, these were put on hold and will be reintroduced after restrictions ease. Parental feedback forms have been sent out routinely where an email address has been provided to encourage feedback from parents' perspectives on the CCR process. However, the uptake on these has not been good. IROs have been encouraging young people to complete feedback forms via email and where possible have supported in person to complete. Although uptake on these has also been poor, the few that have been completed all agree that they feel supported by their IRO; feel their IRO listens to them and all but one felt comfortable attending their meeting. The one young person who did not, noted that this was "because it was on the computer".

My IRO is always here for me and listens to my wishes

My IRO is nice

11. Positive Impact – 'You said, we did'

- 11.1 Within the service, we produce a report to highlight some of the examples of impact that IROs have on children's lives. Below are some examples:

YOU SAID...

I want to live here forever

I want to live at home with my Mum

WE DID...

IRO escalated the delay in convening a Permanency Planning Meeting; a Permanency Planning Meeting has been convened.

The IRO followed up the placement with parent's regulations, ensured a robust support plan was in place prior to the move back home; had oversight of the transition plan. The young person has successfully transitioned home; without the input of the IRO this would not have progressed.

I need more support when I turn 18

The IRO raised a Dispute Resolution as a result the support plan post 18 was updated and additional support provided.

I don't want to leave my home; I want to stay here

The IRO escalated the concerns to senior managed; leased with the young person's advocate. An agreement was made that the young person would not move to new carers.

I need someone to talk to about how I am feeling

An alert was raised around the lack of emotional support available to the young person; the young person is now on the waiting list for counselling.

A young person with additional needs required a health assessment to identify his support needs moving forward. Initially this assessment was rejected

IRO raised an escalation; the specialist health assessment took place and has identified some support needs for the young person and how they can be met.

The supervising Social worker gave notice on a placement on behalf of the carers. If the placement has ended this would have had a significant negative impact on the young person

IRO agreed a plan with the carers and Children Social Care around the support needed and detailed all agreements in the review decisions.

11.2 For IROs a major focus has been combatting isolation for children and young people, and around ensuring contact is progressed, even at the height of the pandemic. IROs understand the importance of family relationships and pursued face-to-face contact, when it could be managed safely and was in the best interests of children.

Further examples of IRO impact include:

Young person who was in supportive accommodation, in lock down with minimal support. IRO made contact with the young person who said he felt unwell and needed more support. Following IRO escalation senior manager review of the case led to increased support hours and the young person said that he feels much happier now as a result.

Young person's contact was indirect due to COVID-19, however as restrictions were relaxed there was a delay in contact returning to face to face, causing the young person to be very upset, especially as the other young person in placement was having face to face contact. This was addressed through a Case Alert and face to face contact was reinstated.

Young person wanted to return to school and there was some delay in putting arrangements in place for this. IRO intervened and the young person was able to start attending school again.

Following a placement move, a young person told his IRO said he felt scared, alone, and isolated exacerbated by COVID constraints. Following IRO case escalation, the arrangements were reviewed resulting in increased support hours, and the young

Rehabilitation back home was at risk of being delayed due to COVID-19. IRO intervened and agreed a creative plan, whereby rehabilitation back home could take place, safely, even with restrictions. The young person has now returned to parents, without any delay, and he is much happier and more settled.

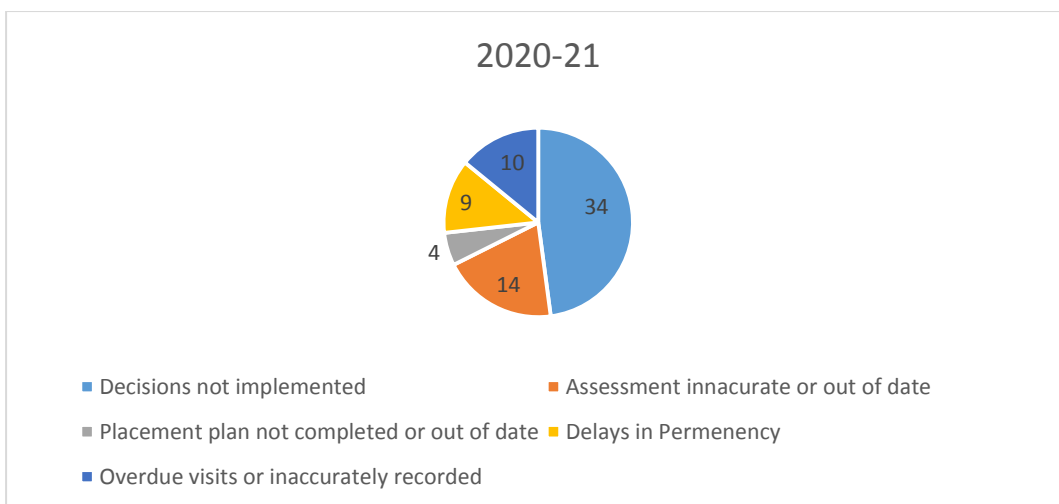
12. Quality Assurance and Audit of Children in Care Arrangements

- 12.1 The effectiveness of the IRO service and the difference they make to children's experiences of being in care in Peterborough is monitored through the activity of the Quality Assurance Team including the ongoing thematic audit programmes. In addition, team and senior managers undertake a programme of case file audits and use Ofsted judgements to grade cases. All cases where remedial actions are identified and monitored by the QA Team to ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner. Audit themes and areas for development inform service improvement plans for each service.
- 12.2 All IROs complete a monitoring form after each statutory meeting. This is sent to the social worker and responsible team manager. If the IRO identifies an immediate cause for concern they will raise a case alert. They will always discuss their concern with the case responsible manager/senior manager and agree a course of actions with timescales. This will then be followed up with an email to the responsible manager and Head of Service and any other

managers as appropriate. This ensures that immediate action is taken to safeguard and protect the child.

13. Dispute Resolution

- 13.1 The IRO Handbook clearly describes the role of the IRO where there are areas of disagreement: 'One of the key functions of the IRO is to resolve problems arising out of the care planning process. It is expected that IROs establish positive working relationships with the social workers of the children for whom they are responsible. Where problems are identified in relation to a child's case, for example in relation to care planning, the implementation of the care plan or decisions relating to it, resources, or poor practice, the IRO will, in the first instance, seek to resolve the issue informally with the social worker or the social worker's managers. The IRO should place a note of this initial informal resolution process on the child's file. If the matter is not resolved in a timescale that is appropriate to the child's needs, the IRO should consider taking formal action.
- 13.2 During 2020/21, the Independent Chairs raised 102 case alerts. Thirteen formal DRP cases were active throughout the year; most of which were addressed within timescale and two are outstanding with further discussions taking place. Of the 13, 3 were escalated to Stage 3, 3 were escalated to stage 2 and 7 were resolved at stage 1.
- 13.3 Updates are sent to Heads of Service and Group Managers on a two-weekly basis to ensure management oversight and to bring attention to outstanding alerts. The following themes were noted with regard to the case alerts raised:
- Decisions not being implemented.
 - Practice issues, which include assessments and other paperwork not being completed.
 - Drift in care planning.
 - Statutory visits.
 - Placement issues.
 - Pre-meeting reports not completed, shared or of adequate quality.
 - Issues regarding placement.
 - Delays in achieving permanence.
 - Lack of supervision or management oversight.



