

Corporate Parenting Committee

Agenda

Date: Wednesday, 9th May, 2018
Time: 4.00 pm
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and in the report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making and Overview and Scrutiny meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

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 3 - 6)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2018 as a correct record.

4. **Input from Children and Young People**

An update from participation with Children and Young People will be given at the meeting.

5. **Staffing and Infrastructure** (Pages 7 - 24)

To consider a report on staffing and infrastructure, to include the recruitment and retention strategy.

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

6. **Corporate Parenting Scorecard Q3** (Pages 25 - 28)

To consider the scorecard for the third quarter of 2017/18.

7. **Corporate Parenting Update** (Pages 29 - 36)

To consider a report updating the Corporate Parenting Committee on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 20th March, 2018 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor G Merry (Chairman)
Councillor D Flude (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors S Edgar (Substitute for Cllr O Hunter), M Deakin, B Dooley,
L Durham, A Kolker, L Smetham and M Warren

Councillor in attendance

Councillor J Saunders, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Officers in attendance

Kerry Birtles, Head of Cared for Children & Care Leavers
Gill Betton, Head of Service: Children's Development and Partnerships
Anji Reynolds, Service Manager Permanence and Through Care Team
Diane Grist, Service Manager Fostering, Adoption and Special Guardianship
Ruth Tucker, Named Nurse Safeguarding Nurse
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors P Butterill, M Grant and
O Hunter.

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

43 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2018 be approved as
a correct record, subject to the following amendments to the officers
present at the meeting:

Officers in attendance:

Delete: P Lambert, Head of Cared for Children
Insert: Kerry Birtles, Head of Cared for Children & Care Leavers

Add: Shan McParland, Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Add: Ruth Tucker, Named Nurse Safeguarding Nurse

44 UPDATE FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Head of Cared for Children and Care Leavers reported on a meeting she had had with young people the previous week and at which they had discussed what corporate parenting was and talked about the 'pen picture' of Corporate Parenting Committee members and the information they would like to be included.

45 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the Care Leavers Annual Report 2017-18.

The report provided details of the work undertaken to help care leavers to be better prepared and supported to live independently; have improved access to education employment and training; better access to health support; access to housing when leaving care and achieve financial stability.

The report highlighted events which care leavers had participated in. These include a Christmas dinner and 6-a-side football team league and meeting with Mark Riddell, Department for Education Care Leaver Implementation Adviser.

New statutory guidance had been published stating that all local authorities needed to implement a 21-25 Offer to care leavers. Under the guidance annual contact must be made with all care leavers 21-25 years.

The recent DfE visit had highlighted that the operational model was very strong but practice was impacted by the lack of a Corporate Offer. The role and function of Corporate Parenting was viewed as needing to be strengthened as it was perceived that there was limited buy-in from key partner agencies. This provided an opportunity to re-focus and address need across health, housing and any adult service provision to better support care leavers as they move towards adulthood and independence.

Members of the Committee asked about and made comments on care leavers access to apprenticeships, the Stoke City FC course, the allowances available to care leavers, substance misuse and access to health care, care leaver learning to drive and the location of the drop in centre.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

46 CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

The Committee received a presentation on the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

A refresh of the Strategy was being undertaken to reflect the changes in national and local policy, feedback from Mark Riddell's visit and link to the five corporate parenting priorities.

Members of the Committee completed a questionnaire on their knowledge and confidence as a corporate parent. The Committee discussed the issue of visits and the required clearance and how they could communicate to those outside of the council on corporate parenting.

An example of a completed 'pen portrait' was shared with the Committee. It was agreed that members of the Committee would forward the required information and photographs to the Corporate Parenting email address for their 'pen portraits' to be completed.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the report be noted; and
- 2 the information and photographs for completion of 'pen portraits' be forward to the Corporate Parenting email address.

47 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers.

The report included updates on:

- changes to the Children and Social Work Act applying to corporate parenting, local offer and support to age 25
- feedback from Mark Riddell, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, on the Council's arrangements to support care leavers
- the Inspection of Local Children's Services inspection framework coming into force in January 2018.

The Head of Services for Cared for Children and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families regularly met with cared for children and young people and care leavers. Discussion at recent meetings had included contact with family and friends and how they can maintain a relationship with them; delivery and information about sexual health and healthy relationships; celebration of individual achievements, and attendance at local and national events to share experience.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.20 pm

Councillor G Merry (Chairman)

Children's Social Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2018 – 2020



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Why we need a Strategy

Introduction

Working with children, young people and their families is one of the most important and rewarding jobs - the right person can make the biggest difference to their lives. That is why Cheshire East has set itself a standard to attract and retain high calibre social care professionals to our front line Social Work teams supporting our most vulnerable children and young people.

Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of this document is to set out Cheshire East's approach to recruitment and retention. The strategy has been developed via a Recruitment and Retention Task Group under the leadership of the Children and Families Social Care management team.

This strategy serves to meet some of the key recommendations detailed in the Service improvement plan that ensures **a fully resourced, permanent, and highly qualified and competent Social Care workforce**. At a time when there is a national shortfall in qualified and experienced Social workers, this strategy sets out how we intend to make Cheshire East the employer of choice in this region and to be the *very best* – 'Where Social Work Works'.



By being the *very best* we want a workforce that is confident and competent that puts children and families **first**.

Putting Children and Families First is about really listening and understanding what our children and young people need and responding appropriately to provide the best possible **Service**:

OUR VALUES

This requires **Flexibility**, which means us all adapting quickly to changing circumstances and learning together from our experiences.

Innovation is about us being creative in our thinking and the way we approach our work and challenging convention where this no longer seems appropriate.

Taking personal **Responsibility** is at the heart of our values in delivering what we promise, and ensuring efficient use of resources, whether this is our people, funding, processes, information or technology.

Bringing this together is **Teamwork**, respecting and working well with others to collectively achieve the best outcomes for residents and communities.

These are our Council's values and the values that we expect from our Social Care Workforce. Cheshire East has also embarked on a major programme to transform the culture of the Council. **Working for a brighter future – together**, will create a place where staff are proud to work, where people from across the organisation feel valued, trusted and supported and understand their role in achieving the council's visions. We shall ensure that our strategy provides sufficient resource, is flexible and responsive enough to the changing demand, to respond to the needs of children and young people within our service.

