

# Corporate Parenting Committee

## Agenda

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**Date:** Tuesday, 18th June, 2019  
**Time:** 4.00 pm  
**Venue:** Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,  
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

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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.

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

1. **Appointment of Chairman**

To appoint a Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

3. **Apologies for Absence**

4. **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.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2019.

6. **Corporate Parenting Update from Elected Members**

To receive a verbal update from members of the Committee.

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**Contact:** Julie Zientek  
**Tel:** 01270 686466  
**E-Mail:** [julie.zientek@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:julie.zientek@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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

To receive input from children and young people.

8. **Recruitment and Retention** (Pages 7 - 10)

To consider the above report.

9. **The Health of Cared for Children and Young People Interim Report: Oct 2018 - March 2019** (Pages 11 - 16)

To consider the above report.

10. **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and Scores in Cheshire East** (Pages 17 - 24)

To receive a presentation.

11. **Children's Homes Mobilisation Update** (Pages 25 - 30)

To consider the above report.

12. **Claremont House Ofsted Report** (Pages 31 - 40)

To consider the above report.

13. **Review of Terms of Reference** (Pages 41 - 42)

To consider the attached Terms of Reference for the Committee.

14. **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2, pursuant to part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Act.

**PART 2 - MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT**

15. **Corporate Parenting Update** (Pages 43 - 76)

To consider the update report.

**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 19th March, 2019 at Committee Suite 2/3 - Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

**PRESENT**

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)

Councillors P Butterill, B Dooley, L Durham, G Hayes, O Hunter and G Merry

**Officers in attendance**

Jacquie Sims, Director of Children's Social Care

Gill Betton, Head of Service: Children's Development and Partnerships

Keith Martin, Head of Service: Cared for Children & Care Leavers

Sam Ankers, Care Leaver Manager

Kayleigh Wilshaw, Service Manager: Cared for Children and Care Leavers

Laura Rogerson, Head Teacher, Virtual School CFC

Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

**42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Flude, S Gardiner, A Kolker and M Warren.

**43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**44 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING****RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 be approved as a correct record.

**45 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE FROM ELECTED MEMBERS**

There was nothing to report from the work streams this time. The Chairman had met with young people and gave an update under the item 'Input from children and young people'.

The Committee agreed on the need in future for an elected member to serve on each work stream.

**46 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19**

The Committee considered the Care Leavers Annual Report 2018-19.

The report outlined the work of the team to improve outcomes for care leavers over the past year, including:

- A joint working protocol with the Department of Work & Pensions to make it smoother for care-leavers to access benefits and receive individualised support from the job centres.
- Publication of the Local Offer to Care-Leavers in October 2018.
- A revisit from Mark Riddell (DfE's National Care Leaver Implementation Advisor), who commented that the Care Leavers Service was functioning at a good or outstanding level
- Two tenancy readiness courses held across the Borough.
- A weekly refugee and asylum seeker support and activity group in Crewe.
- The development of a bespoke job for a care-leaver in the participation team.
- Changes to the housing allocations policy to give Care Leavers more of a voice in terms of their banding.
- The Ignition Panel continued to grow. Since the last report, 35 young people had attended or been discussed and had been shortlisted for a number of national awards.
- The Care Leavers football team were semi-finalists in the 2018 North West Leaving Care Football Tournament.
- A number of social events had been organised, including a successful trip to Chester Zoo.

A discussion took place around apprenticeships and the need for the Council as corporate parent to be proactive in offering these to its cared for children and young people. A recent example was given whereby Legal Services would be offering a placement to a young person who was interested in that area of work.

The Committee discussed progress in relation to the Government's five key outcomes, which formed part of the national care leavers 'keep on caring' strategy.

The report concluded with a summary of the challenges for the year ahead.

With regard to the EET Champion role, the officers reported that the outcome of an application for additional funding was still awaited.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Care Leavers Annual Report 2018-19 be noted.

