

Corporate Parenting Committee

Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 6th September, 2016
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2016.

4. **Voice of the Child**

Video 'changing the narrative about the care system: views from children and young people'.

5. **Focus area - Role and Purpose of the Virtual School** (Pages 5 - 18)

To consider a report providing information to the committee on the local authority duties in promoting the education of cared for children and on the Virtual School arrangements in Cheshire East.

6. **Corporate Parenting Update** (Pages 19 - 30)

To consider an update on the national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people, and care leavers.

7. **Corporate Parenting Board Development**

Contact: Cherry Foreman
Tel: 01270 686463
E-Mail: cherry.foreman@cheshireeast.gov.uk

8. **Committee Work Programme** (Pages 31 - 34)

To consider the work programme for the Committee.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 7th June, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillors P Butterill, B Dooley, S Edgar, D Flude, M Grant, G Hayes,
G Merry, S Pochin and L Smetham

Officers

Nigel Moorhouse, Director of Children's Social Care
Peter Lambert, Head of Cared for Children
Gill Betton, Head of Children's Development & Partnerships
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was moved and seconded that Councillor G Hayes be appointed as
Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor G Hayes be appointed as Chairman.

Councillor G Hayes in the Chair

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved and seconded that Councillor G Merry be appointed as Vice-
Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor G Merry be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

3 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors J Saunders, M Simon and M
Warren.

4 CABINET REPORT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received for information the report considered by Cabinet,
at its meeting on 19 January 2016, together with the Terms of Reference.

Cabinet had resolved that

- “1 a Corporate Parenting Committee be appointed with cross party membership of 12 Elected Members and the terms of reference at Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2 the Committee shall have the status of an advisory committee and include representative young people from the Children in Care Council to perform an advisory role to the Committee;
- 3 the Committee shall, once its membership has been agreed, formally commence its role;
- 4 the existence of the Committee be noted in the Council’s constitution; and
- 5 all Members of the Council receive a progress report on a quarterly basis.”

The Committee was informed that, although the young people from the Children in Care Council wished to be involved, they did not at the present time wish to attend the meetings. It was suggested that Committee members may instead meet with them through their meetings.

The Corporate Parenting Operational Group would continue to meet to deliver the strategy and provide information and advice to the Committee.

It was requested that details of the governance structure for Children in Care be provided to the Committee, along with the details of the new officer structure for Children’s Services.

It was noted the Committee would receive summary reports of Regulation 44 visits and it was request that the how these visits operated be included in the work programme for the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 The Terms of Reference be noted.
- 2 The details of the officer structure for Children’s Services be circulated to the Committee.
- 3 The governance structure for Children in Care and how Regulation 44 visits operated be added to the work programme.

5 CORPORATE PARENTING IN CHESHIRE EAST

The Committee received a presentation which covered the role of a corporate parent, strategy, performance and improvement plan areas.

The presentation gave details on:

- Definition of children in care
- the number of children in care in Cheshire East
- Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015-17
- Outcome of Ofsted Inspection in July 2015
- Performance data on placement stability, health, care leavers, adoption and education
- Focus area for 2016-17

In discussion the Committee asked questions about comparison of data to neighbouring authorities; timescale for the completion of health assessments; unaccompanied child asylum seekers; care leavers accommodation; the number of care leavers not in education or training; out of county placements and the placement by other authorities of children into privately run children's homes in the Cheshire East.

It was agreed that copies of the slides would be circulated to the Committee members.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received and the slides circulated to Committee members.

6 FORWARD PLAN FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee discussed the plan of work for future meetings.

It was agreed that a forward plan of work should be created and include the following issues which had been raised at the meeting:

- Governance structure
- Health Assessments
- Adoption and Fostering Annual Reports
- Refresh of Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Out of County Placements
- Virtual Head – annual report and information on their work
- Regulation 44 Visits

Training and development for Committee members was also discussed and it was agreed that a half-day session on the responsibilities of the corporate parenting role would be arranged.

It was agreed that future meetings would be held at 5 pm on a Tuesday and be held every other month.

RESOLVED:

That a forward plan of work for the Corporate Parenting Committee be created and dates for future meetings be arranged.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.20 pm

Councillor G Hayes

Cheshire East Council

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting:	6 th September 2016
Report of:	Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills Nicola Axford, Headteacher, Virtual School for Cared for Children
Subject/Title:	Role and Purpose of the Virtual School
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Liz Durham

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides information to the committee on the local authority duties in promoting the education of cared for children. It provides information on the Virtual School arrangements in Cheshire East and an overview on the cared for children cohort and their latest education outcomes.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1 Note the contents of this report;
 - 2.1.2 Scrutinise whether the outcomes set out in the report are good enough for our children and young people; and
 - 2.1.3 Identify where they may be able to support the key developments as Corporate Parents.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. As an advisory Committee to Cabinet, it is important that Corporate Parenting Committee has a comprehensive overview of the role and purpose of the Virtual School and its impact on attainment and outcomes for cared for children and young people.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable.

5. Background

Key Duties

- 5.1. Local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. This includes a particular duty to promote the child's education achievement, wherever they live or are educated. The authority must therefore give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children.
- 5.2. The local authority is required to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH) for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children, wherever they live or are educated.
- 5.3. Social workers, VSHs and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO), school admission officers and special educational needs departments should work together to ensure that – except in an emergency – appropriate education provision for a child is arranged at the same time as a care placement.
- 5.4. All looked after children should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which is part of the child's care plan.

Delivery of Key Duties

- 5.5. In delivering its key duties, the local authority must ensure that:
 - Closing the attainment and progress gap between looked after children and their peers and creating a culture of high aspirations for them is a top priority.
 - Looked after children have access to a suitable range of high quality education placement options and that commissioning services for them takes account of the duty to promote their educational achievement.
 - VSHs are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively.
 - VSHs have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and education progress of the children their authority looks after.
 - The authority's Children in Care Council (CiCC) regularly addresses the educational experiences raised by looked after children and is able to respond effectively to such issues.
- 5.6. In delivering the above, the Virtual School Head should make sure there are effective arrangements to:

Give the child a voice

- 5.7. To promote a culture that takes account of the child's views in meeting their educational needs and to help others, especially IROs, social workers, carers and schools, understand the importance of listening to and taking into account of the child's wishes and feeling about education.

Work with others

- 5.8. Encouraging and supporting social workers and carers to have high expectations in helping looked after children to achieve their full potential in education from pre-school to post-16 education, employment and training.
- 5.9. Help IROs and social workers understand the importance they need to place on education as part of care planning.
- 5.10. Ensure that whenever a child is likely to move schools that there is an informed discussion about the choice of school that will best meet their needs.

Supporting Schools

- 5.11. Ensuring that schools understand the powerful role they can play in significantly improving the quality of life and the educational experiences of looked after children.
- 5.12. The VSH should make schools aware of their responsibility to ensure that designated teachers have had the appropriate training to undertake their role as set out in the statutory guidance for governing bodies on the role of the designated teacher for looked after children.
- 5.13. The VSH should offer training and advice to schools. This should enable schools to understand that looked after children, including those who remain looked after but have been placed for adoption, are not a homogenous group and that their individual needs will be different.

Pupil Premium

- 5.14. Local authorities receive a pupil premium grant allocation for children looked after. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked after children and close the attainment gap between this group and their peers.
- 5.15. VSHs, working with education settings, should implement pupil premium arrangement for looked after children and hold schools account for the impact of the additional support provided.

Information Sharing

- 5.16. Appropriate and specific arrangement for sharing reliable data should be in place to ensure that the educational needs of looked after children can be understood and met. This is particularly important in relation to the tracking and monitoring of attainment data and notifications of where children, including those placed out-of-authority, are being educated.