Training and Development (including Signs of Safety)

There is an established training offer that is in place to meet the needs of individuals and our organisational priorities, as well as the children and families that we work with. The training and development programmes are underpinned by the **Workforce Development Strategy** and aligned to the professional capabilities framework, knowledge and skills statements, as well as professional standards from the regulatory body. The programme of training is well embedded across the organisation to support career development for every level of practitioner, ensuring they have the opportunity to progress.

Our training pathway has been devised in a way that supports the consolidation and advancement of key skills and knowledge to strengthen the workforce and improve outcomes for children and families. We draw on a range of methods of delivery in addition to formal training and masterclass seminars, but also through our links with the North West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership, our own LSCB, in addition to our corporate membership of Research in Practice.



Signs of Safety has been adopted as a whole service approach to working with children and families, and staff are being supported through a rigorous training package to ensure that they have the skills and confidence to work within the approach. The training provides guidance for how to build relationships with families and work effectively with them to improve the lives of children and young people. The Signs of Safety approach includes specialised training, ways of working and tools for capturing the views of children for social workers and other staff supporting children, young people and their families. We are adopting the approach in order to invest in the quality of our social work practice, ensuring that we have the right structures, support and tools in place to enable use to always put children and young people first and ensure children are safe.



Regular supervision and personal development plans contribute to measuring the impact of training and inform ongoing needs as well as identifying deficits in practice knowledge.



Priorities for 2018-20

Cheshire East has the following four key priorities:

Priority 1: to recruit sufficient permanent high quality staff with suitable qualifications and experience

Priority 2: to retain existing employees by supporting them to carry out their roles effectively, and by ensuring that our total offer for new and existing employees is competitive within the market place

Priority 3: sustain manageable Social Worker caseloads

Priority 4: career development through student placements, progression to Advanced Practitioner and Manager Development Programme

This strategy sets out the proposed approach in 2018-20 under each of the priority areas.



Priority 1 - Recruitment

To recruit sufficient permanent high quality staff with suitable qualifications and experience, in 2018-20 we will:

- Increase our exposure in the market place through social media and the internet, targeted advertising on WM Jobs and Greater Jobs, and via the Teaching Partnership
- Continue to use and develop our microsite to promote recruitment opportunities
- Ensure there is a targeted programme of recruitment
- Launch a further student sponsorship scheme to target Crewe where recruitment remains more of a challenge
- Develop the recruitment and selection process to focus on critical factors such as values and resilience
- Re-join the Step-Up to Social Work Programme

Recruitment Principles

The principles applied to a holistic approach to recruitment are:

- All opportunities for engagement with potential recruits will be explored
- The first point of contact with Cheshire East will be a professional and informative experience
- The recruitment process is swift and timely
- Young people form a part of the decision making process
- A targeted programme of recruitment is adopted

Recruitment and Retention Task Group

A Recruitment and Retention Task Group is now well established, which is chaired by the Director of Children's Social Care and comprises senior managers from across the Council including Workforce Development, HR and Communications. The Group is responsible for the implementation of this strategy and will review whether:

- Our approach to recruitment and whether it is achieving the required results
- The information provided to potential applicants is attractive and informative
- The working rewards that we offer potential recruits are competitive with the market place and whether we can offer more
- The first point of contact with Cheshire East Council is professional and efficient

Total Reward Package

As part of our recruitment strategy we will continually review our total reward package. The basic salary offer is comparable or greater compared to other authorities, so we will promote those aspects of working rewards that set us apart from other employers, to include ASYE and retention payments, targeted incentives to assist in recruitment to Crewe and other staff benefits such as a green car schemes, bikes scheme, child care voucher schemes, Employee Assistance Programme, Relocation Package and Car Allowances.



Recruitment Payment

A Recruitment Market Supplement will be paid to those who are appointed as Grade 9 or 10 Social Workers in the Child in Need/Child Protection in Crewe and who remain there for two years. It will be paid in one instalment of up to £3,000 on successful completion of a probationary period. Part-time recruits will receive a pro-rata payment. The payment is subject to normal deductions.

Student Sponsorship Scheme

We will strengthen our relationships with our partner universities by offering students a route into Cheshire East both during their period of learning and following graduation. This scheme, which was launched in 2014, will provide opportunities for up to four students who will be based in our CiN/CP Team in Crewe. The number of opportunities to be offered will be reviewed each year.

The Route into Social Work

We will develop and expand our exposure to potential applicants by increasing our coverage and publicity of our offer to the social work workforce. A microsite setting out our offer and commitment to social workers has been developed and is the first point of contact; use of the Register Interest Button generates either an email or telephone response to enquiries within two working days. An improved process of selection that includes the participation of our young people has been adopted to ensure that we only recruit those workers who are passionate about improving the outcomes for our children.

Teaching Partnership

Cheshire East is a partner in the North West Midlands Teaching Partnership. The Department for Education introduced Teaching Partnerships to help improve the overall quality of practice, learning and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) amongst trainee and practicing social workers. Funded by the government, Teaching Partnerships have been created to develop and support high standards of work and education by building stronger links between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers (Local Authorities). The Partnerships involve a highly collaborative relationship, with the curriculum being jointly developed, delivered and owned.

Students within the partnerships benefit from a curriculum that is relevant to and informed by social work practice – equipping them to be good social workers going forward. They also benefit from practical statutory placements. Meanwhile, fully qualified social workers get access to many more CPD opportunities and have the opportunity to share best practice via the Partnership structure.

Teaching partnerships offer a great opportunity for working together to invest in the highest standards of social work education and practice. They provide the chance to ensure that we have more good placements available for students, more support for practice educators and more input from practising social workers and people with lived experience in educating social work students.

Step Up to Social Work

The Step Up to Social Work Programme has been widely used by authorities in the region and we will be re-joining it as part of our ongoing efforts to attract the best candidates into Cheshire East; this particular scheme allows graduates from other professions such as teaching to fast-track their social work qualification.

The Recruitment and Selection Process

The recruitment and selection process has been improved and streamlined following the introduction of Cheshire East's on-line recruitment platform, and ongoing development work, to ensure a smooth and efficient route into Children's Social Care.

Recruitment will continue to be improved by promoting Cheshire East's exposure in the market place through social media and the internet, targeted advertising and the Teaching Partnership; we will also look for opportunities to publicise our work in the social work press and websites and by entry into national award schemes where appropriate.