#### **47 INPUT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Chairman and the Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers reported back to Committee on their meeting with the Shadow

Committee of young people. The Chairman raised a couple of issues regarding the need for the planning process for children in relation to their options and career progression to start at an earlier age. One example was given of a young person who had moved to a new school, with a less extensive curriculum. The officers undertook to follow up on both matters.

Members also discussed the importance of taking note of comments made by children and young people during informal conversations which provided a rich source of information regarding their aspirations and ambitions. The Virtual Head stressed that her team would include any information sent to them in their PEP conversations with young people.

### **48 STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCORES IN CHESHIRE EAST**

This item was deferred.

### **49 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE REPORT**

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

The report aligned with the priorities of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and included an update on the impact of the Children and Families Act 2017.

With regard to member training, the Committee stressed the need for all members who sit on the Committee in future to receive all the requisite training. This would provide members with the necessary knowledge to perform an effective role as challengers. In this respect, the Committee asked the officers to consider using part of the Committee's scheduled meetings for training purposes.

The Committee discussed the document being developed by North West Virtual Headteachers around exclusions. The Virtual Headteacher confirmed that fixed term exclusions were an issue across the North West. Cheshire East had undertaken a lot of work with schools and this was continuing. However, some schools were more inclusive than others. Committee members suggested that governors should be targeted and it was confirmed that a number of training sessions had taken place and were planned in this area, including attachment and trauma training.

It was noted that the venue for the star celebration event on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2019 could change to Tatton Park.

It was also noted that the four new children's homes referred to in the report would be located in Crewe (2) and Macclesfield (2). These would be based on an innovative hub model. Further details of the model and its impact would be submitted to a future meeting.

A new Service Manager had been appointed to Adoption Counts. Details would be included in the update report to the next meeting.

### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.10 pm

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)

## **Cheshire East Council**

### **Corporate Parenting Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**Report of:** Steve Nevitt, Service Manager Resources

**Subject/Title:** Recruitment and Retention

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#### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides the committee with a summary of recent recruitment activity and some further thoughts to foster and improve social worker retention.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and approve any further strategies to address the recruitment and retention of social workers as appropriate.

#### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The recruitment and retention of social workers has featured on the Council's Corporate Risk Register for some time; however whilst there are still areas where recruitment is something of a challenge, the overall position is positive and suggests that our overall strategy is effective.

#### **4. Summary**

- 4.1 Since the appointment of the new Director of Children's Social Care, the Recruitment and Retention Group which oversees our activity in this area, has been expanded into a Workforce Planning Forum to consider a person's whole career journey through the department from student placement through to manager development. This meeting brings together officers from across the Council in HR, Workforce Development, Children's Services and others as necessary to plan, review and evaluate our strategy and work-streams.
- 4.2 We have recently conducted a round of recruitment activity and the highlights are as follows:
- It is pleasing to report that there are currently no agency social workers or managers in either of the CiN/CP teams. In particular, recruitment and retention of social workers in Crewe which has previously been our most significant area of challenge has improved and stabilised dramatically. We believe that this is likely to be the result of our positive and developing

working relationships with Staffordshire and Keele Universities through the local Teaching Partnership and the impact on our ability to attract students from the area into placement.

- Although there are also no agency social workers in Macclesfield, recruitment has been slower of late with fewer applicants expressing a preference to work there; as we're in a different Teaching Partnership, our relationships with the Manchester Universities are not as well developed and therefore we are likely to use our Sponsored Programme to specifically target their best students later in the summer.
- Over the past year or more in the Cared for Children's Service (where we have traditionally been able to attract social workers internally) recruitment and retention has been surprisingly difficult and we currently have five agency workers. We believe that travel has been a significant contributory factor in this which is just one more reason why we should always endeavour to place our children in homes and families within the Borough wherever possible. We have been able to recruit to a number of posts however, and by August when the last of our new starters joins us, we should only have one agency worker who is covering maternity leave.
- There are no vacancies in the Fostering Service or amongst the Child Protection Chairs; in the Independent Review Team, there are currently two agency staff, one of whom is covering the acting up arrangements for the manager's role.