Training for those involved in Care and Education of Cared for Children

- 5.17. The VSH should ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked after children.
- 5.18. Such training, among other things, should include information about school admission arrangements; special educational needs; attendance and exclusions; homework; choosing GCSE options; managing any challenging behaviour in relation to education settings; promoting positive educational and recreational activities and supporting children to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment.

Securing Appropriate Education

- 5.19. When a child becomes looked after his or her local authority will arrange a suitable placement. In doing so, the child's allocated social worker should do everything possible to minimise disruption to the child's education, whatever the child's age but particularly at key stage 4, and this should involve the VSH.
- 5.20. If it is not possible to maintain the child's existing education placement, the child's new education placement should be arranged in consultation with the VSH at the same time as the care placement. The VSH has primary responsibility for ensuring that there is suitable education in place for all children looked after by the local authority. The following principles should apply:
- Educational provision should mean a full-time place.
 - Schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' should be prioritised for looked after children in need of a new school.
 - The choice of education setting should be based on what any good parent would want for their child. It should be based on evidence that the setting can meet the educational needs of the child and help them make the maximum progress.
 - The child's wishes and feelings should be taken into account and the suitability of the education setting tested by arranging an informal visit with the child.

Admissions

- 5.21. Looked after children have been given the highest priority within school admission arrangements. It is the responsibility of the VSH to ensure that admission authorities understand that Fair Access Protocols do not apply to looked after children and that they are 'excepted pupils' in relation to infant class size regulations. The local authority, as a corporate parent, does not tolerate drift and delay where children the authority looks after are without an education placement that is appropriate to their assessed needs. This includes using their powers of direction in a timely way rather than delay issuing a direction as a result of protracted negotiation.

Exclusions

- 5.22. Headteachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding any looked-after child.
- 5.23. Where a school has concerns about a looked after child's behaviour the VSH should be informed and, where necessary, involved at the earliest opportunity. This is to enable to VSH, working with others, to:
- Consider what additional assessment and support (such as additional help for the classroom teacher, one-to-one therapeutic work or a suitable alternative placement) needs to be put place to address the causes of the child's behaviour and prevent the need for exclusion.
 - Make any additional arrangements to support the child's on-going education in the event of an exclusion.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

- 5.24. All looked after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part. All of those involved in the process of developing the PEP should use it to support the personalised learning of the child.
- 5.25. The PEP (pre-school to age 18) is an evolving record of what needs to happen for the looked after children to enable them to make expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations and builds life chances.
- 5.26. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looked after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, Designated Teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together.

Resources

- 5.27. In order to promote the education of our cared for children, the virtual school has the following resources in terms of both dedicated staffing and budget.

Structure

- 5.28. Virtual School Headteacher (1 FT) - responsible for ensuring that the statutory duties of the LA are carried out with regard to the education of cared for children and the strategic lead for developing processes and policies which support this. They will also establish and maintain links with other service areas.
- 5.29. Virtual School Advisors (2.6 FTE) - have overview of a caseload of cared for children, attend PEP meetings for new children and provide targeted support for those cases with greatest need.
- 5.30. PEP Co-ordinator (1 FT) - ensure that all children are allocated a named Advisor and also manage a caseload.

- 5.31. Youth Engagement Service Advisor (0.5 FTE) - have reduced caseload, focussing on cared for children who are known to the Youth Engagement Service.
- 5.32. Early Years Advisor (0.5 FTE) - oversee cases of all pre-school cared for children and support Social Workers to carry out PEPs for children less than 2 years old.
- 5.33. Education Liaison (1 FT) - support carers and young people who are showing signs in disengagement with education or are at risk of exclusion.
- 5.34. Education Psychologist (0.2 FTE) - provide advice to schools on managing behaviours and developing appropriate support plans.
- 5.35. Business support (3 FTE, including 1 x apprentice) - maintain records of children in care, schools attended, attendance and attainment, PEPs, funding allocation and prepare for analysis and monitoring by VSH.

Budget

- 5.36. Pupil Education Allowance (£175k) - used to support additional education needs such as 1:1 tuition, alternative provision, additional Educational Psychologist interventions, specialist teaching for pupils changing schools, laptops and funding for development of personal interests and talents such as attending international swimming competitions or music college.
- 5.37. Used to fund additional needs of children in pre-school, e.g. speech and language therapy and that post-16 such as interpreters and English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses for unaccompanied asylum seekers.
- 5.38. Pupil Premium Plus (£590K) - funding for children age 5 to 16 yrs. Majority is allocated to schools to carry out support and extension activities identified in the PEP but school can request additional funding, if needed. Additional funds have been used to purchase alternative provision for children at risk of exclusion or who have moved areas in Year 11, support integration into new schools and to support transition between schools or phases of education.

Cohort Analysis

- 5.39. Attached at Appendix 1 is a cohort analysis as of July 2016.

Cared for Children Attainment and Outcomes

- 5.40. Attached at Appendix 2 is detailed information on cared for children attainment and outcomes.

Key Developments

5.41. The following are key developments:

- Review arrangements to ensure there is no delay in admission of our cared for children into an educational setting.
- Review of the PEP process and allocation/impact of pupil premium allocations.
- Review of arrangements for intervening where there are concerns about attendance and to support school in avoiding excluding a child.
- Work with Social Care to establish a 16+ wrap around support programme that gives all young people access and to education and training opportunities and support to engage with these.
- Establish an annual detailed self-evaluation of outcomes which identifies early intervention/priorities to shared late autumn each year with Corporate Parenting Committee for scrutiny.

6. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

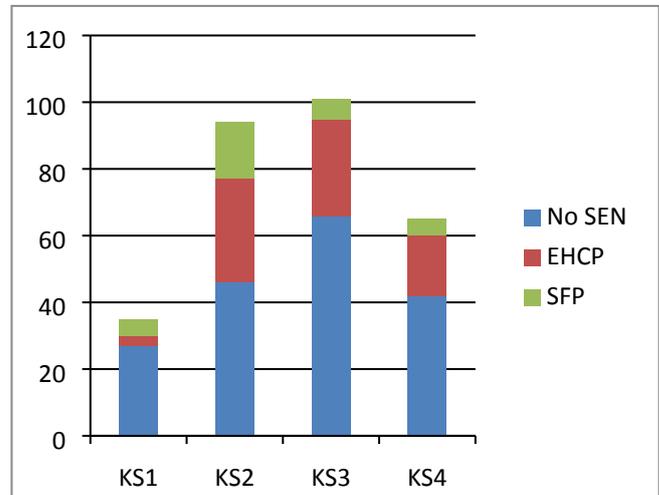
Name: Nicola Axford
Designation: Headteacher, Virtual School for Cared for Children
Tel. No.: 01606 271951
Email: nicola.axford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Cohort Analysis as of July 2016

Cohort size and gender

The Virtual School supports all young people in care as well as all eligible care leavers up to the end of school year when they become 18 years old. After this time advice is available on request but the main support is via Social Care. The total number supported by the Virtual School as of the end of July was 467, a 6% increase from July 2015.

Graph shows number of children in each key stage.



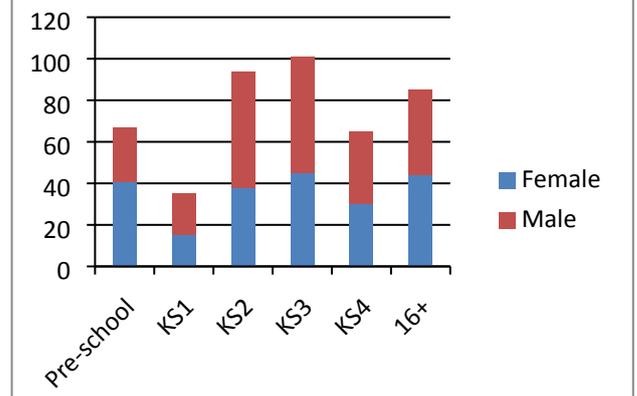
SEN

Pupils with SEN are those who have an Education Health and Care Plan, (EHCP) or those who have a School Focussed Plan (SFP).