13.4 Relationships between Cafcass and the IRO service continue to be positive with a named guardian and IRO providing a link between the two services. Cafcass attend the IRO team meeting twice yearly and the named IRO reciprocates this arrangement. This ensures joined up working and the sharing of information continues to be a priority between the professionals who maintain albeit differing degrees of independence from the operational social work teams.

14. Summary

14.1 The IRO Service has continued to provide effective provision for reviewing and monitoring the Care Plans for children in care. It contributes to improved outcomes for children in care through increasing participation of children and young people in the decision making about their care, as well as making independent representations to operational teams and management on planning and practice issues. The independent scrutiny provided by the team is valued by social workers and management. IROs have shown continued strength and resilience throughout a very difficult year and have contributed to a creative and high delivering service.

15. Independent Reviewing Officer Achievements in 2020/21

15.1 IROs have:

- Ensured robust oversight of all vulnerable cohorts in light of COVID-19 through enhanced audit activity.
- Maintained oversight of all key decision making and milestones in the child's journey.

- Worked to ensure all essential meetings were able to go ahead via virtual meetings, providing additional support to families where required.
- Remained proactively responsive to the changing situation by leading the way and developing creative solutions.

15.2

- a) Caseloads – Independent Reviewing Officers' caseloads have remained within the recommended guidelines of between 50 and 70. This has enabled the IROs to meet expectations for a high-quality service whereby all aspects of their role are undertaken.
- b) Oversight and Quality Assurance – IROs have actively addressed concerns, poor practice, and non-compliance in a systematic and professional manner to promote the improvement of standards amongst social work teams and partner agencies. They have challenged as denoted within the IRO Handbook and ensured that timescales are adhered to.
- c) IRO footprint – There has been clear evidence obtained throughout case audits, supervisions and dataset analysis of the consistent presence and oversight of the IRO and clear demonstrations of the IRO footprint on their caseloads.
- d) Children's voices – There has been a consistent approach by IROs to maximise the engagement of children and the evidence within reports demonstrates an awareness and objective to ensure that the voice of the child is heard achieving 100% in the year.
- e) Themed audits – the Quality Assurance team continues to undertake a significant number of thematic audits across Children's Social Care and a number of audits across the IRO service have evidenced robust systems and competent and effective practice and established performance.
- f) Learning and development – The IRO service continues to promote good practice and to develop and embed learning and supportive relationships within the wider sector. IROs take responsibility in organising and managing meetings with operational team managers to identify impacts and issues within the service and to recognise areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement. They work together in maintaining a respectful, transparent, and learning-abled forum within which to identify and design models of ideal working.
- g) The IROs also take turns to represent Peterborough City Council at the Eastern Regional IRO network. Unfortunately, the annual IRO conference due to take place in May 2021 has been postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak but discussions are ongoing in relation to setting a new date in 2022.

- h) The IROs have contributed to the increase in dental checks and health assessments for children in care due to increased monitoring. They have also been instrumental in the increased oversight of children at risk of CSE or Missing episodes.
- i) The IROs have shown remarkable professionalism, dedication, and creativity since the outbreak of Covid-19 and have risen to the challenges of the virtual world, engaging young people in care, carers, parents, and professionals in timely and effective reviews. No reviews were cancelled as a result of implications caused by the pandemic in 2021.

16. Objectives for 2021/22

- a) IROs will continue to proactively contribute to improving outcomes for looked after children through rigorous monitoring and challenge of care planning and promoting timely permanency planning.
- b) To support the service in identifying and implementing effective and creative strategies for involving children and young people in the review process in a way that suits them.
- c) To increase the number of children/young people chairing/co-chairing their review.
- d) continue to support placement stability as key to emotional wellbeing of our children and young people
- e) strengthening our oversight of pathway planning to support successful timely move into independence
- f) Continue to ensure permanence plan identified at second review with clear robust contingency plan.
- g) IROs will continue to raise awareness amongst Social Workers of the need to keep the IRO informed of significant events between review meetings and to consult the IRO before important decisions are taken in respect of changes to the child's care plan.
- h) To continue to support in establishing good working relationships with Cambridgeshire County Council and to continue to improve processes and services across the two Local Authorities.
- i) To continue to build established relationships with partner agencies.

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 10 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Report of: | Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Lynne Ayres Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Myra O'Farrell Head of Service Corporate Parenting | Tel: 864391 |

PERFORMANCE DATA FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS JANUARY 2021

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| FROM: Nicola Curley Assistant Director Children's Services | Deadline date: N/A |
| <p>It is recommended that members of Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the content of the report, and 2. Raise any questions with the lead officer | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee to each formal and informal committee as part of the standing work programme item in relation to performance.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Committee in respect of the numbers of children and young people being looked after by the Council as of 31 May 2021 by providing a breakdown of the types of placements in which they are living. The report also provides information about the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people.
- 2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.6 To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.
- 2.3 This reports to the Children in Care Pledge by focussing on the placements for children in care and care leavers.

3. TIMESCALES

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 As of 31 May 2021 there were 362 children in the care of the local authority; of these:

- 4.2 133 children were placed with foster carers who work for Peterborough City Council (in house).
- 4.3 134 children were in foster care and placed with independent fostering agencies (IFAs) outside of the city boundaries. The agency works with the Local Authority on a contractual basis to provide foster placements.
- 4.4 22 post 16 years olds were living on their own (independent living) but still classed as CLA with an allocated Social Worker. Independent living assists the young person with the transition to leaving care. These young people are supported by our Leaving Care Service.
- 4.5 18 children were placed with family or friends' carers (connected person). These carers are formally assessed in the same way that our other in-house carers are assessed and are presented to the Fostering Panel for approval in the way. They are paid the same level of allowances as other in-house foster carers.
- 4.6 3 children were living with their parents but are still considered 'looked after' because they are subject to a full care order so the Council still shares parental responsibility with the birth parent. Placements with parents are often made pending a plan for reunification with the parent and in some cases will result in an application for care orders to be revoked.
- 4.7 10 children were placed for adoption.
- 4.8 37 children and young people (without disabilities) were placed in residential educational care that provides intensive support in a residential setting. These placements are most usually made when it is clear that foster care is not sufficient to meet the child or young person's needs. Residential care is nearly always accessed by adolescents and only rarely used for younger children in very special circumstances.
- 4.9 There were 4 children (with disabilities) placed in specialist residential care.
1 young person was placed in a secure unit.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 N/A

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 This is an accurate report of the current accommodation placements for children in care and care leavers.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The data included in this report is from the monthly performance report which includes live data.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 There are no legal implications.