4.3 Members of the Committee may already be aware that there was recently some adverse publicity for the department in relation to social worker caseloads and retention. In both these cases, our data had been reported inaccurately and we do not believe that we are an outlier against either comparator authorities or across the NW region in relation to retention in particular. The issue of social worker caseloads is more complex and there is evidence to suggest that we have fallen behind the best authorities in this regard; it is certainly a factor to which Ofsted will pay close attention and it is a fact that high caseloads have tended to be a common feature of recent poor inspections.

4.4 Whilst we have done well recently in relation to recruitment, retention and agency staffing, there can now be no question that pay is an issue and again, it is clear that we are starting to fall behind other Councils in this respect. A recent trawl of the main recruitment websites showed the following starting salaries for newly qualified social workers against the £26,470 on offer here:

Herefordshire: £28,221 + bonus   Sandwell: £29,636  
Manchester: £27,688   Hampshire: £28,272

4.5 In turn, we are also behind with salaries for progressed social workers which could in part explain why some people complete the ASYE programme with us and then start looking to move elsewhere. Whilst salary is only one aspect of a complex dynamic, when one repeatedly hears that first year social



workers are anxious about failing to submit their travel expenses in time, it is probably time to finally address this matter more proactively.

### **5. Developments**

- 5.1 Later this year, we plan to introduce an assessment centre model of selection to replace our current interview and written exercise; this will include an introduction from the Director and/or Heads of Service, a group activity, values based exercises and separate young people's and panel interviews. This will create a better experience for candidates (who always have a choice to apply elsewhere) and a more rounded and effective selection process.

### **6. Contact Information**

Steve Nevitt, Service Manager Resources  
Cledford House, 01606 271823  
[steve.nevitt@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:steve.nevitt@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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## **INTERIM REPORT TO: Cheshire East Corporate Parenting Board FOR INFORMATION**

**Report of:** Shan McParland Designated Nurse Cared for Children and Care Leavers  
**Subject/Title:** The Health of Cared for Children and Young People  
 Interim Report: Oct 2018 – March 2019

### **Purpose of the report**

This interim report outlines the delivery of NHS health services to children in the care of Cheshire East Council (CEC) during the period from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019. It reviews performance indicators, clinical work undertaken by the Wirral Community NHS Trust Cared for Children Health Team, service improvements and plans for further development.

The aim of the Cared for Children Health Service is to ensure that children in the care of Cheshire East Council have their health needs identified and addressed. This includes the provision of a detailed, high quality initial health assessment (IHA) when received into care and a statutory review health assessment (RHA) annually for children over five years of age and 6 monthly for those under five years of age.

The team works in partnership with Cheshire East Council and local health providers to ensure that appropriate services are developed and maintained to continue meet the health needs and improve the health and wellbeing of all cared for children and young people originating from Eastern and South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group areas.

In Cheshire East, Looked after Children are referred to as Cared for Children. For the purposes of this report the terms are synonymous.

Glossary/Acronyms	
C4C	Cared for Children
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CEC	Cheshire East Council
IHA	Initial Health Assessment
RHA	Review Health Assessment
DoH	Department of Health
LAC	Looked After Children
DNA	Did Not Attend
SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
CQC	Care Quality Commission
SEN	Special Educational Need

## Key Points

The population covered within the report is all Cared for Children and Care Leavers that live in, or originate from, the Cheshire East Local Authority footprint. The number of Looked after Children nationally has continued to rise steadily over the last eight years, however in Cheshire East over the last twelve months have remained relatively stable. On 19<sup>th</sup> April 2019, 484 children were registered as cared for by Cheshire East Council compared to 477 children on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018; therefore the total population has risen by 1.5% during the year. In addition there are approximately 259 children placed in Cheshire East Local Authority area by other local authorities who also receive health services from the Cared for Children Team.