The overall level of SEN of cared for children Cheshire East is 39%. This is an increase from 32% in 2015, but is below the national level of SEN for all cared for children which was 61% in 2015.

The Virtual School works with the SEN Team to ensure that needs are identified and met effectively and that the teams work together when new EHCPs are being considered or a school move is required.

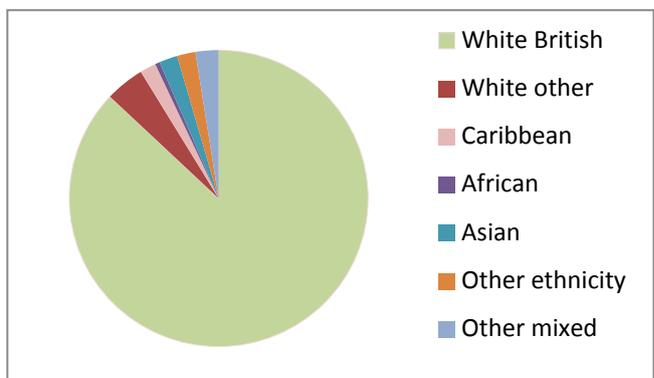
Graph shows level of SEN children in each key stage.



in

Ethnicity

The majority of children in care in Cheshire East are white British who make up 87% of population. The next group, white other make up a further 4%. The 'other ethnicity' group who make up just 2% of the population are mainly 16+ young people who are of Middle Eastern origin and include unaccompanied asylum seekers, who require additional language support in order to access training or education.



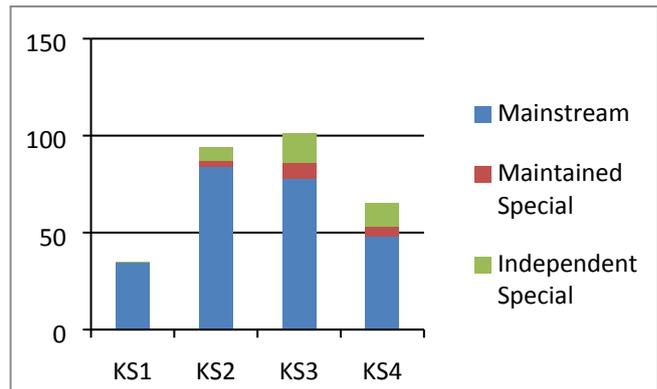
Graph shows ethnicity of children and young people in care.

Placement Type

Wherever possible children are placed in mainstream school where they can be fully included and have their needs met.

Where children have identified needs which require specialist provision, they are placed by the authority's SEN Panel where they live in a school which can meet their needs. The Virtual School are active in this process to find the right school as soon as possible.

Graph shows provision type for children in each key stage.

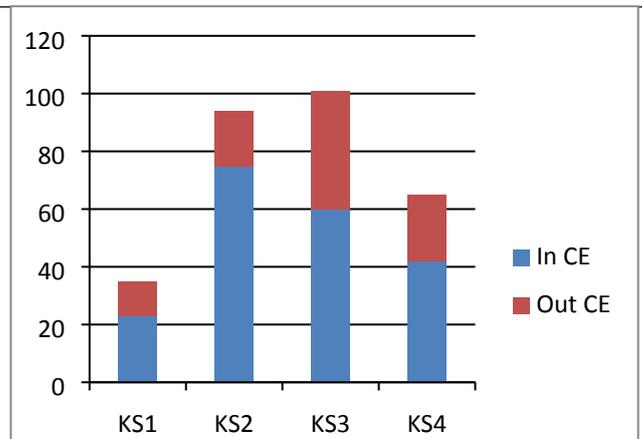


Location of School

Most children are placed in Cheshire East schools when they come into care and will remain at this school, if it is appropriate. In some cases a move away from the home area is requested by the Court when the child enters care or the care placement may be too far from the previous school.

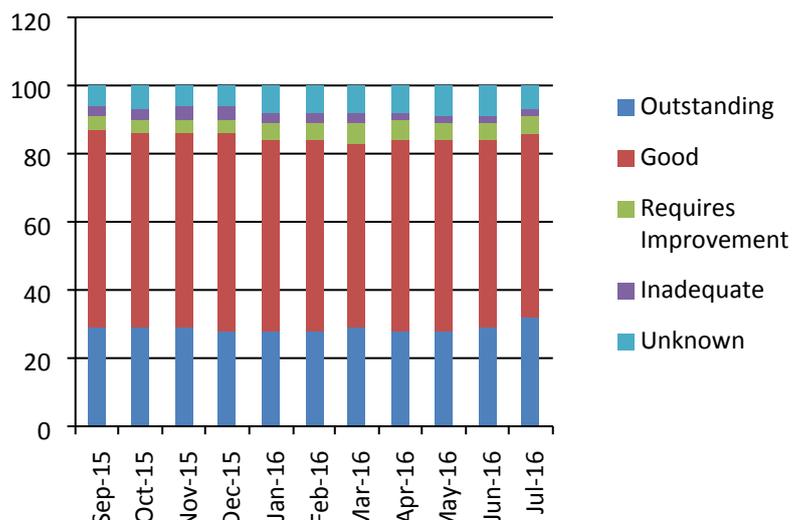
A new school may be needed when a placement breaks down. New placements which will allow the child to remain at the same school are sought initially, but if this is not possible then transfer to an out of borough school may be necessary.

Graph shows location of children in each key stage.



School Ofsted ratings

Over 80% of children cared for by Cheshire East attend schools rated as good or outstanding. Children who attend schools which are found inadequate are monitored and a risk assessment is carried out to determine whether they should change schools. Schools with no rating are those outside England or new schools who have not yet been inspected.

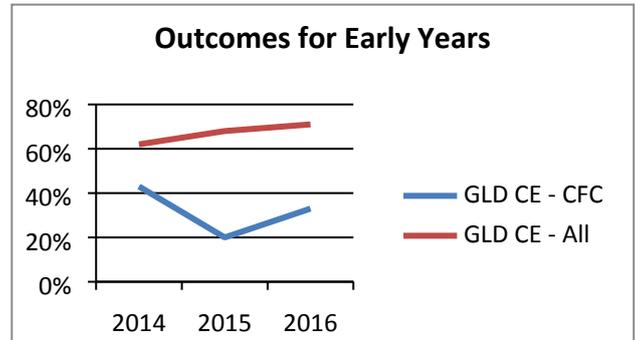


Graph shows Ofsted ratings of schools 2015-2016.

Cared for Children Attainment and Outcomes

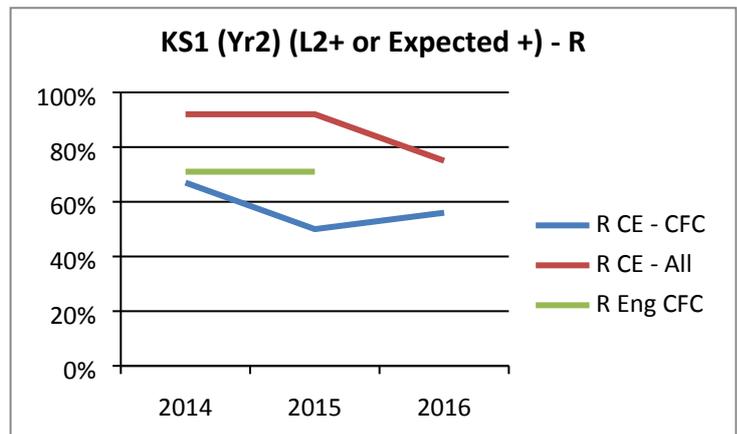
End of Reception

All children are assessed in 12 areas at the end of their Reception year. Those who are assessed as reaching the expected level in all areas are deemed to have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) These areas include speech and language, social and emotional development as well as basic literacy and numeracy. Cared for children often require additional support to develop their speech and language and emotional intelligence and so do not reach the expected level. All children age 2 years and above are encouraged to attend nursery provision so that they can access support and areas for development can be identified and addressed.