Priority 2 - Retention

To retain existing employees by ensuring they have the right skills, equipment and support to carry out their roles effectively we will:

- Continue to uphold professional standards, giving clarity and full understanding of the expectations and requirements of social workers
- Provide greater opportunity for peer and manager support around practice and professional standards
- Support our Social Workers in their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)
- Maintain a programme of professional development to support our ASYE Social Workers progressing to experienced social workers, and create opportunities for career progression through the Advanced Practitioner route to Team Manager.
- Cheshire East has adopted **Signs of Safety** as our operational model and training has been embedded throughout the service; this will give workers a clarity of purpose and an increased sense of the 'Cheshire East way' of doing things

Retention Principles

The principles applied to a holistic approach to retention are:

- A quality first day experience followed by thorough induction
- A comprehensive programme of training and support including Signs of Safety
- Practice expectations are communicated and understood

- Regular quality supervision, with the emphasis on reflective practice
- A clear and transparent career path progression
- Appropriate caseloads for the level of experience
- Systems to support flexible working
- Opportunities for reflection and open discussion
- Career and succession planning
- A culture of reflection and learning through the use of Exit Interviews and staff surveys

Retention Payment

A retention payment will be paid to those who are working in the roles of Team Manager or grade 9 or 10 Social Workers in the CiN/CP or Cared For Children & Care Leavers teams. A fixed one off payment of £1,000 will be paid with normal pay on the anniversary of appointment and is subject to normal deductions. A £1,000 Retention Payment is also paid to ASYE social workers who progress through panel to their second year of employment.

Professional Fees

Any cost over and above the first £50 to register with the relevant social work regulatory body will be paid by Cheshire East.

Practice Standards

Practice Standards play a vital role in making Cheshire East a great place to be young, where children and young people are happy, healthy, safe, and have opportunities to enjoy life, learn and develop. In order to achieve this all practitioners, social workers and managers have clear guidance regarding their roles and responsibility as professionals; and

that there is a consistent approach to the social work task across all teams and a clear expectations for practitioners, social workers and front line managers which they can measure themselves against.

The HCPC (Health and Care Professionals Council) provides Social Workers with a framework within which to operate alongside standards of conduct as a reference point, in conjunction with the PCF (Professional Capabilities Framework) and the Knowledge and Skills statements recently introduced by the Department for Education, as part of social work reform agenda looking to raise the standards of practice within the Social work profession. These continue to be the point of reference for our Social Care workforce to ensure a highly professional and competent workforce is able to deliver to the children and families of Cheshire East.

Induction and Supervision

Induction and Supervision policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure that they are current and fit for purpose and available to the entire Social Care workforce, including agency workers. Managers will ensure that newly qualified Social Workers have appropriate caseloads during the induction period.

Reflective Practice

Opportunities for reflective practice and shared learning that considers the needs and views of our children and young people are available to all Social Work professionals through team meetings and group supervision using Signs of Safety.



Resilience and Wellbeing

Cheshire East understands the importance of providing support and resources to promote resilience and well-being. The World Health Organisation defines wellbeing as:

‘A state of mind in which an individual is able to realise his or her own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.’

Resilience helps us to maintain our wellbeing in difficult circumstances and situations.

Cheshire East Council is a Learning Organisation and is committed to providing a range of support and guidance to ensure that staff are able to seek the appropriate level of support, should they need to. It is important to recognise that building effective relationships with others at work are the cornerstones of your working life and investing time in developing these connections will support and enrich you every day. We have a service available for all employees through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – which is a free and confidential advice and support service available to all employees and to their household members. The service is provided to include:-

- General information
- Legal information
- Telephone counselling
- Face to face counselling.

This will act as first point of contact for employees to get immediate assistance on a range of matters that may be of concern to them both on a professional but more on a personal level. Children’s Social Care

regularly seek feedback through the use of supervision, the annual staff survey as well as through practice forums to ensure that the workforce feel supported and are receiving the appropriate levels of support.

Training and Development

A programme of mandatory training including Signs of Safety is well embedded as is the training for ASYEs. The Workforce Development Strategy reports on the activities supporting our Social Care workforce.



Priority 3 – Caseloads

To sustain manageable Social Worker caseloads we will:

- Reflect the level of experience of the worker
- Robust auditing of cases and Performance Challenge to ensure that every child is being managed at the appropriate level
- Ensure our partners are delivering intensive support to children in need
- Family Support Workers in the teams to support Social Workers.
- Ensure that the Placement Support Team offers additional support to vulnerable children and young people, including those at risk of being cared for.

Caseload Management Principles

Cheshire East's caseload management principles are:

- Robust Team Manager oversight of Social Worker caseloads through supervision and Performance Challenge
- Caseloads will be managed at an acceptable level
- There will be continuity of key worker and transfer points will be kept to a minimum
- There will be a planned handover when a key worker leaves
- Support will be available from a range of sources including advanced practitioners, team manager and senior managers
- Comprehensive auditing process in place, including practice coaching of Social Workers and their Managers

Managing Caseloads and Improving Practice

Ensuring that Social Workers have manageable caseloads is a key priority for the service and is a key driver for determining our recruitment and retention strategy. Continuity of key worker with capacity to respond appropriately is directly influenced by the level of case work held by each professional. Reducing turnover will serve to ensure that continuity and capacity is maintained to acceptable levels which will improve the experience of the young person and their family.

There is a culture of continuous improvement in Cheshire East through high quality reflective supervision, group supervision using Signs of Safety, and a comprehensive programme of auditing which includes consultation with children and their families. Fostering a sense that people are doing a good job and celebrating positive interventions through our quarterly Practice and Performance Workshops also supports worker retention.

Risk Mitigation Strategy

The risk mitigation strategy, developed in 2014, will continue to be used. This sets out the standards and expectations to be followed in the event of a Social Worker leaving. This includes re-allocating the case under the same Manager, ensuring that the outgoing member of staff completes a detailed transfer summary and chronology that is signed off by the Team Manager and that every case is audited to agree next steps. It also sets out the role of the newly allocated Social Worker.

Cases at the Right Level of Need

One of the key ways of ensuring manageable caseloads is to ensure that cases are 'stepped down' appropriately. Regular analysis of Child in Need (CiN) cases will be carried out to identify those that can be 'stepped down'.