The team responsible for co-ordinating health services for Cheshire East Council Cared for Children are employed by Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust and are co-located with local authority colleagues at Cledford House in Middlewich. The team consists of a Named Nurse for Safeguarding and Cared for Children, 2 Specialist Nurses Cared for Children, 1 Specialist Nurse 16+ and Transitions, and 2 Administrators.

## Key Performance Indicators

### Initial Health Assessments

It is a regulatory requirement throughout England for each child new into care to have a comprehensive health assessment and a health care plan in place prior to the first LAC review (which takes place at 20 working days from entry to care). Across Cheshire East there continues to be a strong focus on improving the timeliness of IHAs and RHAs and a range of actions have been undertaken to achieve this. From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, an improvement in timescales for both request and completion of IHAs has been noted in comparison to the same period last year. (see Table 1)

**Table 1: Cheshire East Children requiring IHA**

Time frame	Request received with 48 hrs	IHA within 20 working days
Q3 2017-18	63%	71%
Q4 2017-18	64%	70%
Q3 2018-19	78%	80%
Q4 2018-19	76%	76%

The primary focus for action during 2018-19 has been around:

- Review of the pathway to escalate late IHA requests which is shared across Cheshire.
- Greater scrutiny of cancelled and/or DNA appointments by senior children's social care managers following escalation by the Designated Nurse.

Whilst the work above has yielded demonstrable improvement in both the timeliness of notification and the completion of IHAs, it is recognized that this can be improved further during the coming year. This has been discussed in the Corporate Parenting Operational Group (Workstream 4), 'Help Me Be Healthy', and it has been agreed that a programme of education and training for social care staff and carers will be delivered by health practitioners. This will ensure that the IHA process and pathway is fully understood by LA partners, and that the IHA forms, supporting information and referral letters are completed correctly and promptly.

### **Review Health Assessments (RHAs)**

For children under 5 years it is a statutory requirement that an RHA should be completed twice in a 12 month period. For children and young people 5 years and above, an RHA is required annually. RHAs are completed for all Cheshire East cared for children, and also for children placed in the Cheshire East area by other Local Authorities.

Reporting of performance with regards to timeliness of assessments continues to be monitored on a quarterly basis and discussed at the 'Help me to be Healthy' Group meetings, a Sub group of the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group.

In February 2018, a new process for requesting RHAs was developed which provides practitioners with an increased amount of time to arrange and complete the RHA. During 2018-19 this has proved to be effective in improving the timeliness of RHAs. The information within Tables 2 and 3 (below) provide information regarding the percentage of RHAs completed within the month they were due for each quarter, and demonstrate an upward trajectory in performance which can be partly attributed to the new practice of Social Workers requesting RHAs in a more timely manner.

For children who are placed out of area it can be difficult to influence the timescales of completion of their RHA as it is another Provider being asked to do this work. In response to this issue an escalation process was created which provides a clear line of action to follow in the event of an RHA being delayed. The process involves the Designated Nurse liaising with the Designated Nurse in the relevant area to raise awareness of concerns regarding their Provider's response to a Cheshire East request. Their support in ensuring that our child or young person receives health services in line with Statutory Guidance is requested, and that the completed RHA is returned without delay. During Quarters 3 and 4 2018-19, there have been 11 escalations to the CCG. As a result, 9 RHAs have been returned promptly, 1 remains outstanding due to the young person refusing to engage and 1 has been completed but failed quality assurance so has been returned to the practitioner for amendments.