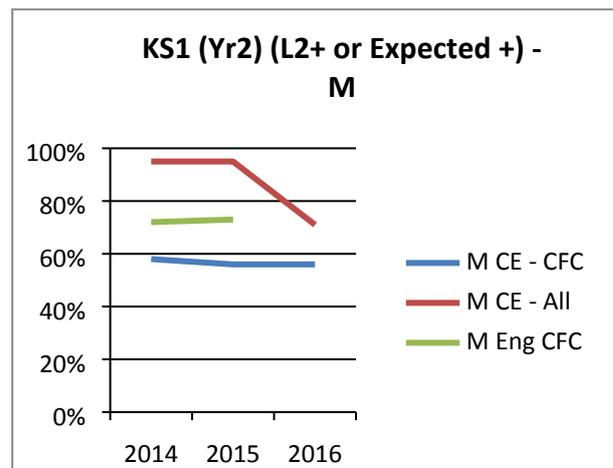
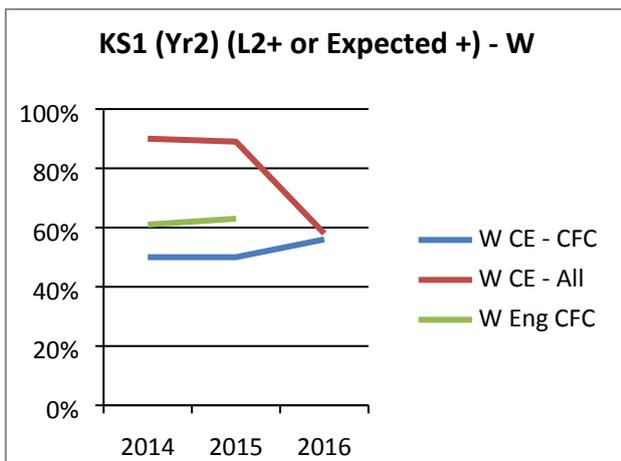


Key Stage 1 – age 7

Attainment in the Y2 tests is below that for all cared for children but has shown an improvement this year, with the percentage gaining the expected level in reading, writing and maths increasing from 50% to 56% although the small cohort size means that caution is needed when drawing conclusions; only five children who had been in care for one year or more competed the tests this year.

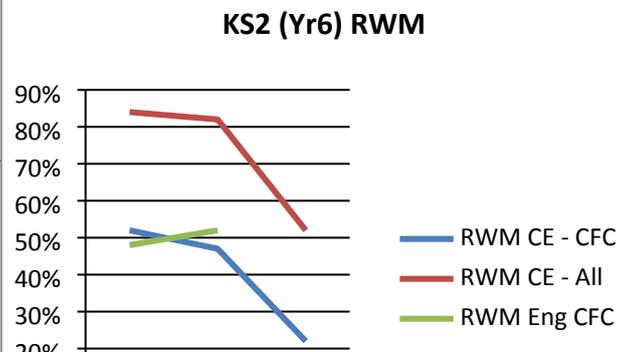


The attendance of this cohort is consistently high and has been 97% for the past three years.



Key Stage 2 – age 11

Cared for children consistently achieve better in reading than in writing or maths despite many

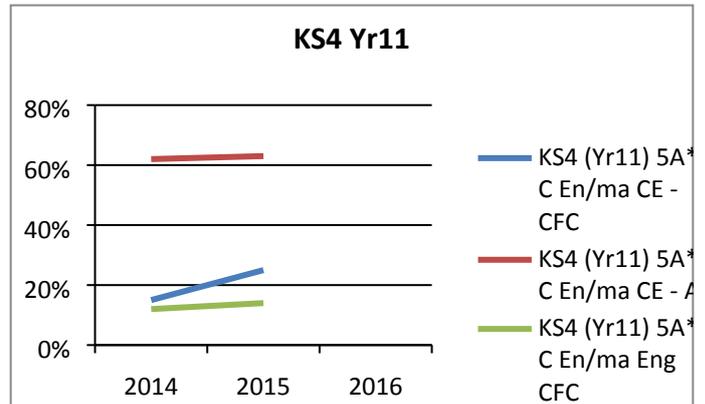


having additional support in these subjects. There have been significant levels of SEN in this cohort for the past two years. Of the 23 children who completed Year 6 in 2016, seven did not complete the tests as they were working below the threshold for assessment. The results for 2016 are for the new curriculum and assessment scheme and are not comparable with the previous years.

The attendance of Year 6 was 99%; an increase of 2% from that of the previous 2 year groups.

Key Stage 4 – age 16

Since 2014 the measure of attainment at the end of Year 11 has been to gain five or more GCSE (or recognised equivalents) at grade C or above including English and maths. Children in this group are supported with additional tuition, revision guides, mentoring and careers support. Children who enter care or require a school change during this phase are supported to find suitable education programmes which will provide good progression routes. Eleven children who completed Year 11 in 2016 have been supported in this way.

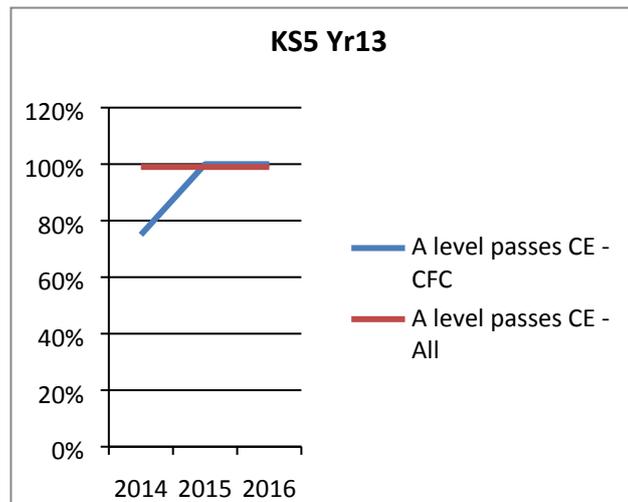


The attendance of Year 11 has increased this year to 90% from 84% in 2015.

Key Stage 5 –age 18

All young people who gain 5A*-C are encouraged to progress to A levels and HE. Although the numbers in each year group are small, the success rate has increased.

Young people who do not complete A levels are supported to move into vocational areas or to continue to progress with lower level studies. 37 young people completed Year 12, of which 26 already have a positive destination from September. Five young people cannot work due to parenting or ill health, while the rest are being supported to find work.

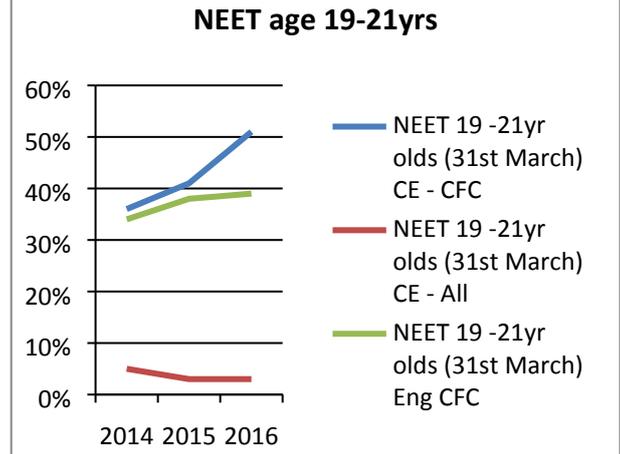


Post-16

The scope of the Virtual School was expanded in 2014 to include all eligible post-16 cared for and care leavers. The focus of our support is on 16 and 17 year olds who are expected to remain in education training after which time Social Care take the lead on support.

