

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL)	AGENDA ITEM No. 4
20 NOVEMBER 2019	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Sarah-Jane Smedmor, Assistant Director Children's Social Care	Tel. 01223 699920

FOSTER CARER FORUM REPORT NOVEMBER 2019

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Myra O'Farrell, Head of Service	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; and 2. Raise any queries they have with the lead officers. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

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

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 Corporate Parenting Committee wish to receive an update at formal committee meetings of discussions and actions from the Foster Carers Forum.

2.2 This report is being presented under the Corporate Parenting Committee 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 This links into all areas of the children in care pledge.

3. TIMESCALES N/A

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

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Foster Carers Committee continues to meet on a regular basis. The agenda consists of standing items and other issues, topics of conversation that occur from time to time. Meetings are attended by 10-15 representatives. The chair, deputy chair, secretary and treasurer posts are subject to annual elections. Managers from the Permanency service and colleagues from

Peterborough City Council (PCC) are also present at these meetings. Stephen Green has been elected as the new Chair of the Committee.

4.2 The service returned to Peterborough City Council on the 25th October 2019. Lou Williams, Service Director Children and Safeguarding and Dominic Porter-Moore Corporate Parenting Programme Lead have met with carers subsequently. Both will attend future committee meetings, as much as their schedules would allow, to help alleviate carers concerns. Carers are keen as are PCC to retain positive changes that have occurred over the past two years and ensure a strong relationship between carers and the service is maintained.

4.3 The committee organised events at Snettisham Deer Park during the Easter holidays and in August at Wicksteed Park with 200 attending. May half-term events took place at Bounce and the annual BBQ took place in July at the Peterborough Rugby club.

4.4 Planning is at an advanced stage for the Children's Christmas Party in Peterborough in December.

A trip for carers and children to the pantomime is planned in December. Previously free tickets were obtained from the YMCA, but these are not available this year, so Committee members have been involved with other partners in raising over £350 to contribute towards funding.

4.5 Several teenagers living with Peterborough foster carers attended the TACT Big Weekend in the Isle of Wight and TACT Peterborough had its own 'Little Weekend' at Caythorpe Hall. Twelve boys and girls aged between eight and fourteen enjoyed a weekend of outward-bound activities. This trip was organised by the TACT Children's Resource worker supported by the PCC Children's Participation officer and four members of staff.

4.6 The committee is keen to be involved in the recruitment and retention of foster carers and this has been an area of discussion at meetings. The Carers bulletin has been used to remind carers of the advantages of fostering for Peterborough such as:

- Transport available for YP
- Vivacity memberships
- Summer Holidays days out/activities
- Christmas Party & Panto
- Excellent training opportunities
- Top class support from Supervising Social Workers
- 24/7 Out of hours support

Carers share the Council's concerns about the retention and recruitment of carers and will be invited to take a direct role in recruitment activities going forward.

Exit interviews had begun to be undertaken anonymously using survey money as carers leaving had not always felt able to speak honestly about their reasons for leaving the service. Thought will be given as to whether this will be continued in this way.

4.7 The Committee has discussed carers' activities on social media and takes the view that a helpful development would be to clarify policy in this area. The Committee would also like to see it used more for sharing knowledge and promoting training opportunities.

- 4.8 Learning and Development continues to flourish within the service with nearly all courses for the rest of the year being fully booked. A carer champion role has been created to ensure this high take up continues alongside the service.
- 4.9 Young people's Passports – The carer committee is working with Children's services to ensure that the complexity of process involved does not negatively impact on the timescales in which young people obtain passports.
- 4.10 The Committee considers it important to support carers increased involvement in the education of the children they are caring for and have circulated information around the Do's and Don'ts of Personal Education Plans (PEP's). Eliza Devanny has accepted an invite to attend a future Committee Meeting.
- 4.11 The Committee has promoted young people maintaining contact with previous carers and this can be important in building and retaining relationships. This obviously must be in line with care plans, but carers have an important role in supporting this as they do with children's birth families.
- 4.12 Carers have valued the Assistant Children's Resource Worker role that TACT had introduced. Funding for this post ends in December 2019 and carers have valued the support this person has provided to children in their care and the mentoring she has provided. Carers recognise we have some very competent and successful young people who are within, and have been, through the care system and if willing, believe they could share their experiences and knowledge of the system with other young persons who may be struggling generally.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 None

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 None

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Corporate Parenting Committee to be aware of the role of the Foster Carer Forum.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial Implications

No

9.2 Legal Implications

None - as this report is for the Committee's information.

9.3 Equalities Implications

No

9.4 Any Other Relevant Implications

Peterborough City Council are working with colleagues in the Permanency Service to develop the most effective service for children in care.

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