**% RHA's Completed by the due month (Source Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust)**

**Table 2. RHAs completed within due month Quarter 3 2018-19**

	Children placed in Cheshire East area	Children placed out of borough
<b>Number of children requiring an RHA during Quarter 3</b>	129	51
<b>Number of RHAs completed within the month due</b>	105 (81%) ↑	38 (75%) ↑
<b>Number of RHAs outstanding</b>	29	13

**Table 3. RHAs completed within due month Quarter 4 2018-19**

	Children placed in Cheshire East area	Children placed out of borough
<b>Number of children requiring an RHA during Quarter 4</b>	129	51
<b>Number of RHAs completed within the month due</b>	105 (83%) ↑	38 (84%) ↑
<b>Number of RHAs outstanding</b>	19	7

## Care Leavers Health Passports

All young people who leave care when they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday should receive a summary of their health history. During 2018-19 there has been continued work by the Clinical Nurse Specialist 16+ in the Cared for Children's Team to ensure that all young people are leaving care at the age of 18 years with a meaningful, relevant summary of their health history. Engagement has been successful in a large proportion of cases and has involved an innovative and constantly evolving approach to access even the most hard to reach young people. Further work which will involve the participation of young people is planned in summer 2019 to review the current format of the health summary and adapt if required using the views and comments of young people.

During Quarter 4, there were 14 young people who reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and left care. Of the 14, 13 (93%) were offered and accepted a summary of their health history which is a significant improvement on previous quarters. The one young person who has not yet received a health summary during Quarter 4 has multiple complex health needs and requires the document to be presented in an adapted format. This has been arranged and is being completed by a nurse who knows the young person well and will therefore be best placed to deliver this piece of work in a way that the young person will find easy to understand.

## **Corporate Parenting Operational Group Workstream 4 – ‘Help Me Be Healthy’**

This group continues to meet bi-monthly and membership consists of Local Authority and Health Partners. An action log is maintained and priorities are reviewed and updated at each meeting. The following priorities for 2019-20 have been identified:

### **Priorities for 2019-20**

- Review of the SDQ strategy to ensure the completed scores inform the annual health assessment and care planning
- Strengthen the process for maintaining oversight of all our children and young people placed out of area
- Improving Services for Looked After Children as required by Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked after Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England (2015): The performance and quality of health input for children in care and care leavers has been constantly monitored by reviewing the timeliness and quality of all health assessments, and by close partnership working with LA colleagues. There have been changes made to service delivery in some areas and plans for further improvements to continue into 2019-20. An area for particular focus will be around the use of the electronic information systems within both the LA and NHS organisations and ways to improve functionality and accuracy will be explored. Further areas for development during the coming year will be detailed in the annual report for 2018-19
- Completion of a Self-Audit by the Cared For Children’s Nursing Team team in line with commissioning standards: This will be used to benchmark current services provided against commissioning standards and identify areas where improvement/development is required
- Strengthening of training arrangements: Undertake a training need analysis of the multi-agency workforce to identify existing gaps in knowledge to promote delivery of statutory responsibilities and role as corporate parents. Develop a training strategy to develop interagency training across the health economy to improve the workforce knowledge and understanding of the LAC and Care Leaver population.

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# **Use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) with Cared for Children in Cheshire East.**

**Shan McParland**

**Designated Nurse for Cared for  
Children and Care Leavers**

*NHS Eastern Cheshire  
Clinical Commissioning Group*

*NHS South Cheshire  
Clinical Commissioning Group*

# What is the SDQ?

- Brief tool for screening emotional and behavioural problems in children and young people aged three to 17
- 3 versions – **Parent/Carer, Teacher and Self**
- 25 statements - respondent is asked, on three point scale, to what extent they agree
- Results in five sub scores covering:
  - hyperactivity/inattention symptoms
  - emotional symptoms
  - conduct problems
  - peer relationship problems
  - pro-social behaviours (i.e. strengths).

## How is it used?

- SDQ tool is designed for administration by trained practitioners.
- From the responses to the statements, a single summary figure is produced for each child (***'total difficulties score'***) which ranges from 0 to 40
- a score of under 14 is considered normal
- 14-16 is borderline cause for concern
- 17 or over is considered a cause for concern.

# How is it used?

- A pathway is in place to provide clarity on action required in the event of a score causing concern
- Action may take the form of monitoring, advice and support for carers, the child/young person or other professionals working with the child, or a referral into a specialist service.
- Authorities submit SDQ data to the DfE alongside outcomes data on themes such as placement changes, educational attainment, substance misuse and offending (DfE 2015a, DfE and DH 2015).