Those not in education, employment and training (NEET) amongst this group has remained at 30%, although the level amongst 16-17 year olds is lower. Additional engagement and support activities have been put into place to try and encourage those young people who are reluctant to engage with any services.

A multi-agency approach is now being taken to improve the participation levels at age 18 and above, which involves Youth Support, Workforce Development and Skills and Growth.

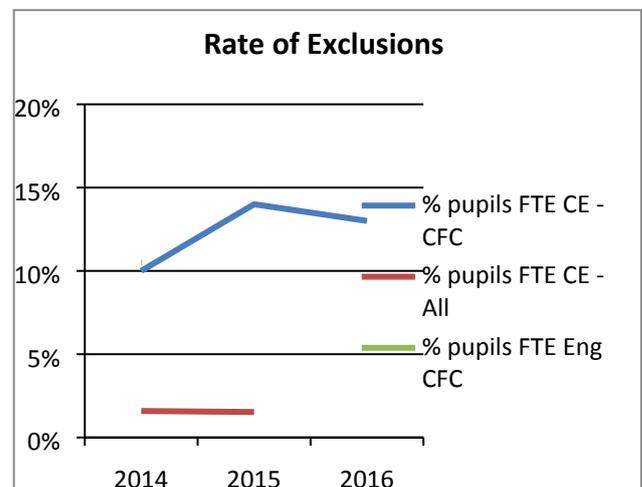
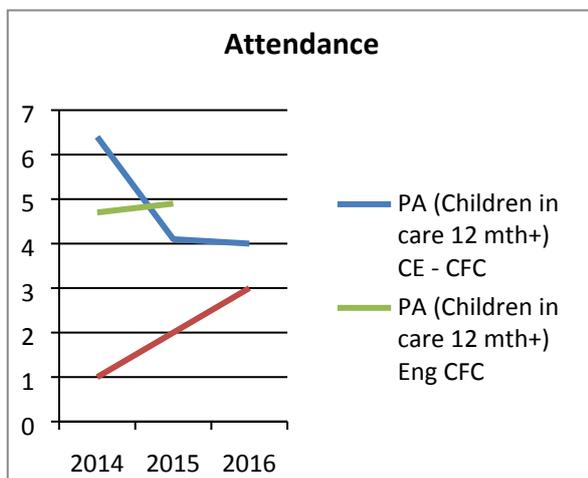
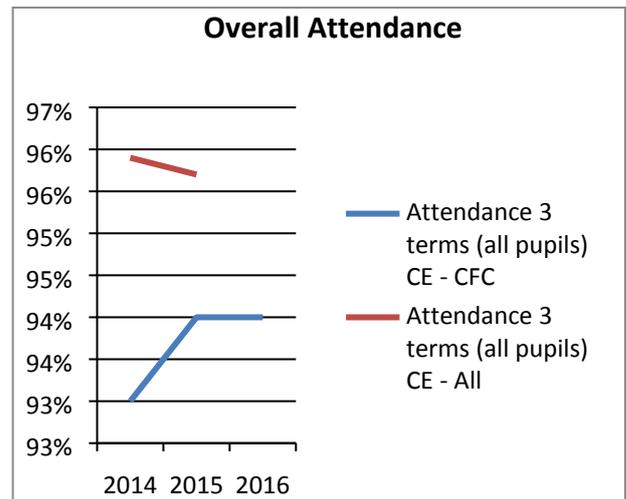


Attendance and Exclusions

Attendance has been a focus for the Virtual School and, although there has been no change in the overall level, there has been a decrease in the level of persistent absence compared to last year. The threshold has however been raised this year to 90%.

Despite a rise in permanent exclusions in Cheshire East, there have been no permanent exclusions amongst cared for children for the past 4 years. This is due to the close working between schools and the Virtual School to find ways to avoid exclusions and put in interventions which help to stabilise the young person so that they can resume learning.

The Virtual School has worked with schools when an exclusion has taken place to try and avoid repeat exclusions and this has contributed to the reduction in the number of incidents and total days lost.



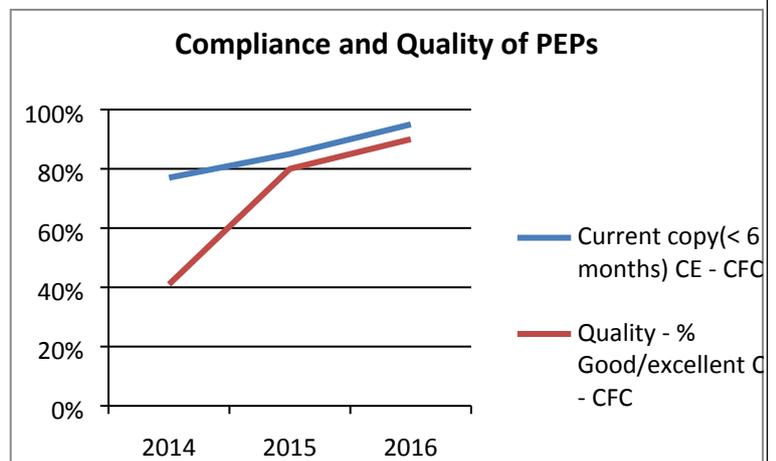
PEPs

For children less than two years olds, a simplified PEP has been produced which is completed by Social Workers and/or Health Visitors to avoid multiple meetings and carers having to give the same information to several agencies. Once completed these are subject to quality assurance by the Virtual School.

The Virtual School takes the lead in ensuring that all children from 2-16 years have PEPs every term. These are then reviewed by the Advisor who assesses the support needs and quality assures the PEP, giving feedback to the school. Where cases are assessed as having high support needs, the Advisor is heavily involved in the case. This may include observing classroom behaviour or visiting prospective new schools while for cases with lower support needs the Advisor will monitor the case through the returned PEPs and termly data reports.

Young people age 16-18 are encouraged to have termly PEPs and these are always arranged for those in education. Some young people who are in apprenticeships or other training may not wish to have a formal PEP meeting, although their progress and future plans are recorded in their pathway plans and the Virtual School support remains available on request.

All returned PEPs are reviewed and quality assurance is carried out on those where the Virtual School have not attended. Training with Designated Teachers has focussed on the need to ensure that PEPs are fully and accurately completed and that targets are specific, appropriate and can be monitored for impact. This has shown a significant improvement over time and continuous improvement remains a priority.



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Cheshire East Council

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting:	6 th September 2016
Report of:	Pete Lambert, Head of Cared for Children
Subject/Title:	Corporate Parenting Update
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Liz Durham

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update to the Corporate Parenting Committee on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1 Note the contents of the report;
 - 2.1.2 Note the proposed future updates around national and local developments; and
 - 2.1.3 Comment on the scorecard at Appendix 1 and identify any further measures required for a quarterly scorecard.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee is as advisory group to the Cabinet and, as such, needs to be aware of any national or local issues that are likely to impact on cared for children and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Committee need to be able to scrutinise and challenge performance to improve outcomes for cared for children and young people.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. None; this is an update report.

5. Background

National Developments

Children and Social Work Bill

- 5.1. The Children and Social Work Bill, published earlier this year, is currently progressing. The main elements of the Bill are:

Looked-after children and care leavers

- Standards for how local authorities should act as a 'corporate parent' to support children in care and as they move into adult life.
- A requirement on local authorities to consult on and publish a 'local offer' to care leavers, setting out the services they are entitled to.
- An extension to the right to a Personal Adviser, someone who will make sure care leavers receive the support they need as they transition into adulthood, to all who want one up to the age of 25.