Intensive Support to Children in Need

Our partner service strives to achieve positive sustainable outcomes for families with children aged 0 to 19-years-old who are identified as Children in Need. A holistic, whole family approach is provided, based on improving outcomes for every child through developing strong relationships and including staff training in The Prevention and Intervention Programme.

By using strength-based interventions, the service seeks to strengthen the family unit, instigating change where possible and necessary to reduce factors contributing to concerns around risk and need.



Priority 4 - Career Development

To ensure that career pathways and opportunities for development are available to all staff that seek them we will:

- Offer a wide range of student placements, including a sponsored programme to select the best possible candidates for the Crewe team
- Continue to develop our already well regarded ASYE programme
- Support social workers to progress through the grades from ASYE to Advanced Practitioner
- Look for developmental opportunities for staff within the service, balanced with bringing in new talent with fresh ideas
- Identify and support aspiring managers including those who want to progress towards the positions of Independent Reviewing Officer and Child Protection Conference Chairs

Career Development Principles

Cheshire East's career development principles are:

- Creating long term stability in the workforce through opportunities for progression and development
- An unswerving commitment to Equality of Opportunity and fighting discrimination
- Identifying and supporting all of our staff who wish to progress and advance their careers
- Ensuring that workers who find a level at which they prefer to operate are still supported and offered developmental opportunities

- A 'mixed economy' of growing our own talent and bringing in new people with fresh ideas

Career Development

Cheshire East Council is committed to developing the careers of its social workers through learning and development opportunities, including vocational and academic routes, which allow social workers to demonstrate their professional progression within the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). A clear Social Work Career Pathway has been established enabling progression from ASYE (Grade 8) to Grade 9 and 10 and Advanced Practitioner.

ASYE Programme

A comprehensive Induction to Children's Social Care is offered to all new staff including experienced Social Workers, Team Managers and Service Managers. In addition the Principal Social Worker has a specific remit of supporting social workers on the ASYE programme and facilitating networking sessions to respond to identified needs.

Progression Year 2 Programme – leading to Grade 9

This programme is available to all social workers on completion of ASYE and is also relevant to more experienced workers joining Cheshire East who have not yet 'progressed'. The programme offers access to further learning and development activities including a University taught module and involves completion of a portfolio to demonstrate readiness for progression to Grade 9.



Grade 10 Progression and Advanced Practitioner

The opportunity to achieve progression from a grade 9 to grade 10 social worker and Advanced Practitioner is linked to achievement of a Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Social Work Practice (or PQ Specialist Social Work Award/PQ Child Care Award/BAAF Award under the previous PQ Frameworks) and Practice Educator status, alongside demonstrable practice competence at an enhanced (Grade 10) level.

Eligibility to undertake the PG Diploma is informed by the Performance Development Review process and all social workers are encouraged to aspire to this level of practice.

Management Development Opportunities

The manager development programme provides an opportunity to support the existing group of managers, as well as those identified as aspiring managers, Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Conference Chairs to ensure that they have the key knowledge and skills to assist with the rigour that is expected within this role. The underpinning qualification for the programme is an ILM Level V Award in Leadership and Management.



Delivering on our Priorities

Action Plan

The priorities and actions set out in this strategy will be incorporated into the Recruitment and Retention Plan and will be regularly reviewed by the Senior Children's Leadership Team.

Governance

The Recruitment & Retention Group will provide the initial governance to oversee this strategy, with performance reporting and impact to the Senior Children's Leadership Team and the Corporate Parenting Committee every six months. The recruitment and retention of social workers is an essential part of the Council's business and our challenges in this regard have led to its inclusion in Cheshire East's Corporate Risk Register.



Measuring Success

The success of the strategy will be measured based on a range of quantitative and qualitative measures.

Quantitative Measures

- Reduction in maximum Social Worker caseload
- Reduction in average Social Worker caseload
- Reduction in the number of agency workers occupying permanent posts during 2018.
- Number of ASYEs completing first year
- Number of ASYE progressing to Grade 9 during 2018
- Number of Grade 9 Social Worker progressing to Grade 10 and Advanced Practitioner
- A reduction in turnover in 2018 amongst Social Workers, compared to 2017
- Number of Social Workers on aspirant manager scheme

Qualitative Measures

- Staff Survey
- Staff feedback, including exit interviews
- Feedback from parents and children collected at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure





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Ref	Department Lead	Measure	Polarity	Stat Neigh Av	National Av	Target	Yr. end 16-17	Qu 1 17-18	Qu 2 17-18	Q3 17-18	Q4 17-18	RAG	Quarterly dir of travel	Comments	C&YP Plan Priority	Corporate Priority
General																
G1	Jacqui Hall	Number of cared for children				380-430	422	438	466	470			↑	The overall population of cared for children has increased, however at a significantly slower pace than that observed in quarter 2. The increase was due to a high number of unaccompanied asylum seekers supported (9 in quarter 3). In context we only accommodated 11 in the whole of 2016/17. The service are focused on ensuring that children that require safeguarding via care have that option, but also that support is available for those children who require intense support to remain at home, or with family members. Cheshire East are not unique in the region in experiencing increased demand, however the operational strategy to managing this is evidenced in the plateauing out of overall numbers. At third quarter review the children's social care service was predicting an overspend of £3.4m and this formed part of the report to February 2018 Cabinet. The key driver for this pressure is the rise in the number and costs of children in care which have increased at a greater rate than the budget. In December 2017 the number in care stood at 470 compared to 420 in December 2016 and 394 in December 2015. That is a 20% increase over two years. The increase in numbers has been recognised in the budget process with +£2.1m being included in 2017/18 and +£3m in 2018/19 to provide additional funding. The positive news is that the number of children in care reached 466 in August 2017 and has stayed at broadly that level since then. Despite the increase in cared for children, we continue to be towards the lower end of our statistical neighbour group and nationally for rate of cared for children (per 10,000), in particular lower than Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils. A number of initiatives are being taken forward to reduce the pressures such as commissioning residential children's homes, expanding Project Crewe, establishing Project Macclesfield, joining a regional adoption agency, and starting work on a shared fostering service.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
G2	Debra Sloan / Pete Thorley	Rate per 10,000 cared for children		56	60	50.7-57.3	56	58	61.8	62.3			↑	As above	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
G3	Anji Reynolds	Number of care leavers					199	202	198	196			→	This represents all eligible, relevant and former relevant care leavers who are supported with access to a Personal Advisor (PA) to offer help and guidance as they move to independence together with financial support as appropriate to individual needs.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
Involve Me																
P1.1	Sue Preston	Number of eligible children and young people accessing advocacy services	High is Good				127	27	98	66				Of the 66 advocacy cases open this quarter, 31 were issued based cases (22 in care, 4 care leavers, 3 disability, 2 child protection) and 35 were open to children on a child protection plan. The issues were 14 placement issues, 8 representation at meetings, 2 child protection, 2 complaints, 2 contact to see own child, 1 contact, 1 transition, 1 financial and 1 educational issue. The number of children and young people accessing advocacy service has gone down due to the fact we no longer operate an automatic referral for children on child protection plans as this work will now be carried out by the Social Worker or other professionals. The Children's Rights Team will be raising awareness of the service and delivering workshops to staff on Children's' Rights and the new way of working for children on child protection plans in the next quarter.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P1.2	Debra Sloan / Pete Thorley	% cared for children reviews in timescales	High is Good				98%	95%	96%	99%			↑	This is a considerable improvement given the increase in number of individuals in care and therefore reviews required. There will always be occasions where due to unforeseen circumstances a review cannot be held when planned. Ongoing scrutiny ensures that where this occurs there is evidence that the reason are understood and the young person is receiving the right support.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 6
P1.3	Pete Thorley	% of children and young people chairing their own reviews	High is Good				2.75%							<i>Data not available at quarter 3. A report is being developed to address this for quarter 4.</i>	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 7
Provide Me With a Good Safe Home																
P2.1	Jacqui Hall	Number of cared for children in internal foster care (including friends and family placements)	High is Good			215	209	210	207	199			→	The number of available Cheshire East fostering households does not meet the current demand for placements. The Cheshire East fostering collaboration with 3 neighbouring authorities goes live in April 2018, with a targeted recruitment strategy aimed at increasing in-house provision. The reasons for a reduction in in-house placements is complex and there are often a range of reasons why a household can either not accommodate the number of individuals it is registered for or that the needs of individuals are not compatible with the placements available.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5

P2.2	Jacqui Hall	Number of cared for children in external foster care	Low is Good			85	95	102	118	114			↓	The Cheshire East fostering collaboration with 3 neighbouring authorities goes live in April 2018 with a targeted recruitment strategy and shared agreement regarding use of internal vacancies across the collaboration. The aim of the collaboration is to significantly increase the recruitment and retention of in house foster carers so more of our children live with our foster carers and costs are reduced. Whilst the number of children placed in external placements is higher than we would like, 39% of the placements are long fostering arrangements so children have achieved permanence and a good outcome.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.3	Debra Sloan / Pete Thorley	% cared for children placed over 20 miles from home address (Cheshire East and out of borough)	Low is Good				22%	24%	24%	23%			↓	Whilst this figure represents 23% of the individuals in care (excluding UASC), 11 of these children are placed with family/friends, 4 in adoption placements and an additional 23 are in long term foster placements. In addition a further 25 are in specialist school/ home provision and there is ongoing work with commissioning to increase the level of locally available specialist provision and residential homes.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.4	Jacqui Hall	% of children and young people in residential care	Low is Good			10%	9%	11%	9%	9%			→	Whilst this is a low percentage there has been an increase in our cared for population residing in residential care and an increase of younger children living in residential care. This reflects the reduction in foster carer capacity locally and the increase in complexity of need. We are addressing this through our fostering collaboration.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.5	Jacqui Hall	Number of Cheshire East foster carers	High is Good			165	150	152	159	163			↑	Work continues to increase the number of Cheshire East Foster Carers and it is hoped that numbers will continue to increase once the collaborative arrangements are in place post April 2018.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.6	Debra Sloan / Pete Thorley	Long term placement stability - % cared for children in care for 2.5 years who have been in the same placement for 2 years (under 16 years old)	High is Good		68%	75%	69%	This data will be presented annually. See comments for quarterly updates						Of the 161 children currently under 16 who have been in care for over 2.5 years at the end of September 2017, there were 105 who had been in the same placements for 2 years. This gives an indicative figure of 65%. However this should be taken with an element of caution as it will not reflect the final outcome.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.7	Debra Sloan / Pete Thorley	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			5	5	13	7	9			↑	The year end position is the number of cared for children that went missing more than 5 times in the reporting year 2016-17. The quarterly figures has been amended to reflect the number of individuals that went missing 5 or more times in the quarter. This includes CE children who are placed in CE and those placed in other local authorities. This is monitored closely on a monthly basis and scrutinised for emerging patterns together with ensuring plans are revised to reflect needs and the reasons for missing episodes fully understood and addressed.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.8	Viki Kehoe / Dave Leadbetter	% of children and young people placed with providers with good/outstanding Ofsted judgements	High is Good				90%	91%	90%	87%			→	There has been a slight reduction in the percentage of children and young people placed with providers with good/outstanding Ofsted judgements this quarter. There has been a percentage decrease since the previous quarter due to the increase in our Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) - two of our providers who require improvement have 17 foster care placements. An agency is inspected by Ofsted as to how it operates as a whole. When making a placement, whilst we consider the Ofsted judgement, we make placement decisions based on the individual carers, their history and experience to best meet the needs of the children and young people involved, along with references from other Social Workers who have current / previous placements.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.9	Jacqui Hall	% of children ceased to be looked after due to granting of special guardianship order (SGO) - year to date figure	High is Good			12%	17%	20%	17%	23%			↓	A cumulative figure of 28 out of 124 children in 2017-18 have ceased to be cared for due to granting of SGO.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.10	Jacqui Hall	% of children ceased to be looked after due to adoption - year to date figure	High is Good			20%	18%	18%	16%	10.0%			↓	A cumulative figure of 13 out of 124 children in 2017-18 have ceased to be cared for due to granting of adoption order.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.11	Jacqui Hall	Number of children adopted in period (YTD)	High is Good			30 annually	26	8	13	13			↑	As at the end of quarter 3, a total of 13 children has been adopted. An additional 39 individuals have a decision of adoption, with 11 awaiting placements orders and a further 13 with families.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.12	Jacqui Hall	% children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with adoptive family (This has changed to 14 months from 16 months)	High is Good			58%	84%	74%	69%	67%			↓	Please note that this indicator has reduced to being monitored at 14 months rather than 16 months in previous scorecards. Despite a small reduction in the performance by the end of quarter 3, it still remains ahead of the target. The target is based on the England average that was provided by DfE on the adoption scorecards.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.13	Jacqui Hall	Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family (A1 national indicator)	Low is Good			426	541	383	391	391			→	Cheshire East performance has improved steadily year on year since this became monitored through the Adoption data set, from an initial position of over 700 days down to 391 in the latest quarter.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.14	Jacqui Hall	Average number of days between placement order and match with adoptive family (A2 national indicator)	Low is Good			121	66	62	88	88			→	We continue to out-perform the England average of 226 days and the national target of 121 days.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P2.15	Jacqui Hall	Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family/ foster carer who becomes adoptive family	Low is Good			426	284	373	391	377			↓	Cheshire East performance has improved steadily year on year since this became monitored through the Adoption data set, from an initial position of over 700 days down to 391 in the latest quarter.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5