# Key points



- SDQ is nationally recognised as a measure of children and young people's emotional and mental health.
- Open to interpretation & professional judgement must also be used.
- Government guidance recommends that in addition to data collection, LAs also use the SDQ to:
  - Inform a child's initial health assessment & health plan
  - Identify specific emotional & behavioural difficulties that may warrant specific intervention
  - Help quantify the needs of the children in care to inform population-wide strategies for health services. (DfE and DH, 2015 pp10,17,30).

# Use of SDQ in Cheshire East



- In 2017/18, SDQs completed by carers in relation to 96% of 4-16 year olds which is an excellent compliance rate

Year end	Average score	Normal range (under 14)	Borderline (14-17)	Concern (17+)
2013/14	14.2	45%	14%	41%
2014/15	13.4	50%	15%	34%
2015/16	14.6	46%	10%	45%
2016/17	14.6	44%	3%	53%
2017/18	14.0	48%	14%	38%

# Future Plans in Cheshire East



- Review of the SDQ pathway
- Strengthen the use of the SDQ within all services
- Consistent use at point of entry to care
- Ensure it is fully embedded in the review health assessment process
- Training for all staff working with C4C on use of the SDQ

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*Working for a brighter future together*

## **Corporate Parenting Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** 18 June 2019

**Report Title:** Children's Homes Mobilisation Update

**Portfolio Holder:** Dorothy Flude Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

**Senior Officer:** Dave Leadbetter, Head of Children's Commissioning

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### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1. This report provides an update to Corporate Parenting Committee on the mobilisation of the children's homes commission.

### **2. Recommendation/s**

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
  - 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation/s**

- 3.1. Corporate Parenting Committee plays a key role in scrutinising and challenging performance to improve outcomes for cared for children and young people. The commission of children's homes supports cared for children to have a safe and stable home and a basis for our children and young people to flourish.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1. None; this is an update report.

### **5. Background**

- 5.1. Cabinet agreed a commissioning model to put in place sufficient accommodation of a good quality that is local to the cared for children's home community.
- 5.2. The Commissioning Question we posed as we went out to tender was:

'As Corporate Parents how do we ensure that Cheshire East Council consistently commissions high quality residential care for our cared for children that is safe, stable and delivers outstanding outcomes. The commissioning approach needs to create a strong partnership with providers, support permanency planning and provide value for money.'

5.3. An outline of the procurement process we undertook is as follows:

Following market engagement and senior officer consideration of the best model of service delivery to achieve outstanding outcomes for our cared for children, a transparent and compliant tender process was undertaken that included:

- 1) A written submission that was scored against the quality questions we set on the following themes:
  - Mobilisation
  - Key attributes for an outstanding service
  - Assessment and matching
  - Continuous improvement
  - Safeguarding
  - Social Value
  - Child Centred Service Development Plan
- 2) A face to face negotiation / clarification stage
- 3) Presentations followed by a question and answer session to a young people panel (two of our cared for children who have lived in a residential setting) and a separate evaluation team panel
- 4) Assessment and scoring of the financial submissions

5.4. The above culminated in the following lots awarded based on a cost / quality evaluation:

**Safe Places for Children** awarded:

Lot 2 – 3 bed Children's Home in Crewe – with property available (Broad Street)

Lot 3 – 3 bed Children's Home in Macclesfield – with property available (Victoria Lodge)

**Horizon Care** awarded:

Lot 4 – 3 bed Children's Home in Crewe – property to be sourced

Lot 5 – 3 bed Children's Home in Macclesfield – property to be sourced

**Lot 1** (the current operational home – **Claremont**) - was not awarded as the price submitted (£677,820 pa) was significantly beyond that expected (even after taking into account the legacy Cheshire East pay and conditions that

remain across the staff group at Claremont). Hexagon were the only bidder for Lot 1 and their quality score was lowest of the three final bidders. We have agreed to continue with the current contract with **Bettercare Keys** to run Claremont ( cost £403,586 pa). Bettercare Keys have confirmed that they will honour the existing contract terms for the duration of the contract (three year initial period running to 31 March 2020, with 2 x 12 month extensions available) which, from a cost perspective, is extremely positive. From an operational point of view the Registered Manager and staff group at Claremont have moved from Cheshire East Council systems, recording and management oversight to Bettercare Keys just over two years ago and another significant change and re-registration so soon after could be very disruptive for the home.