Adoption

- Ensuring courts and local authorities take better account of a child's need for stability up to the age of 18 when making decisions about their future.
- A duty on local authorities and schools to promote educational achievement for adopted children and those in the long-term care of family members or guardians.

Regulation of social workers

- A specialist regulator for social work, to enable a clear focus on standards and effective training and development.

Children's safeguarding

- Better protection of children by ensuring that lessons are learned from serious child safeguarding cases.
- Support for innovation in children's social care by allowing local authorities to pilot new, innovative approaches.

- 5.2. The DfE has begun developing draft statutory guidance that will underpin the corporate parenting principles set out in the new Children and Social Work Bill. These principles, once finalised, will be applicable to all LAs in England but will not replace duties that LAs already have under the Children Act 1989. To ensure this guidance is as useful as possible the DfE is seeking examples of what good corporate parenting looks like in local areas in order to inform this work. The Bill has implications for how Cheshire East delivers its services and further updates will be provided to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Children's social care reform: a vision for change'

- 5.3. In January 2016, the Department for Education (DfE) published '*Children's social care reform: a vision for change*'. The paper set a vision and reform programme for children's social care, structured around three key areas, known as pillars:
- **People and leadership** - bringing the best people into the profession, equipping them with the right knowledge and skills and developing leaders equipped to nurture practice excellence.

- **Practice and systems** - creating the right environment for excellent practice and innovation to flourish and creating a learning culture, drawing on both best practice and the lessons when things go wrong.
- **Governance and accountability** - making sure that what we are doing is working, using data to show the strengths and weaknesses in the system, and developing innovative new organisational models with the potential to radically improve services.

Putting Children First

- 5.4. In July 2016, the DfE published '*Putting Children First: delivering our vision for excellent children's social care*'. The paper sets out – against each of the above three pillars – the DfE's programme of reform in children's social care for the next four years, detailing how it will create the conditions to enable Government, local authorities and their local partners, social workers and other professionals such as foster carers to provide consistently excellent children's social care.

'Keep On Caring - Supporting Young People from Care to Independence'

- 5.5. Following on from '*Putting Children First*', the government published 'Keep on Caring' in July 2016, which sets out specifically and in more depth what it means to put care leavers first.
- 5.6. Firstly, it sets out how the government will use the Innovation Programme to rethink how services are delivered and what support is provided, with a strong focus on finding new and better ways of helping care leavers develop the social networks that will sustain them not just in the years immediately after leaving care, but throughout their lives. The government will also support new ways of delivering services, for example through Trusts, which have a clear and specific focus on improving care leavers' life chances.
- 5.7. Secondly, it sets out how the government will strengthen the culture of corporate parenting, both locally – through planned legislative measures – and through changes to central government policies, so that they better respond to care leavers' unique status and circumstances.
- 5.8. Finally, it sets out how the government will support and challenge local areas, so that all deliver to the standards of the best.

Independent report on children's residential care

- 5.9. Also published in July 2016 was an independent report on children's residential care by Sir Martin Narey, former Chief Executive of Barnardos and independent social care adviser to the Department for Education. Sir Martin Narey's key conclusion in the review report is that despite the history and reputation of children's residential care, children living in these settings are treated overwhelmingly well. Children's homes can and should be better though and the report makes 34 recommendations to deliver significant improvement.

Not Seen, Not Heard

5.10. The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England, recently published '*Not Seen, Not Heard*', a report on children's safeguarding and looked after children services in England. The review is the result of two years of research, looking into the quality of care that young people receive with local authority areas. The CQC's summary findings are as follows:

- Two out of every three young people we spoke to told us they didn't feel involved in their care;
- Most areas we visited couldn't prove to us they were making a difference to children and young people;
- Health staff need to improve how they share information with the right people at the right time; and
- When young people are old enough to leave children's care services it can be very difficult for them to move to adult services.

5.11. CQC made the following recommendations:

- Children and young people must be actively engaged in their care
- Services must ensure their focus is on outcomes
- More needs to be done to identify children at risk of harm
- Children and young people must have access to the emotional and mental health support they need.

5.12. These recommendations are currently being considered by the Corporate Parenting Operational Group and proposed actions will be reported back to the Committee.

Local Developments

National Transfer Scheme – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

5.13. Nationally, 2015 saw a significant increase in the volume of unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) arriving in the UK, with 3,043 claims being lodged; representing a 56% increase on the previous year. In light of the varying commitments to support unaccompanied minors, the Government have established one national dispersal/transfer scheme, which will deal with all three strands of asylum and refugee children who will ultimately require local authority care provision. This ensures a fair and equitable distribution at a national level, as opposed to only a small number of local authorities, eg, Kent, being overburdened with UASC applicants, as is currently the case.

5.14. The Immigration Act 2016 provides a legislative framework with four key provisions to assist in the implementation of a national scheme. These being:

- To make the transfer of legal responsibility from one local authority to another much easier.
 - Places a duty on the local authority to provide information about available services.
 - Places an obligation on the local authority to set out in writing reasons for not supporting the transfer of children.
 - Provides a duty to accept the transfer of relevant children under a mandatory scheme, if sufficient voluntary commitment is not provided by local authorities.
- 5.15. On 4th July a regional event took place, with strong senior officer and political representation to discuss a way forward for the north west. A task and finish group was established to:
- Develop a proposal for a regional approach to standards to work with unaccompanied minors – using evidence of what works/best practice from areas with more experience.
 - Develop a proposal for a regional approach to completing age assessments, aimed at reducing the likelihood of judicial review of decisions, if through a consistent approach risks may be mitigated and shared.
 - Based on information already known about sufficiency of accommodation – consider and make proposals for local authorities to consider, based on age, vulnerability and need; considering joint opportunities to commission facilities that might reduce cost pressures.
 - Using knowledge of resources already in place e.g. regional Fostering Front Door, make recommendations about how this can occur.
 - A single approach to development of a marketing and communications strategy to attract interest from specific communities who may offer support and accommodation; with a focus on the development of shared accommodation and supported lodgings options.
- 5.16. It is anticipated that Care leaver status would apply to the majority of young people transferred to Cheshire East. This will subsequently impact on the case loads and capacity of the Care Leavers Team. There is a potential shortfall in the home office grant to fund these additional young people and this is being raised locally and nationally.

Care Leaver Pledge

- 5.17. Cheshire East care leavers and professionals worked together earlier in the year to decide on the 10 key things that would improve the help and support care leavers receive. Regionally care leavers said that they wanted:
- To feel listened to by everyone who is supporting us
 - For our friendships to be valued

- To have accurate information about our rights
- Council tax exemption for care leavers up to 25
- Help to get into work
- To have our life choices respected
- Improved multi-agency working for care leavers
- To be able to remain in care homes until we're 21, if we ask to
- To be encouraged and supported to pursue our interests and form our own identities
- Better mental health provision for care leavers.

DfE Innovation Fund – Expressions of Interest

- 5.18. Cheshire East Council has recently submitted a number of expressions of interest to the DfE Children's Social Care Innovation Programme. If successful, these bids would provide a significant opportunity for Cheshire East to enact change on a scale that we would not be able to support from our resources in house, and to invest in preventative approaches, thus potentially saving money in the long term. It is also an opportunity to be involved in shaping the direction of change for children's social care and to be a leader for change within the sector. A detailed report will be going to a future Cabinet meeting when the full financial impacts are determined.