Keep Me Healthy																	
P3.1	Jacqui Hall	% of initial health assessments requested within 48 hours of coming into care	High is Good			70%	64%	78%	41%	84%				↑	This is an exceptional improvement with 37 of the 44 individuals who entered care in quarter 3 having their initial health assessment requested within 48 hours. This demonstrates the success of the new process and will ensure that individuals are having their needs identified at an early stage. There is further work to do with aspirations of ensuring that all children entering care are supported to have their health care needs met in a timely way.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 5
P3.2	Debra Sloan / Pete Thorley	% of initial health assessments completed by paediatricians within 20 working days	High is Good			100%	58%	41%	32%	61%				↑	There has been a considerable improvement in quarter 3 with 27 of the 44 health assessments requested being completed within 20 days. Whilst this may not yet be on target, it demonstrates the success of the new process and a willingness for partnership working to support our most vulnerable individuals. A review of the process by senior officers in health and social care has enabled blockages in the system to be unblocked.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 5
P3.3	Kerry Birtles	Number of pregnant care leavers (eligible, relevant and former relevant) 16+	Low is Good				7	8	7	6				↓	This is a reduction from last quarter and remains below the national average. This measure will be changed to pregnant care leavers below 21 years from quarter 4.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 5
P3.4	Steve Nevitt	% of young people with a SDQ score of 20 or above	Low is Good				23%	This data will be presented in the Annual Health Report.							The emotional well-bring of our cared for children is assessed via the completion of the SDQ. The data highlights the need for a greater response from children social care and health. This topic forms part of the health and social care interface meeting and is being proactively picked up by our looked after children's nurse. In quarter 3 there were 60 cared for children who had SDQ scored. 16 of these scored 20+, which is 26%.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 5
Help Me Achieve																	
P4.1	Nicola Axford	% of cared for children accessing 2-4 yr old provision (quarterly)	High is Good			90%	95%	89%	85%	84%				↓	23 out of 27 children attend early years settings. The 4 who do not are placed with adopters and so are settling in before starting a new setting.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
P4.2	Nicola Axford	Percentage of completed PEPs (Termly)	High is Good			90%	83%	93% (July fig)		92%				↓	There were 5 children with no PEP in quarter 3 as they were new in care and the school had closed for Christmas. These were completed following the school holidays. 20 PEP's were not returned in the quarter. The adviser followed these up and all but 2 now have PEP's completed and returned. Discussions have taken place with schools re these children and support has been allocated, where needed.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
P4.3	Nicola Axford	% attendance at primary school of children in care (quarterly figure is all cared for children at month end rather than those in care for 12mths which are published figs)	High is Good	95.50%	96.10%	95%	96%	96%	97%	97%				→	Quarter 3 has been a positive start to the new school year in terms of attendance at primary schools.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
P4.4	Nicola Axford	% attendance at secondary school of children in care (quarterly figure is all cared for children at month end rather than those in care for 12mths which are published figs)	High is Good			95%	92%	92%	94%	93%				↓	There has been a slight drop from September, mainly due to short term absence for sickness. Pupils with unexplained or longer periods of absence have been followed up with carers and social workers	5 Best Skills & Quals	
P4.5	Nicola Axford	% primary school age persistent absence of children in care (quarterly figure is all cared for at month end rather than those in care for 12mths which are published figs)	Low is Good			10%	12%	9%	8%	6%				↓	7 out of 116 cared for primary children had attendance below 90% over the quarter 3 period. 1 was new into care in December, 5 showed improvement over the term and had 90%+ attendance in December with 4 having 100% in December. The lowest attendance was of a severely ill child.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
P4.6	Nicola Axford	% secondary school age persistent absence of children in care (quarterly figure is all cared for at month end rather than those in care for 12mths which are published figs)	Low is Good			10%	17%	21%	11%	13%				↑	19 out of 145 secondary pupils had attendance below 90% by the end of Dec 2017. Two are teenage mums, 5 school refusers (the Virtual School is working with Education Welfare service, school and Social Workers to put in plans to address attendance for this group), 1 is new into care with a history of none attendance, 1 moved area and is awaiting a new school place, 3 had low attendance due to exclusions, 2 had a delayed start while confirming school place but are now attending regularly and making progress and 2 were absent due to illness. 4 of the 19 had 90%+ attendance in December. Children waiting places were provided with tuition and work done with SEN to secure suitable places as soon as possible - these have now started new schools and so attendance will improve.	5 Best Skills & Quals	
P4.7	Nicola Axford	Number of Permanent Exclusions 1/2 termly - Primary	Low is Good				0	0	0	0				→	Work has been done with schools to provide training and support to avoid permanent exclusions. The Attachment Awareness Project in Cheshire East has proved useful in this.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3