### 5.5. Did we meet the commissioning question posed:

- Our specification and direct contact with bidders during the tender process (including young peoples views) has provided the successful bidders with a clear understanding of our expectations / standards, focus on excellent outcomes for young people and direction of travel re a 'No Wrong Door' type model of service delivery ie multi-agency approach to supporting plans to return to family / friends or step down to fostering.
- Safe Places for Children and Horizon Care demonstrated their focus on excellent outcomes for our children, resilience through difficult times and a strong partnership ethos.
- The price submitted and agreed for both providers was very similar and provides the Local Authority with good value for money that is secured for a period of seven years. The prices secured through the tender are below the current market rate, which continues to increase at a rapid pace.
- The proof of the above positive position will be in the actual delivery and this will be assured through close partnership via Resource Allocation Panel, Permanence Forums , effective contract management and the inclusion of the providers as an integral element of the new Care Hub arrangement that we are planning.

## 6. Update on mobilisation progress since award of contracts

### 6.1 Safe Places for Children

- We have appointed a Registered Manager for Crewe (Broad Street) and she joined the last mobilisation meeting with LA commissioners. Safe Places have submitted their registration pack to Ofsted however the complete registration process can take between 12 - 16 weeks and sometimes longer depending on volume of applications and Ofsted capacity. Safe Places should take possession of Broad St next week as Housing clients have now move out and a programme of refurbishment will then commence.

- The Registered Manager for Macclesfield (Victoria Lodge) has just been appointed and Safe Places expect to take possession of Victoria Lodge by the end of June. A programme of refurbishment will start and Ofsted registration pack submitted.

### 6.2 Horizon Care

- Have sourced a home in Willaston and a planning application has been submitted, with an expected decision on the 5th July. Following the planning decision an 8 week refurbishment programme will start and Ofsted registration will commence; the complete registration process can take between 12 - 16 weeks and sometimes longer depending on volume of applications and Ofsted capacity.
- A Registered Manager has been appointed and her application with Ofsted will be ready to submit on the 15th June. Advertisements are out across the region to recruit the wider staff team.
- Horizon Care are still trying to source a property in Macclesfield which should be done by mid June.

6.3 It was agreed at the last mobilisation meeting that the two providers would arrange to meet to plan an agreed approach to community engagement and correspondence / engagement with elected members.

6.4 Given the good progress detailed above, and with the caveat of timescales for Ofsted registration, an indicative timeline for the homes opening would see Broad Street open in October 2019, followed by Victoria Lodge and the new Horizon Care home in Willaston in November / December 2019. The second Horizon Care home in Macclesfield is likely to open early 2020. Staggered opening dates will help with the capacity required to mobilise effectively and for good planning for the right children to transition to their new homes.

6.5 Heads of Service and Service Managers in Children's Social Care are currently working to identify those children currently in residential placements that should move into the new homes as they open. This requires careful consideration of the following:

- Young persons' views
- Outcomes
- How far the young person is currently placed away from their local community
- Improved ability to move back to family / friends or step down to fostering
- Stability of placement and recent history of moves

- Cost efficiency

## **7. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **7.1. Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications of this report.

### **7.2. Finance Implications**

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

### **7.3. Equality Implications**

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

### **7.4. Human Resources Implications**

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

### **7.5. Risk Management Implications**

The main risk is that the Children's Homes do not mobilise within the required timescales and the Local Authority has to revert to purchasing from Framework Contracts or spot purchasing. This could have financial consequences, impact negatively on the initiative to establish a Cheshire East Care Hub and could impact on cared for children being able to live local. The mobilisation is being co-ordinated by commissioning and service managers and the progress of our two new providers to date is positive.