Equalities Implications

9.3 The current recruitment campaign for foster carers is focussed on increasing placements for specific groups linked to sibling placement, older children and Link carer for children with disabilities.

9.4 Carbon Emissions Implications

Carbon impact has been considered in this report and none have been identified.

9.5 Children in Care Implications

This report relates to all children in care.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 Monthly Performance Report

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – May 2021



Peterborough Corporate Parenting

Monthly Performance report

May 2021



Information

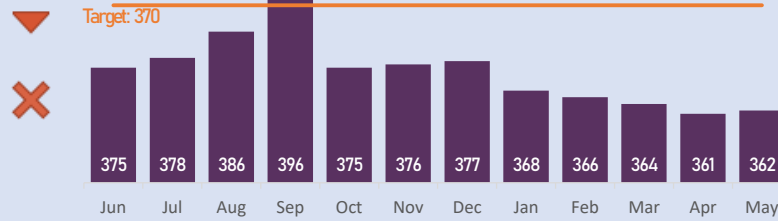


HEADLINE FIGURES

Number of children in care on the last day of March

362

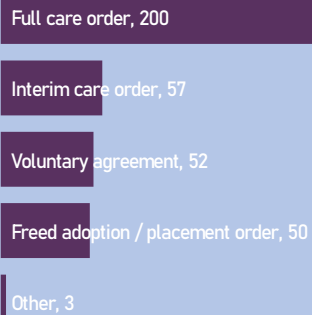
Target: below 394



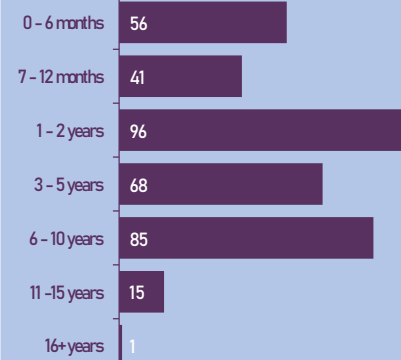
Staffing

| | Establishment | Average Caseload | Change | Performance |
|---|---------------|------------------|--------|-------------|
| Family Safeguarding Qualified social workers | 33.5 | 15 | ▲ | - |
| Children in Care Qualified social workers | 17.5 | 17.5 | ▲ | - |
| Leaving Care Personal Advisors | 8.5 | 19 | ▲ | - |
| Independent Reviewing Officers | 8.5 | 67 | ▲ | - |

Legal status of children in care



Length of time children have been in care



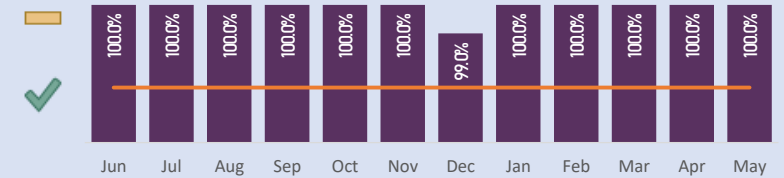
Key Change since previous month: ▲ Improved, ▼ Deteriorated
 Performance against target: ✓ Strong, ✗ Poor, ! Acceptable, ▬ Stayed the same

SERVICE STANDARDS

% of child in care reviews which were held on time (year to date, and during each month)

100%

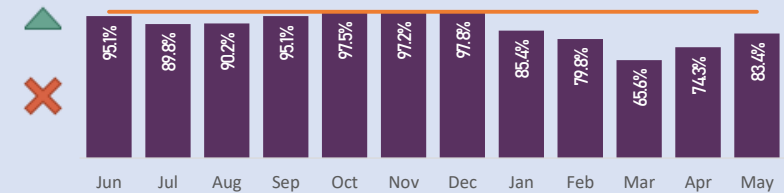
Target: above 97%



% of child in care statutory visits which were carried out on time (year to date, and during each month)

83.4%

Target: above 98%

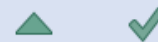


PLACEMENTS

Placement stability

7.2%

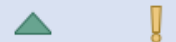
Target: below 10.0%



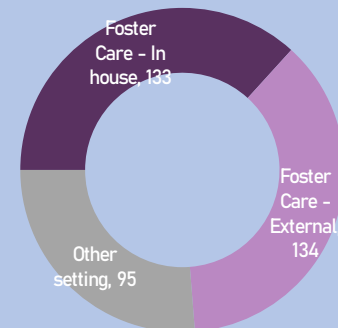
7.2% of children in Peterborough's care had 3 or more different placements in the last 12 months. Out of those children who have been in care for over 2.5 years, 68.0% have been in their current placement for two or more years.

68.0%

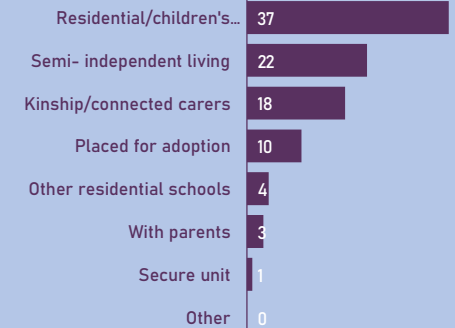
Target: above 68%



Type of placement of children in care

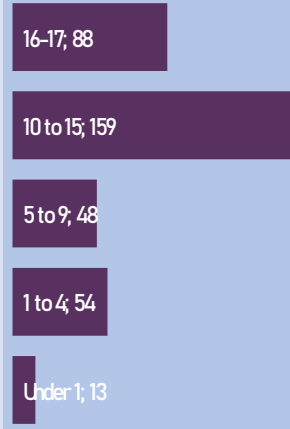


Other settings breakdown



EDUCATION

Children in care by age group



% of school-aged children in care who have a PEP in place

100.0%

Target: above 98%

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) was in place for 231 out of 231 school-aged children who were in care for at least a month by the end of May.

83.7%

83.7% of Peterborough's children in care are taught in good or outstanding schools.