P4.8	Nicola Axford	Number of Permanent Exclusions 1/2 termly - Secondary	Low is Good				0	0	0	0			➡	Work has been done with schools to provide training and support to avoid permanent exclusions. The Attachment Awareness Project in Cheshire East is being offered to secondary schools to develop better understanding and intense support offered by Virtual school is helping to avoid permanent exclusions.	5 Best Skills & Quals	
P4.9	Nicola Axford	% of cared for children in good or outstanding schools	High is Good			85%	82%	83%	77%	81%			⬆	Schools which have converted no longer have reports available and so legacy reports have been used showing 81% of children in good or better schools. Newly named or formed academies are listed as unknown; as there is no Ofsted rating linked to their name. There are 16 children in schools with no listing. Children attend school less than good if they were previously on roll, are making progress and it is considered a move would de-stabilise, if it is the only option within a geographical area or if there are other personal or social factors which suggest it is the most appropriate school as agreed by child, Virtual School, Social Worker and carer/parent.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
P4.12	Nicola Axford	% 16-18 year olds in Care that are NEET (monthly)	Low is Good			20%	Amended measure from Q2		6%	6%			➡	3 Young People are NEET but cohort has reduced from 58 to 54. Intense support has been offered to these 3.	5 Best Skills & Quals	Outcome 3
P4.13	Nicola Axford	% 16-18 year old Care leavers that are NEET	Low is Good			40%	Amended measure from Q2		23%	9%			⬇	This cohort is based on school years and includes young people who are in Year 12/13 so who have their 17th or 18th birthday within the school year. Reduction is due to in house provision - Cygnet and tutor led engagement programme.		
P4.14	Sam Ankers	% 19 - 21 year Care leavers NEET	Low is Good			45%	Amended measure from Q2		33%	24%			⬇	Corporate Parenting Committee and the care leavers service are in the process of strengthening the offer to care leavers to for education, employment and training (EET). Personal Assistants require the council to offer multiple opportunities for care leavers so that every opportunity is provided to secure these options. The Care Leavers Team continue to have a designated role in promoting EET, which has been part of the success in the improving picture.	5 Best Skills & Quals	
Support me to move into adult life																
P5.1	Sam Ankers	% of care leavers accessing Higher Education (University)	High is Good				10%	10%	12%	16%			⬆	The number of care leavers accessing higher education is showing an improving picture.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 1
P5.2	Sam Ankers	Number of Cheshire East care leavers in apprenticeships (18+)	High is Good				9	4	6	6				This is no change from the last quarter. Work is underway to increase the number of care leavers accessing apprenticeships.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 1
P5.3	Debra Sloan / Pete Thorley	The number of young people with a CSE plan - All Individuals					10	6	7	7				NB this is all individuals - not just those in care (that would be a suppressed figure)	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P5.4	Lisa Blanchard	Number of individual offences committed by cared for children	Low is Good					18	7	1			⬇	This figure shows the total number of offences from those listed in measure P5.6 below.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 1
P5.5	Pete Thorley	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation	High is Good			96%	94%	96%	98%	98%			➡	There are 5 individuals considered to be in unsuitable accommodation. 3 are in custody, 1 we are unable to contact and whereabouts are unknown and one has no fixed abode. The service continues to make every effort to keep in contact with and work with this group of vulnerable young people.	2 Feel & Be Safe	Outcome 5
P5.6	Lisa Blanchard	Number of cared for children offending	Low is Good					4	4	1			⬇	This figure relates to all young people starting on Youth Justice Service or Divert Intervention during the quarter where they are flagged as a child in care on Childview.	4 Being Healthy and Making Positive Choices	Outcome 1

Version Number: 1

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting: 09 May 2018

Report Title: Corporate Parenting Update

Portfolio Holder: Jos Saunders Portfolio Holder for children and Families

Senior Officer: Kerry Birtles, Head of Cared for Children & Care Leavers

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/s

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
- 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.
 - 2.1.2. Comment on any ideas to promote the recruitment of Independent Visitors as set out in para 5.16.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 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

Extended Personal Adviser duty Implementation Grant (New Burdens)

- 5.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new duty on local authorities, requiring them to offer Personal Adviser support to all care leavers up to age 25. This duty came into force on 1 April 2018. The Department for Education (DfE) has issued each local authority with a grant to help meet the

requirements of this duty, in response to young people that may request such support from the local authority after the age of 21 and up to their 25th birthday. Cheshire East has been allocated £13,911. This can be spent on supporting the costs associated with meeting this duty, taking account of the statutory guidance Extending Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25 published on 26 February 2018.

DfE commissioned foster care review

- 5.2 A review of the fostering system in England makes 36 recommendations to the Government about how the outcomes of children in foster care can be improved. Foster Care in England: A Review for the Department for Education by Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers was published on 6 February 2018. It is an independent report following a closed public consultation seeking views on the current state of the fostering system in England and how to improve the prospects of children in fostering care. The recommendations for Government, local authorities and other care partners include:
- ensuring that foster carers are supported and included in decision-making;
 - improving foster placement commissioning and matching; and
 - greater stability and permanence for children and young people in foster care.
- 5.3 The Government will respond to the report and the recommendations in Spring 2018, setting out the future programme of work for the fostering system.

Local Developments

Update on Development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy

- 5.4 Work continues to develop the priorities and content of the new corporate parenting strategy. This has included engagement with young people and frontline staff and managers. A session for senior managers is planned in May. It is expected that the new strategy will be signed off by Committee in September.

Local Area SEND Inspection

- 5.5 Between 12th-16th March 2018, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an Inspection of Cheshire East's multi-agency effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Inspectors spent the majority of the time in a wide variety of professional focus groups each looking at SEND Provision. 60 focus group meetings were held, involving over 220 staff. They also held 3 parent/carer workshops, which attracted 140 participants. Inspectors also reviewed a number of children's case files. A

letter from Inspectors setting out the local area's strengths and areas for development will be published in early May.

Approval for new special school in Crewe

- 5.6 On 29th March 2018 the Secretary of State announced approval of the Cheshire East bid to establish a new Special Free School in Crewe for children aged 4 - 16 with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs. The timeline for the opening of the new school is yet to be finalised and the Council is pushing for the earliest possible date (September 2019), however this is a challenging deadline. The school will be called the Axis Academy and will be run by East Cheshire Youth Achievement Free School Trust who currently run Fermain Academy in Macclesfield. This is a fantastic opportunity to increase the number of local special school places and may help placing cared for children locally as sometimes the travel to school is a barrier to achieving a local placement. The new Special Free School will focus on mental health and it is envisaged that a multi-disciplinary team will be based at the school delivering outreach across the community.

Voice for Children Contract

- 5.7 The contract for Voice for Children, the company originally established by two care leavers from Cheshire East, has been extended for a further year. A reduction to the value of the contract has been applied from 1st April 2018 and the specification has been adjusted to reflect this. The main change to the specification has been to reduce the mentoring offer as this part of the specification encountered difficulties in 2017-18 and is already available through another company, Pure Insights. The mentoring offer remains within the specification but is now focused on supporting a small number of young people that are experiencing difficulties in debt, drugs and offending that are having an impact on housing applications. It is hoped that targeting mentoring in this way will provide re-assurance to housing providers and this change has been input to the consultation on the Vulnerable Persons Housing Strategy.