Cheshire East Children's Rights and Participation Service

- 5.19. Cheshire East's Children's Rights and Participation Service is currently delivered by The Children's Society. This includes the advocacy and independent visitor service and the participation of cared for children and young people through, for example, the Children in Care Council. The current contract expires at the end of November 2016 and discussions are currently underway on options from December 2016 onwards; this includes delivering elements of the service 'in-house', extending the existing contract and re-tendering to test the market. The Corporate Parenting Committee will be kept updated on developments.

You Can Foster Campaign

- 5.20. September sees the launch of the regional foster carer recruitment campaign called 'You Can Foster'. The theme of the campaign will be 'Ambition' focussing on the important role foster carers play in supporting children & young people and helping them to realise their dreams. The campaign will feature on regional TV and radio as well as online via social media channels such as Facebook.

Foster Carer Survey

- 5.21. The recruitment and retention of high quality Cheshire East Foster Carers continues to be a priority for the service. A recent survey has provided some key feedback on what is important to our Foster Carers, including:
- Receiving adequate information about the child (89% of respondents)
 - Support from own children, family & friends (71% of respondents)

- Well managed payment systems (71% of respondents)
 - Access to specialist help and advice (69% of respondents)
 - Only 37% of respondents thought that guaranteed respite was very important in motivating you to foster
- 5.22. The majority of Foster Carers were happy with the training and development opportunities provided by Cheshire East. Areas for improvement include the support received from their supervising social worker, the information received to care for children and information available on our website. The service is working on an action plan to address these areas.

Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report

- 5.23. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report for 2015-16 has been drafted and will be presented to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee. The report will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence that summarises how the IRO service executed their statutory duties to ensure that children's voice, views and rights were at the heart of care planning and review and that the decisions made in relation to these children were in their best interest.

Corporate Parenting Performance Scorecard

- 5.24. The Corporate Parenting Committee need to be able to scrutinise and challenge performance to improve outcomes for cared for children and young people. The attached scorecard at Appendix 1 is an extract from the performance information currently scrutinised by the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.25. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to consider the attached scorecard and identify and additional measures required. Areas the Committee may wish to include are:
- Access to advocacy and independent visitor services
 - Information on the use of local foster carers
 - More information on the health of cared for children and care leavers, including immunisations, developmental assessments, annual health review and dentist checks
 - More information around the take up and educational attainment of cared for children including the early years and apprenticeships
 - Offender rates
- 5.26. Once the content is agreed, it is proposed that the scorecard will be reported to the Corporate Parenting Committee on a quarterly basis.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. Although the number of Cheshire East cared for children and young people is relatively small, they are a vulnerable cohort, who live across Cheshire East and in other local authority areas.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

7.1.1. There are a number of policy implications as a result of local and national developments and these will be reported, as appropriate to the relevant Committee.

7.2. Legal Implications

7.2.1. The national and local developments described in this report are wide ranging and will in many particulars have legal implications. Legal advice will be sought, as appropriate, upon all relevant emerging issues.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. The continued increase in demand for social care services for cared for children and unaccompanied asylum seekers will have a budgetary impact and these are being reported separately to Cabinet. The Council as a whole is managing a substantial reduction in resources from Government, savings resulting from transformation programmes etc will help, but demand for these services is continuing to increase. Therefore, the allocation of additional resources to this service will require greater reductions elsewhere.

7.4. Human Resources Implications

7.4.1. There are potential staffing implications from the increase in the cared for children population, in particular around unaccompanied asylum seeker children. These are being reported separately to Cabinet.

7.5. Equality Implications

7.5.1. Cared for children and care leavers tend to have poorer outcomes when compared to their peers.

7.6. Rural Community Implications

7.6.1. None.

7.7. Public Health Implications

7.7.1. None identified at this stage.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1. Managing the increase in demand for social care services is a current risk on the Children and Families risk register. The number of referrals requiring a social work assessment continues to increase and consequently the numbers for children and young people in care and on a child protection plans have increased significantly over the past year. Whilst this is in line with national increases, there is a risk that if the current increase in demand for services continues, this will affect staff's ability to deliver effective social work practice.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1. Appendix 1 – Corporate Parenting Scorecard
- 9.2. 'Children's social care reform: a vision for change'
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-reform-a-vision-for-change>
- 9.3. *Putting Children First* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/putting-children-first-our-vision-for-childrens-social-care>
- 9.4. *Residential Care in England: Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of children's residential care*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-residential-care-in-england>

10. Contact Information

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Corporate Parenting Scorecard - 2016-17

PI Ref	Measure	Polarity	Stat Neigh Av	National Av	Target	Yr. end 15-16	Qu 3	Qu 4	Qu 1 16-17	Yr. end 16-17	RAG	Quarterly dir of travel	Comments	C&YP Plan Priority	Corporate Priority
Cared for Children															
CF1	Number of cared for children				350-400	387	394	387	400			↑	It is being reported nationally and locally that numbers of cared for children are increasing. Cheshire East remains at the lower end of our statistical neighbour group, with latest figures from CWAC and Warrington showing much higher rates. We have amended our target to reflect a range in which we consider our cared for population to be appropriate.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF2	Rate per 10,000 cared for children		59.8	60	46.6 - 53.3	51.5	52.5	51.5	53.3			↑	It is being reported nationally and locally that numbers of cared for children are increasing. Cheshire East remains at the lower end of our statistical neighbour group, with latest figures from CWAC and Warrington showing much higher rates. We have amended our target to reflect a range in which we consider our Cared 4 population to be appropriate.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF3	% cared for children with 3 or more placements in year	Low is good	data not yet released		<10%	12.2%	13.9%	12.2%	13.8%			↓	This figure is a rolling year to date position and relates to 56 individuals.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF4	% cared for children in long term stability placement	High is good	data not yet released		80%	66.7%	73.0%	66.7%	70.2%			↑	This small but significant improvement demonstrates continued proactive approach to pre-disruption work to prevent placement and effective matching of placements from the outset.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF5	% cared for children reviews in timescales	High is good				96%	97%	97%	97%			→	Whilst every effort is made to review individuals in good time there will always be the occasional delay due to unforeseen circumstances. In Q1 of those that weren't reviewed in timescales 62% were seen within 3 weeks of the target review date and 100% within 4 weeks of the target review date.	1 Having A Voice	Outcome 5
CF6	Number of cared for children in internal foster care (including friends and family placements)	High is good				210	199	210	191			↓	Whilst there appears to be a small drop in the % of cared for children in internal foster care placements, of the 66 beds not in use there were only 20 vacant beds. The rest were unavailable primarily due to respite provision.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF7	Number of cared for children in external foster care	Low is good				89	88	89	97			→	This growth is as a result of increased demand and the targeted move of children from residential care.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF8	Number cared for children placed over 20 miles from home address (Cheshire East and out of borough)	Low is good				69	74	69	77			→	Although there is a slight increase in this figure, it is important to note that almost 20% of these are placed either with family/ relatives or in adoption placements.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF9	Number of cared for children that went missing 5 times or more (quarterly figure is 5 or more times in any month in that quarter)	Low is good				16	7	8	5			↓	In Q1 there was a total of 5 individuals who have had more than 5 missing episodes in any given single month. All individuals are offered interviews following missing episodes and the information is used to inform the cared for plan to manage and reduce the risk associated with going missing.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
CF10	% of initial health assessments requested within 48 hours of coming into care	High is good				11%	4%	20%	69%			↑	During the first quarter of 2016-2017 there were 57 children who entered the care system, 55 of which required IHA Part A completing within 48 hours of entering care. The number of IHA Part A being completed within timescale has increased each month from 42% in April 16 to 88% by the end of June 16 with a total of 69% for Quarter 1. This is due to a review and change in process to enable operational efficiency.	4 Being Healthy	Outcome 5
CF11	% of initial health assessments completed by paediatricians within 20 days	High is good				34%	29%	12%	36%			↑	During the first quarter of 2016-2017 there were 57 children who entered the care system, 50 of which required an IHA completing within 20 working days. There were 7 that did not require completion due to one transferring from another local authority with a completed IHA and six returned home within 20 days of entering care. The percentage of IHAs completed within timescale has increased each month from 24% in April 2016 to 57% in June 2016, with a total of 36% for Quarter 1.	4 Being Healthy	Outcome 5
CF12	% of children in care over 12 months with a health check in the last year	High is good	84%	90%		73.9%	73.7%	73.9%	71.2%			→	There is ongoing work to ensure that all cared for children and young people get sufficient support and advice around their health and wellbeing. A new Cared for Nurse took up post in July 2016 to drive this.	4 Being Healthy	Outcome 5
Care Leavers															
CL1	Number of care leavers					225	219	225	201			↓	All care leavers are supported with access to a personal assistant to offer help and guidance as they move to independence together with financial support as appropriate to individual needs	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
CL2	% not in education, employment or training (EET)	Low is good				42%	43%	42%	47%			→	Of the 64 individuals not in education employment or training (NEET), over 39% are engaged in positive activities that are developing skills for the work place. Excluding those pregnant/ with parenting responsibilities and those unavailable to the workplace due to illness/ disability/custody there are only 14 individuals that are NEET and able to work. Active support is in place via Personal Assistants for these individuals.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3