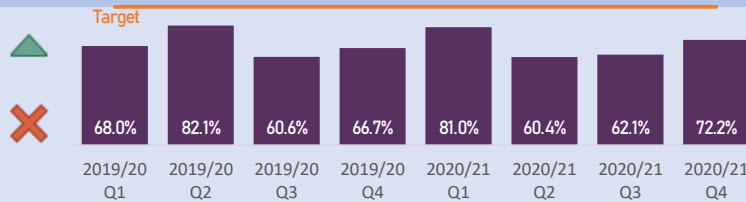
% of school-aged children in care in good or outstanding schools

HEALTH - SERVICE STANDARDS

Children in care whose initial health assessment was completed on time (Year to date and by quarter)

66.4%

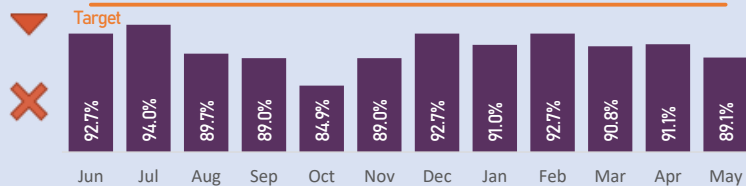
Target: above 95%



Children in care whose annual health assessment was completed on time

89.1%

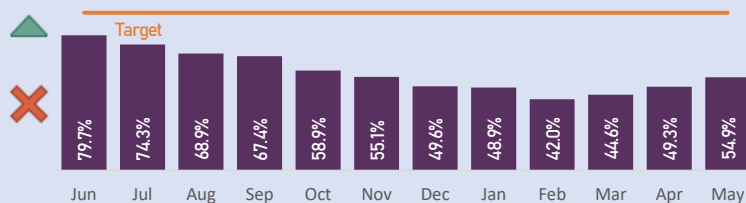
Target: above 93%



Children in care whose annual dental examination was completed on time

54.9%

Target: above 93%



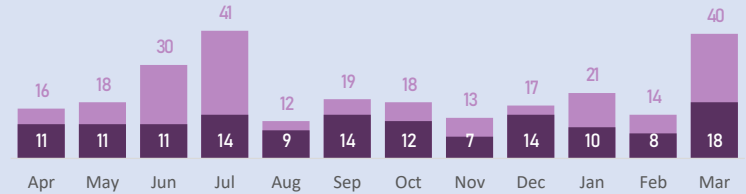
Children in care who go missing (with number of episodes)

0

0

Episodes

Children

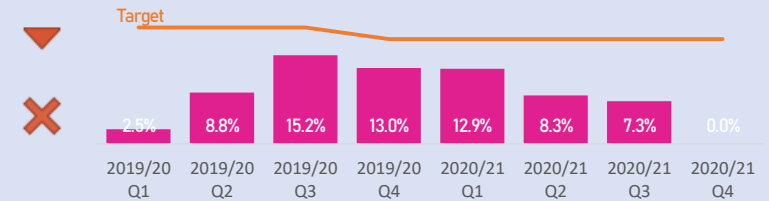


ADOPTION

% of children leaving care who are adopted (Year to date and by quarter)

6.4%

Target: above 18%



Timeliness of adoption process

Time to placement

362

Target: below 426

For children adopted during the past 12 months, an average of 362 days passed between the child entering care and them moving into their adoptive placement. An average of 156.125 days passed between their placement order being granted and approval of a match with their adopters.

Time to match

156

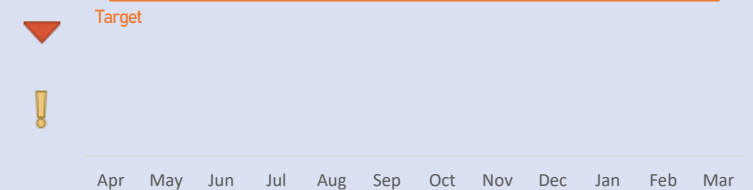
Target: below 120

CARE LEAVERS

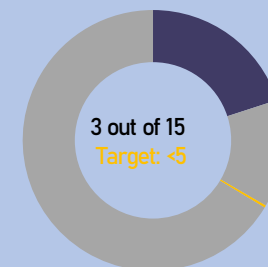
Care Leavers who have a pathway plan in place

90.5%

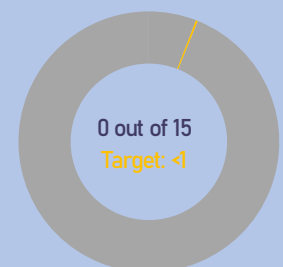
Target: above 95%



19 to 21 year old care leavers who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)



19 to 21 year old care leavers who live in unsuitable accommodation



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| | |
|---|----------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 10a |
| 21 July 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Report of: | Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Children's Social Care Catherine York, Designated Nurse Children in Care | Tel: 864065 |

HEALTH UPDATE REPORT 1 APRIL – 31 JUNE 2021

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S | |
| FROM: Assistant Director Children's Social Care | Deadline date: N/A |
| <p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the content of the report 2. Raise any queries with the lead officers | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to a formal Corporate Parenting Committee

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report provides an update on the performance of Initial Health Assessments, Review Health Assessments and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. The report provides an overview of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems are in place to meet the health needs of Peterborough's children in care.

2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting panel to consider under its terms of reference no: 2.4.3.6 (c) Promote the development of participation and ensure that the view of children and young people are regularly heard through the Corporate Parenting Committee to improve educational, health and social outcomes to raise aspiration and attainments.

2.3 This links to priority 4 of the Children in Care Pledge and Care Leavers Charter. Health issues of Children and young people in care

3. TIMESCALES

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO |
|---|-----------|

4.

BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on the provision of health services, including the physical and mental health care provided to children in care. Throughout this time, the Designated Nurse and Doctor for Children in Care worked with commissioners and providers across social care and health to ensure the provision, quality and timeliness of the required health services including statutory health assessments and completion of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

4.2 Health Assessments

In line with national guidance our providers moved to undertaking virtual health assessments, providing face-to-face clinic appointments for children and young people when clinically indicated, and referral(s) to other services continue to be made as appropriate. Feedback received from carers and young people indicates that the experience of having a virtual assessment was broadly welcomed, and the compliance rate for assessments was good.

4.3 Initial Health Assessments

Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) for those aged 0-5 years continued to be face-to-face appointments throughout the pandemic, and from the beginning of June 2021 all other IHAs returned to face-to-face appointments. Virtual IHAs remain an option if the agreed criteria are met, but it is believed that this will be for a small number of young people.

4.4 Initial Health Assessment Performance Data:

| Children and young people placed in Peterborough | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Month | Number of children new to care | IHAs completed within 20 working days of coming into care | Reason 20 working day target not being achieved |
| April 2021 | 5 | 4 | 1 = late consent and referral. Young person old enough to consent at time of assessment, but referral not received by health. |
| May 2021 | 8 | 8 | |
| June 2021 | 6 | 6 | |
| Children and young people placed outside of Peterborough | | | |
| April 2021 | 1 | 1 | |
| May 2021 | 0 | 0 | |
| June 2021 | 0 | 0 | |
| Overall totals | | | |
| Number | 20 | 19 | |
| Percentage | 100% | 95% | |

4.5 Review Health Assessments

Current provision of Review Health Assessments (RHAs) s continues to be via video consultation unless clinically indicated when a face-to-face consultation is undertaken. Occasionally a telephone consultation is being used at the request of the young person. For those who decline their consultation a questionnaire is provided which enables a Health Action

Plan to be created (in line with the Pathway).