Re-commission of supported lodgings

- 5.8 The re-commission of supported lodgings services is complete and the contract from 1st April 2018 was awarded to Forum Housing again. Their bid was good and built on the service delivery to date that has developed well through Forum Housing's attendance at the Ignition Panel and listening to young people's views re their aspirations and planning towards independence. The new service builds in the ability for our more complex young people to possibly access a supported lodging.

Cared for Children and Care Leavers Service

- 5.9 From April 2018, the Council's Permanence and Throughcare Team will be known as the 'Cared For Children & Care Leavers Service'. This change was prompted by feedback from young people and their families and other

professionals that the previous name didn't adequately describe what the team does.

Family Nurse Partnership

- 5.10 The Family Nurse Partnership helps local young parents to increase their confidence and gives them the guidance and support they need to give their baby the best start in life. Young parents are paired with a specially trained family nurse who visits them regularly, from the early stages of pregnancy until their child is two. The offer has been extended to first time pregnant vulnerable young people in care/care leavers up to the age of 24 (it was previously age 19).

Changes to Pupil Premium Plus

- 5.11 From April 2017, the method used to allocate funding for cared for children was amended to a 'needs led' model where schools can request the amount needed to carry out the support and interventions which have been identified as necessary. This change was made because the needs of children vary considerably. Over recent years the amount allocated for each child has increased, as has the requirement for Virtual School Heads to ensure that this is used to maximum effectiveness to benefit these children and for schools to make clear through the PEP how this money will be used and its impact monitored. The amount paid to the council to be allocated by the Virtual School Head has increased in 2018-19 to £2,300 per child in care who is in Reception to Year 11. Guidance on the allocation method for 2018-19 will be issued to schools shortly.

School places for children looked after by other local authorities

- 5.12 Local authorities have a statutory duty under *The Children Act 1989* to promote the educational achievement of looked after children, including those placed out of authority. Children in care are a vulnerable group and so are given the highest priority when seeking places, including those from other local authorities. As a corporate parent, Cheshire East local authority will seek to ensure that all cared for children have access to the best possible education which meets their needs and that, when new places are required, these are found with as little delay as possible. This means that all staff involved need to be aware of the process, their responsibilities and options available. A document has been produced that sets out the steps for admission of a cared for child and also information about school registration. The School Admissions Team or Virtual School of the Council will issue the guidance paper, '*School Places in Cheshire East for children looked after by other local authorities*', as soon as they are aware of a request for a place.

Participation with Children and Young People

- 5.13 The Participation Team have been making links and engaging with Crewe YMCA, Pure Insight, Voice for Children, the Cared for and Care Leaver Team

and Watermill House (P3) to develop a Care Leaver Council/Care Leaver Voice group. The team will be working with these groups to find out what is going well, what could be developed and ideas to make things better around the following priority areas:

- Better prepared and supported to live independently
 - Improved access to education, employment and training
 - Experiencing stability
 - Feeling safe and secure
 - Improved access to health and support and achieving financial stability.
- 5.14 To date consultations have taken place with young people around improved access to education, employment and training opportunities. Young people were positive about their relationships with some Personal Advisors and Senior Young Person's Advisors (PAs), however they feel that there is not enough feedback/support from Social Workers and potential employers when doing taster days. Also when living in the YMCA there is less incentive to get into employment because this impacts on rent benefits, making it difficult to achieve sustainability. Young people would like to see employability hubs/training and longer drop in sessions with Senior Young Person's Advisors.
- 5.15 The service is responding to the issues raised by care leavers, including exploring ways in which the relationships between PAs and care leavers can be strengthened. In terms of incentives to get into employment, the service offers 'top-up' funding to ensure that the young person is no worse off than if they were on benefits. A meeting has been arranged with the individual who raised the issue to ensure that they are supported to access this fund. One of the immediate actions taken in response to care leaver feedback is that when visiting care leavers, PAs no longer take paper and record during the meeting as care leavers did not like this approach. The bigger challenges in relation to employment, housing and health are being tackled within our new corporate parenting strategy (participation with children and young people runs as a theme throughout the new strategy). The new facebook account (detailed below) is a further example of how the team are working and thinking differently about different ways to engage children and young people.

Cheshire East Care Leavers Facebook Account

- 5.16 A new Cheshire East Care Leavers Facebook account went live on the 1st March 2018. This is primarily for announcements, new events coming up and anything significant that the service wishes to relay to Cheshire East Care Leavers. It is hoped that this can reach a greater audience to raise awareness around apprenticeship offers, Job fairs and anything else of significance. This is managed by the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Service on a daily basis and is for posting information out to care leavers.

Independent Visitors Needed

5.17 Cheshire East commissions The Children's Society to run an Independent Visitor (IV) Service for children in care who are the responsibility of the Local Authority. IVs befriend and support children and young people aged up to 18 years. IVs are recruited and trained to spend time with a young person, doing fun activities depending on the needs of the young person. The Children's Society is looking to recruit additional IVs who have the following skills and abilities:

- Are over the age of 18
- Some experience of children and young people would be useful
- The ability to relate appropriately to a young person
- Non-judgemental and open minded
- Ability to write up visits
- Understand the term 'confidentiality' and when it is necessary to break this
- Not be an elected member of the local council or work for Children's Social Care

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

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.

6.2. Finance Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

6.3. Equality Implications

There are no equality implications as a result of this paper.

6.4. Human Resources Implications

There are no direct financial implications of this report

6.5. Risk Management Implications

Cared for children and care leavers are a vulnerable group that are at risk of a number of factors – poor education and training, health, safeguarding and transition into adulthood.

6.6. Rural Communities Implications

None.

6.7. Implications for Children & Young People

6.7.1. The contents of this report has implications for cared for children and care leavers, who are some of Cheshire East's most vulnerable children.

6.8. Public Health Implications

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. 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.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. None.

9. Access to Information

9.1. None.

10. Contact Information

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Kerry Birtles
Job Title: Head of Cared for Children & Care Leavers
Email: kerry.birtles@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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