PI Ref	Measure	Polarity	Stat Neigh Av	National Av	Target	Yr. end 15-16	Qu 3	Qu 4	Qu 1 16-17	Yr. end 16-17	RAG	Quarterly dir of travel	Comments	C&YP Plan Priority	Corporate Priority
CL3	% in suitable accommodation	High is good				96%	66%	95%	95%				There are 6 care leavers aged 18-21 known to be in unsuitable accommodation. This includes individuals currently in custody. Improved tracking in the care leavers service means that these young people are known and work continues to engage them where possible to improve their accommodation and support.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
Adoption															
AD1	% of children ceased to be looked after due to adoption - year to date fig	High is good				12.8%	10.6%	12.8%	21.0%				This figure reflects 9 individuals out of 43 who have left care since 1/4/2016.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
AD2	% of children ceased to be looked after due to granting of special guardianship order (SGO) - year to date fig	High is good				18.4%	17.3%	18.4%	11.6%				Whilst less than the previous quarter, it is important to note that this only reflects one quarter of the year and that the % rate should increase as the year progresses	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
AD3	Number of children adopted in period	High is good			30	18	supressed	7	9				In addition to the 9 adoptions in the first quarter, we have 29 individuals with an adoption plan, 20 of which are living with their adoptive family.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
AD4	% children who wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with adoptive family	High is good				83%	79%	78%	84%				This is an improving picture from last year and reflects timely decision making to ensure children and young people are in a permanent placement as quickly as possible.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
AD5	Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family (A1 national indicator)	Low is good			426	545	592	545	936				Although this has been RAG rated red, the story behind the data is very positive. This is due to the extremely positive outcome of children and young people being adopted by foster carers after a number of years due to a freestanding application. This is reflected in the reduced figure at AD7 below.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
AD6	Average number of days between placement order and match with adoptive family (A2 national indicator)	Low is good			121	99	97	99	49				This demonstrates the robust activity around timely decision making and activity around quickly matching individuals to adopters once a placement order has been granted.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
AD7	Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family/ foster carer who becomes adoptive family	Low is good			426	477	592	477	243				This should continue to improve as more fostering to adopt applications are approved.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
Virtual School															
VS1	% attendance of children in care (quarterly figure is all cared for children rather than those in care for 12mths which are published figs)	High is good	95.9%	96.1%	95%	94%	94%	94%	89%				The attendance figure includes the Year 11 cohort who were taking exams. If this is taken into account, actual attendance for quarter 1 is 95% and in line with target.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
VS2	% persistent absence of children in care (quarterly figure is all cared 4 rather than those in care for 12mths which are published figs)	Low is good				15%	14%	15%	18%				This equates to 55 children. The rate of persistent absence of cared for children is similar to that of all children. Excluding year 11 whose attendance was low due to study leave during exam period, the number of children with attendance below 90% fell during the quarter. Good attendance is promoted by monthly monitoring, liaison with Education Welfare Officers and contact	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
VS3	% personal education plans (PEPs) less than 6 months old	High is good				88.4%	52.2%	88.4%	89.2%				This includes all children known to the Virtual School. Some young people over 16 do not wish to continue their PEP meetings, but the Virtual School continues to offer support via the Social Worker and pathway plan. This includes young people over the age of 18 who are still accessing Virtual School support. The rate of completion and return is improving due to the allocation of an apprentice to chase PEPs from schools and Social Workers for PEPs for children under 2 years old.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3

Cheshire East Council

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting:	6 th September 2016
Report of:	Gill Betton, Head of Children's Development & Partnerships
Subject/Title:	Corporate Parenting Committee Proposed Work Programme
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Liz Durham

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides a proposed outline work programme/forward plan for the Corporate Parenting Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1 Agree the areas of focus for the forthcoming meetings; and
 - 2.1.2 Note and, if appropriate, prioritise other reports that will be presented to the Committee over the coming year.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. Having focus areas for each Committee meeting will allow Members to have a 'deeper dive' on areas that have the most impact on outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The Committee could determine an alternative work programme.

5. Background

- 5.1. The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Committee in its role as an advisory committee to the Cabinet is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from 0-25 years of age and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities. This means that the Committee needs to have a broad overview of the effectiveness of current services and a deeper understanding of those areas that have most impact on outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

- 5.2. Following a meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair of the new Committee, it is proposed that there will be two main parts to each Committee meeting; one a focussed and more detailed look at one key area; the other a round up of key national and local developments, performance and the effectiveness of existing services in relation to cared for children and care leavers, including proposed actions in relation to these.

Proposed Focus Areas

- 5.3. At its first meeting in June 2016 the Committee considered the document '*10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children*'. This document sets out the particular areas of scrutiny for corporate parents to have the biggest impact on outcomes for cared for children and care leavers. Based on these areas, the following focus areas are proposed for future meetings of the Committee:

September 2016 - **Education, employment and training** of children and young people in care and care leavers

November 2016 - **Health and wellbeing of children** and young people in care and care leavers

January 2017 - **Placement sufficiency and quality** including residential care, out of county placements, Reg 44 visits, advocacy and independent visitors

March 2017 - Provision and **outcomes for care leavers**

May 2017 - **Workforce** and infrastructure to support cared for children and care leavers

Performance Scorecard

- 5.4. It is proposed to present quarterly performance information to the Committee on a broad range of measures. This would be available for Committee scrutiny at the following meetings:

- September 2016
- January 2017
- May 2017

National and Local Information

- 5.5. The Committee will want to look at the experiences of cared for children and care leavers and the effectiveness of all relevant services including Fostering and Adoption, Residential Services, Placements, Support Services, Permanency and Throughcare. Examples of some report areas include:

- Update on participation (Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum)
- Refresh of Corporate Parenting Strategy

- Care Leavers Strategy
- Adoption Panel Annual Report
- Fostering Panel Annual Report
- Reg 44 report
- Virtual School Annual Report
- IRO Annual Report
- Advocacy and Independent Visitor services
- Results of surveys (Foster Carer, staff etc)
- Sufficiency Statement
- Commissioned services
- Safeguarding, including missing from home and care and at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE), youth offending

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

6.1. Not applicable.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Not applicable.

8. Risk Management

8.1. Not applicable.

9. Background Papers

9.1. *10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children.*
http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=dd2b4d45-a687-4c82-9737-fd31fb8a1c7c&groupId=10180

10. Contact Information

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