The recovery plan for RHAs is in place, with the service planning to offer a hybrid model, which will include face to face appointments and virtual appointments for those young people who prefer this option and who meet the agreed criteria which are based on the learning from the past 15 months; this will be monitored by the Lead Nurse and Designated Nurse, as will the quality of the assessments. The CICC are to be included in discussions and decisions about the future offer.

4.6 Review Health Assessment Performance Data:

| Children and young people placed in Peterborough | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Month | Number of children new to care | RHAs completed within timescale | Reason timescale was not achieved |
| April 2021 | 22 | 18 | 1 = carer's availability. 2 = late due to previous DNA 1 = late due to young person declining initially |
| May 2021 | 22 | 20 | 1 = carer's availability 1 = DNA. Young person went out. |
| June 2021 | 28 | 27 | 1 = carer's availability |
| Children and young people placed outside of Peterborough | | | |
| April 2021 | 7 | 2 | 5 = delays in receipt of documentation from out of area team |
| May 2021 | 10 | 8 | 1 = child moved area so requested late 1 = delays in receipt of documentation from out of area team |
| June 2021 | 7 | 4 | 3 = delays in receipt of documentation from out of area team |
| Overall totals | | | |
| Number | 96 | 79 | |
| Percentage | 100% | 82% | |

4.7 Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ)

The Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, commonly known as the SDQ, is a short behavioural screening questionnaire. There are three versions of the SDQ: the parent/carer, the teacher, and the self-report scale (completed by 11-16 year olds), which provide the potential for triangulation of information about a child across the different versions. These questionnaires are used alongside health assessments to support the assessment of emotional health and wellbeing. Scoring categories are: Low need (0-13), Some need (14-16) and High need (17-40).

The health team in Peterborough undertake the SDQ process on behalf of Social Care. Pre COVID-19, the Questionnaires were given out at health assessments as this was found to provide a higher percentage of returns and provide a score reflective of the child's / young person's well-being at the time of the health assessment and therefore supporting the holistic assessment. Since the pandemic and commencement of virtual health assessments, the questionnaire is emailed to the carer around 2 weeks prior to the assessment with a request for the carer to complete the questionnaire and return to the health team before the health

assessment; this process is the same for children/young people placed in and out of Peterborough. This change in process has resulted in far fewer SDQs being available at the Review Health Assessment appointment, and an overall return rate of only 49% as demonstrated in the table below.

The return of face-to-face RHAs will result in an increased number of SDQs being completed, so the August 2021 to March 2022 performance should be in line with the pre-covid performance.

4.8 **SDQ Completion Rate and Average Score 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021:**

| Number of SDQs sent to carers and young people | Number of SDQs returned by carers and young people | Average score of SDQs completed by carers | Average score of SDQs completed by young people |
|---|---|--|--|
| 417 | 204 | 13 | 12 |
| 100% | 49% | | |

5. **CONSULTATION**

N/A

6. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT**

- 6.1 To improve health and well-being for Looked after Children by ensuring adequate assessment of health and addressing areas where there may be a lack of provision.

7. **REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 Corporate Parenting Committee have requested a health update at all formal committees.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 **N/A**

9. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

- 9.1 N/A

Legal Implications

- 9.2 N/A

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 N/A

- 9.4 **Other**

This report supports the health needs of Children in Care and Care Leavers with the service supporting them to live a healthy lifestyle and ensure they are offered regular health checks and support to attend these.

10. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

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|---|--------------------|
| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 12 |
| 21 JULY 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| Report of: | Director of Law and Governance | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University. | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Karen S Dunleavy Email: karen.dunleavy@peterborough.gov.uk | Tel. 01733 452233 |

DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/2022 AND REVIEW OF WORK IN 2020/21

| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
|---|---------------------------|
| FROM: Director of Law and Governance | Deadline date: N/A |
| <p>It is recommended that Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Notes the 2020/2021 year in review and makes recommendations on the future monitoring of these items where necessary. II. Determines its priorities, and approves the draft work programme for formal and informal meetings for 2021/22 attached at Appendix 1. III. Notes the Recommendations and Actions Monitoring Report attached at Appendix 4 and considers if further monitoring of these during the 2021/22 municipal year is required. IV. Notes the Terms of Reference for this Committee as set out in Part 3, Delegations Section 2 – Regulatory Committee Functions, 2.4. | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is presented to the Committee on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 To enable the Committee to discuss its objectives and priorities for 2021/22 and to approve the draft work programme for 2021/22 (Appendix 1).

The report also provides the Committee with the opportunity to review its work conducted throughout the municipal year 2020/21. A copy of the actions and recommendation made are attached at Appendix 4.

- 2.2 This item is being presented to Corporate Parenting Committee under its terms of reference 2.4.4.5): Raise awareness in Peterborough City Council and the wider community by promoting the role of Members as corporate parents and the Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities.

- 2.3 In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee is responsible for agreeing a skeleton work programme annually which will be reviewed at each formal meeting. In reviewing the work programme, the Committee may agree to request reports on particular matters of their own preference or as advised by the lead officer.

2.4 The Work Programme links into all of the Children in Care Pledge Priorities and Care Leavers Charter.

3. **TIMESCALES**

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|-----|
| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | N/A |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------|-----|

4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee was established by Council at its meeting on 13 July 2016. The Committee is scheduled to meet six times a year bi-monthly preceded by an agenda setting meeting.

4.2 Three meetings are formal Committee meetings and three informal meetings. The purpose of the informal meetings will be to engage with looked after children, young people and their representatives.

As part of the Committee's programme of works it can also:

- Make formal recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, and to Cabinet collectively;
- Formally report any issues to the relevant Scrutiny Committee, to full Council, or other bodies, such as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

4.3 The Committee Membership consists of:

- Eleven elected Members
- Up to four Children in Care Council Representatives – with no voting rights
- Up to four Foster Carer Forum Representatives – with no voting rights

4.4 In addition, the Committee has the ability to appoint non-voting co-opt members to help them undertake their work and responsibilities if they feel necessary.

4.5 A work programming session was held at the informal meeting on 16 June 2021 with Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee (CPC) and the Children in Care Council representatives at a virtual meeting in order to prioritise the work of the CPC for the municipal year 2021/2022.

5 **REVIEW OF 2020/21**

5.1 During the year 2020/2021, the Committee considered the following issues:

Information/updates

- A report on education provision during lockdown, attainment and education opportunities for USACS
- University Experience For Our Care Leavers In Relation To Impact Of Covid
- Update on the local offer for care leavers, apprenticeship update and work opportunity update.
- Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee.
- Annual Independent Review Officer Report
- Annual Health Report
- Report on the final structure for the Clinical Offer for Children in Care.
- Report to confirm the new regional adoption agency and Foster Care Structures.

Standing Agenda Items Include:

- Updates from Foster Carers (formal meetings)
- Children in Care Council (informal meetings)
- You Asked We Did (informal meetings)
- Various Case Studies (informal meetings)
- Corporate Parenting Champion Updates (updates listed below in the report)
- Members Issues

Monitoring Items Include:

- Performance reports, Placements of Children in Care and Scorecard
- Health report
- Case Studies (informal meetings)

Corporate Parenting Committee Champion Briefing Notes:

- Passport to independence update
- Statutory Health Assessments update
- Housing for care leavers
- Post 16 Skills and Education

5.2 For the information of the Committee, a copy of the progress on actions and recommendations raised during the year are attached at Appendix 4

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 To ensure the Corporate Parenting Committee fulfil the requirements as set out in the terms of reference attached at Appendix 2.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

8.1 None.

Legal Implications

8.2 Continuous improvement and approval of the coming year's Corporate Parenting priorities providing a planned and focussed approach to the work of Corporate Parenting, is in keeping with good governance.

Equalities Implications

8.3 None

Other Implications

8.4 Setting and agreeing the draft work programme for 2021/22 and reviewing the past year's work provides an opportunity to ensure that the level of service provided to children in care and care leavers is to the highest standard.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 Minutes of the Council meeting held 13 July 2016.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Work Programme 2021/22
Appendix 2 - Terms of Reference
Appendix 3 - Children in Care Pledge and Care Leavers Pledge
Appendix 4 - Progress on actions and recommendations made in 2020/21

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021/2022

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| 16 June 2021 Informal | Theme: Placement | |
| | Part 1 | |
| Priority | Topic | Contact Officer |
| 2. Effective care planning | Update from Children in Care Council (CiCC) b) To encourage those children & Young people to express their views, wishes & feelings c) To take account of the views, wishes & feelings of those children & young people | CiCC |
| 2. Effective care planning | You Asked We Did b) To encourage those children & Young people to express their views, wishes & feelings c) To take account of the views, wishes & feelings of those children & young people | Shalina Chandoo/ Sika Smith |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Draft Work Programme and Review of Work in 2020 - 2021 | Karen Dunleavy/Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Role of Champion Members d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners | Karen Dunleavy/Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Part 2 | |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Case Study – placement stability | Myra O'Farrell |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Members Issues | All Members |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Performance Report Circulated as a Briefing note. Any issues can be raised in the Members Issues section of the agenda. | For Information |

| 21 July 2021 (Formal) | Theme: Placement | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Priority | Topic | Contact Officer |
| 2. Effective Care Planning | Update from Foster Carers and Youth Voice Coordinator for CICC d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners | Foster Carers/Shalina Chandoo/ Marya Ali |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Appointment of Champion Members d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners | |
| | Annual Fostering Service Report and Annual Adoption report | Fiona Van Den Hout/Ricky Cooper |
| 2. Effective care planning | Annual IRO Report 2020 - 2021 | Marie Saunders |
| | Members Issues | |
| | Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placements of Children in Care • Scorecard • Health Report | Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell Catherine York |
| | Draft Work Programme 2021 – 2022 and Review of Work in 2020 - 2021 | Karen Dunleavy/Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell |

| 22 September 2021 (Informal) | Theme: Education | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Priority | Topic | Contact Officer |
| | Part 1 | |
| 2. Effective care planning | Update from Children in Care Council (CiCC) b)To encourage those children & Young people to express their views, wishes & feelings c) To take account of the views, wishes & feelings of those children & young people | Children in Care |
| 2. Effective care planning | You Asked We Did b)To encourage those children & Young people to express their views, wishes & feelings c) To take account of the views, wishes & feelings of those children & young people | Shalina Chandoo/ Sika Smith |
| | Update from Corporate Parenting Champions | Corporate Parenting Champion |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Part 2 | |

| | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Case Study: Virtual School | Dee Glover |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Members Issues | All Members |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Work Programme | |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Performance Report Circulated as a Briefing note. Any issues can be raised in the Members Issues section of the agenda. | For Information |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 24 November 2021 (Formal) | Theme: Education | |
| Priority | Topic | Contact Officer |
| 2. Effective care planning | Update from Foster Carers and Youth Voice Coordinator for CICC d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners | Foster Carers/Shalina Chandoo/ Marya Ali |
| | Virtual School report | Dee Glover |
| | Members Issues | |
| | Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placements of Children in Care • Scorecard • Health Report - | Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell Catherine York |
| | Annual Corporate Parenting Committee Report to Children and Education Scrutiny Committee | Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell |
| | Work Programme | Karen Dunleavy/Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 19 January 2022 Informal | Theme: Health | |
| | Part 1 | |
| Priority | Topic | Contact Officer |
| 2. Effective care planning | Update from Children in Care Council (CiCC) b) To encourage those children & Young people to express their views, wishes & feelings c) To take account of the views, wishes & feelings of those children & young people | CICC |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 2. Effective care planning | You Asked We Did b) To encourage those children & Young people to express their views, wishes & feelings c) To take account of the views, wishes & feelings of those children & young people | Shalina Chandoo/ Sika Smith |
| | Update from Corporate Parenting Champions | Corporate Parenting Champion |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Part 2 | |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Case Study – SDQ | Catherine York |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Members Issues | All Members |
| Priorities 2 - 6 | Performance Report Circulated as a Briefing note. Any issues can be raised in the Members Issues section of the agenda. | For Information |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 16 March 2022 (Formal) | Theme: Health | |
| Priority | Topic | Contact Officer |
| 2. Effective care planning | Update from Foster Carers and Youth Voice Coordinator for CICC d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners | Foster Carers/Shalina Chandoo/ Marya Ali |
| | Annual Health Report | Catherine York |
| | Members Issues | |
| | Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Placements of Children in Care ● Scorecard ● Health Report - | Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell Catherine York |
| | Work Programme | Karen Dunleavy/Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 2.4 | Peterborough Corporate Parenting Committee |
| 2.4.1 | It is advised that Members undertake relevant training within the past three years in order to hold a seat on this committee. |
| 2.4.2 | Terms of Reference |
| 2.4.2.1 | Our Commitment to Children and Young People in Care: |
| | Peterborough City Council is committed to raising the quality of life of everyone living within the city. For children in particular, the city council aims to provide high quality opportunities for learning and ensure children are healthy and safe. It is important that the Corporate Parenting Committee members ensure that the Council provides such care, education and opportunities that the Committee would be afforded to their own children. |
| 2.4.3 | Purpose: |
| 2.4.3.1 | To ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities. |
| 2.4.3.2 | On behalf of the Council and partners of the Local Authority to ensure that all services directly provided for children and young people in care and care leavers are scrutinised to deliver to a high standard and to all statutory requirements. |
| 2.4.3.3 | To raise the aspiration, ambitions and life chances of children and young people in care, narrowing the gap of achievement between children in care and their peers. |
| 2.4.3.4 | To ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities. |
| 2.4.3.5 | To ensure that all elected members are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities and that all Council services are mindful of the needs of children in care and respond accordingly within their particular remit. |
| 2.4.4 | Functions of the Committee: |
| 2.4.4.1 | To act as advocates for looked after children and care leavers. |
| 2.4.4.2 | To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children services and children's homes with a view to recommending any changes. |
| 2.4.4.3 | Ensure that the needs of looked after children and care leavers are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council overseeing interagency working arrangements. |
| 2.4.4.4 | Review complaints from looked after children to ensure officers have dealt with these appropriately and made any recommendations for change. |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| | |
| 2.4.4.5 | Raise awareness in Peterborough City Council and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities. |
| | |
| 2.4.4.6 | <p>To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise the profile of the needs of looked after children and care leavers through a range of actions including through the organising of celebratory events for the recognition of achievement. 2. Ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our looked after children and care leavers. 3. Promote the development of participation and ensure that the view of children and young people are regularly heard through the Corporate Parenting Committee to improve educational, health and social outcomes to raise aspiration and attainments. 4. Hold meetings with children and young people in care, frontline staff and foster carers to inform the committee of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for looked after children. 5. Monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations to foster carers to achieve excellent and high quality care. 6. To appoint elected members as Champions for Children in Care, with the roles being decided and approved by the Committee at the first formal meeting of the municipal year. |
| | |
| 2.4.5 | Work Programme |
| | |
| 2.4.5.1 | The Corporate Parenting Committee will formally agree a skeleton work programme annually which will be reviewed at each formal meeting. In reviewing the work programme, the Committee may agree to request reports on particular matters of their own preference or as advised by the lead officer. |
| | |
| 2.4.6.2 | Performance Monitoring |
| | |
| | <p>The Corporate Parenting Committee will scrutinise and monitor outcomes for children in care and care leavers. To this end, the Committee will develop and agree a core data set which it wishes to receive at each Committee meeting. Additional detailed monitoring reports will be presented in accordance with the agreed work programme on the following key aspects of care:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Placement stability 2. Independent child care reviews 3. The performance of all care standards regulated services 4. Adoption and adoption support 5. Fostering 6. Children's homes 7. Service to care leavers, including accommodation, education, employment and training 8. The health needs of children in care |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| | 9. Educational attainment of children in care |
| | |
| 2.4.5.4 | The Corporate Parenting Committee will report to the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and to the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis or more frequently if required. |
| | |
| 2.4.7 | Membership of the Committee |
| | |
| 2.4.7.1 | There will be a standing membership of the Corporate Parenting Committee to provide continuity and consistency. Councillors outside the standing membership will be invited to discuss issues and raise questions within a standing agenda item. |
| | |
| 2.4.7.2 | The membership of the Corporate Parenting Committee must include the Cabinet Member with the responsibility for Children’s Services. |
| | |
| 2.4.7.3 | All Councillors are invited to attend the informal meetings. The Committee may also co-opt non-voting members. Membership may include up to four foster carers and representatives from the Children in Care Council. The Committee may invite participation from non-members where this is relevant to their work. |
| | |
| 2.4.8 | Children in Care Council |
| | |
| 2.4.8.1 | Representatives from the Children in Care Council may attend the Corporate Parenting Committee up until and no later than 8pm. |

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APPENDIX 3

Working to our promises in the Pledge

Children in Care Pledge

1. **Respect** - We will respect you as individuals, with differing wants, needs and beliefs and tailor the service you get to fit you.
2. **Safe** – We will keep you safe and help you to keep yourself safe.
3. **Support** – We will support you in all aspects of your education so you are able to achieve your full potential.
4. **Health** – We will support you to live a healthy lifestyle and ensure you are offered regular health checks and supported to attend these.
5. **Listen** – We will support you to have a voice in your care plan and make sure you are listened to. We will ensure you know how to make a complaint or compliment about your care. You will have access to advocacy support to do this if wanted.
6. **Information** – We will keep you updated of any changes to your care plan and ensure you have contact details of your Social Worker and IRO as well as all meeting dates.
7. **Life Story**– We will make sure you know why you are in care and support you to understand this honestly at different age appropriate times through your journey.
8. **Contact** – We will support you, where possible, to have contact with the important people in your life (including friends).
9. **Prepare** – We will make sure you are given the knowledge and skills to ensure you are ready for adult life.
10. **Promises** – We will NOT make unrealistic promises to you and will explain fully if we are unable to do something.

Care Leavers Charter

1. Respect

We will listen to you as individuals with an open mind, with your different needs, ideas and beliefs. We will tailor the service to fit you or make sure you have an explanation if we are not able to do something for you.

2. Helping you to do the best you can

We will value your strengths and talents, encouraging your aspirations. We will support you with education and employment.

If we can't meet your needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will do our best to help you break-down barriers you might encounter with other agencies, to ensure you reach your goals.

3. Health and well-being

We will support you to live a healthy lifestyle. It is important to look after all aspects of your health, including sexual, and emotional health as well as physical health. We will do what we can to ensure you know what you can do to keep healthy and that you have the right information and know what to do if you have any concerns.

4. Clear Communication

We will stay in touch with you, and make sure you can contact your worker in a way that is best for you. We will let you know how to complain or access an advocate if you are not happy with the service you have. We will invite you to express your views on how the service can be improved.

5. Finding a home

We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation and furnishings that are right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times we may need to reconsider the plan depending on your differing needs.

5. Support

We will provide support set out in current Regulations and Guidance. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help, we will provide emotional support. We recognise that you might change your mind about what you want to do. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can.

| Meeting Type | Meeting Date | Item | Recommendation | Actions | Referred to | Response/ Outcome | Needs Follow Up |
|--------------|--------------|--|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Informal | 23/09/2020 | 5. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME AND REVIEW OF WORK IN 2020 – 2021 | | The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that there would be an additional work programming session organised to revisit the draft work programme to theme the items across all three priorities. In addition, any ideas or themes raised by the Children in Care Council at this meeting would be incorporated in the work programme. | Democratic Services Officer/Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell | Meeting held on 6 October | Completed |
| Informal | 23/09/2020 | 5. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME AND REVIEW OF WORK IN 2020 – 2021 | | The Head of Corporate Parenting would provide Members with a briefing note on an update on the latest position on Settled Status and Brexit for children and young people in care. | Myra O'Farrell | Report by 9 March 2021 | Briefing note provided to Members 8 March 2021 |
| Informal | 23/09/2020 | 5. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME AND REVIEW OF WORK IN 2020 – 2021 | | The Head of Corporate Parenting would provide Members with a briefing note on the range of mental health services on offer to Young People and Children in Care during the COVID-19 pandemic period. | Myra O'Farrell | Report by 9 March 2021 | Briefing note provided to Members 8 March 2021 |
| Informal | 23/09/2020 | 5. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME AND REVIEW OF WORK IN 2020 – 2021 | | The Head of Corporate Parenting would provide Members with a briefing note on any mental health themes emerging from the 'Thought Tree' exercise for Young People and Children in Care | Myra O'Farrell | Links to above | Needs Follow Up |
| Informal | 23/09/2020 | 6. DRAFT REPORT ON APPOINTMENT OF CHAMPION MEMBERS | | The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report and recommended that the following positions and appointments would be presented to the meeting due to be held on 25 November: Education Employment and Training and Access to Higher Education - Councillor Bashir Housing, Finance and Benefits – Councillor Sandra Bond Health – Councillor Robinson Recreation and Leisure activities – Vacant Effective Care Planning - Councillor Jones | Democratic Services Officer | Positions submitted and approved at to 25 November 2020 formal meeting. | N/A |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 5. UPDATE FROM THE FOSTER CARER FORUM | | Education, Skills and the University would explore the issues with transport and staying put policy notice period within the report and discuss these with the Assistant Director. | Cllr Ayres | | Completed |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 5. UPDATE FROM THE FOSTER CARER FORUM | | The Assistant Director of Children's Services would raise the transport issues with the Executive Director of Education. | Nicola Curley | | Completed |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 5. UPDATE FROM THE FOSTER CARER FORUM | | The Assistant Director of Children's Services and the Head of Corporate Parenting would review the Staying Put Policy as part of the general policy reviews in this area. | Nicola Curley | To be updated April 2021 | Ongoing |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------|---|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 6. APPOINTMENT OF CHAMPION MEMBERS | | The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report and recommended that the following positions and appointments would be presented to the meeting due to be held on 25 November: Education Employment and Training and Access to Higher Education - Councillor Bashir Housing, Finance and Benefits – Councillor Sandra Bond Health – Councillor Robinson Recreation and Leisure activities – Vacant Effective Care Planning - Councillor Jones | Democratic Services Office | Positions submitted and approved at to 25 November 2020 formal meeting. | N/A |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 8. UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE FOR OUR CARE LEAVERS IN RELATION TO IMPACT OF COVID | | The Head of Virtual Schools would provide the Committee with the exam results for Care Leavers. | Dee Glover | To be provided to committee for end of March | Needs Follow Up |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 9. CARE LEAVER OFFER AND APPRENTICESHIP AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE | | The Specialist Personal Adviser would contact Councillor Bond in relation to the offer around the creation of links with the Girl Guide association to become part of the Corporate Aunts and Uncles initiative for Care Leavers. | Joe Gilbert/Cllr Sandra Bond | Joe has made contact with Cllr Bond | Resolved |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 10. REPORT ON WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE FOR THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 | | The Assistant Director for Children's Services would update the report to reflect the briefing note contributions from Corporate Champion The Assistant Director for Children's Services would update the report to reflect the briefing note contributions from Corporate Champion Members; | Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell | Report updated and submitted to C&E Scrutiny Committee | Resolved |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 10. REPORT ON WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE FOR THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 | | Subject to the amendments in relation to Corporate Champion Members briefing note contributions, the annual report was an accurate reflection of the work of the Committee over the last 12 months; and | Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell | Report updated and submitted to C&E Scrutiny Committee | Resolved |
| Formal | 25/11/2020 | 10. REPORT ON WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE FOR THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2019-2020 | | Agreed to submit the annual report to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee for noting as per the Corporate Parenting Committee's Terms of Reference. | All | Report updated and submitted to C&E Scrutiny Committee | Resolved |
| Informal | 20/01/2021 | 3. UPDATE FROM THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL (CICC) | | The Head of Corporate Parenting would provide Members with the meeting dates of the Children in Care Council. | Myra O'Farrell | CICC are meeting w/c 08/02/2021 and will be looking at dates for future meeting, and the attendance of members at these meetings | Cllrs Steve Lane and Dennis Jones both attended the CiCC's April meeting on 15/04. Members can request to attend by emailing Marya Ali |
| Informal | 20/01/2021 | 4. YOU SAID WE DID UPDATE 2021 | | The Youth Voice Worker and the Children in Care Council would explore the opportunity for social workers to send get to know me cards to CiC to let them know a bit about themselves, likes and interests | Marya Ali | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Informal | 20/01/2021 | 4. YOU SAID WE DID UPDATE 2021 | | The Assistant Director for Children's Services and Service Manager, Corporate Parenting Team would explore a way to resurrect electronic achievement cards for children and young people. | Nicola Curley/Michaela Berry | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Informal | 20/01/2021 | 5. UPDATE FROM CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPIONS | | The Assistant Director Children's Services would provide a briefing note to Member's about the resources on offer to children and young people in care for mental health support; and | Nicola Curley | Completed | Briefing note provided to Members 8 March 2021 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Informal | 20/01/2021 | 5. UPDATE FROM CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPIONS | | The CiCC and Quality Assurance Lead would add Dr Aslam to the newsletter distribution list. | Shalina Chandoo | Completed | N/A |
| Informal | 20/01/2021 | 6. UPDATE ON SDQS - HEALTH | | The Health Team would consult with the Children in Care Council to obtain feedback on the preferred method of health assessments for children and young people in care. | Catherine York/CiCC/Marya Ali | | Consultation ongoing |
| Informal | 20/01/2021 | 7. CASE STUDY - CARE LEAVERS SUPPORT DURING COVID - 19 | | The Assistant Director, Children Services and the Head of Corporate Parenting would explore the option of smart device provision to children and young people in care and inform Members of the outcome and the costs involved. | Nicola Curley/Myra O'Farrell | Ongoing | Work is being undertaken within the service to look at this. All CIC age appropriately have access to a mobile phone and laptop. CLs were provided with laptops by the DfE last autumn to apply for jobs, attend college lessons. |
| Formal | 17/03/2021 | 7. REPORT ON THE FINAL STRUCTURE FOR CLINICAL OFFER FOR CIC | | The Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Support Service would explore whether there was an opportunity to extend the trauma framework training approach to schools to ensure that there was a consistent approach to the methods being delivered and provide Members with an update. | Alison Bennett | Ongoing | This will be reviewed in 12 months time when the service is fully staffed. |

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