### **7.6. Rural Communities Implications**

None.

### **7.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

- 7.7.1. The contents of this report should have positive implications for cared for children as the aim is to provide good quality, local homes for our cared for children.

### **7.8. Public Health Implications**

- 7.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

## **8. Ward Members Affected**

- 8.1. The commissioned Children's Homes are to be located in Crewe & Nantwich and also Macclesfield.

## **9. Consultation & Engagement**

9.1. None.

## **10. Access to Information**

10.1. None.

## **11. Contact Information**

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

Name: Dave Leadbetter  
Job Title: Head of Children's Commissioning  
Email: [dave.leadbetter@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:dave.leadbetter@cheshireeast.gov.uk)



# 1255796

Registered provider: Keys Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a national organisation in partnership with the local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to three children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The manager has been registered since March 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 9 to 10 April 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 23 May 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/05/2018	Full	Good
08/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
16/08/2017	Full	Good



## What does the children's home need to do to improve?

### Recommendations

- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

In particular, staff must act to protect children and adults from aggression, racist abuse, sexualised behaviour and language.

- The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained and refreshed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)

In particular, ensure that staff have training to enhance their knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is at risk from harmful sexual behaviour. Furthermore, ensure that staff have the expertise to address harmful behaviour, including racist and sexual language, and to help children to develop safe and healthy relationships.

- Records of staff supervision should provide evidence that practice-related supervision is being delivered. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3)

In particular, ensure that the record of supervision shows: the discussions that have taken place about professional practice; that staff have reflected critically on their work with children, colleagues and other professionals, and their involvement in any serious events; and identify their learning and how this is being used to inform practice and find the best ways to support children.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child living at the home is receiving good-quality care that is meeting his assessed needs and making a difference to his life.

The child has a strong sense of belonging and trusting relationships with the adults caring for him. He can talk to them and knows that they will listen and try their best to help him. A social worker said, 'He gets on really well with his key workers. He loves the banter with them. They get him, and he sees this.'

The manager agrees to look after a child only once she is satisfied that staff can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs. She also carefully considers each child's compatibility with the children already living at the home. The manager identifies each child's vulnerabilities and the precautions needed to manage any assessed risks.

The manager and staff have created a home learning environment that supports children's education. For example, the staff have helped a child to settle into a new school, where his attendance has improved significantly to over 90%. He is also making pleasing academic progress.

Staff work effectively with teachers, social workers and the virtual school to manage any difficulties and overcome barriers. They help children to do well and to achieve their full potential. For example, the staff have worked with a school and a training provider to arrange a work placement for one child, with an electrician. The child is loving the experience, and is highly motivated and working hard. When another child was previously permanently excluded from school, the staff helped her to see the benefits of continuing with her education and the value of gaining qualifications. This support helped her to re-engage in education, which, in turn, increases her future life chances.

Staff encourage and support children to develop their hobbies, interests and talents. They are helping one child to follow his love of fishing. He goes fishing at every opportunity. Staff take him, make sure that it is safe and get him the equipment that he needs. This is an important part of his life. He is growing in confidence and has a sense of calm, as well as pride in himself in his achievements. He loves talking about fishing and sharing his skills with staff, such as showing them how to hold a fish and keep it calm before returning it to the water.

Children see their families regularly. Staff make sure that it is a safe and positive experience for everyone involved. This has helped children to rebuild relationships with their parents, brothers and sisters and relatives. One child is seeing his mother more often and staying overnight with her.

Recently, the staff have supported another child to return to live with her family. The move was planned carefully with the child, her family, social worker and the other professionals involved in her life. Together, they made sure that she and her family were

ready and that the right help was in place to support them as they looked towards the future.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Children live in a safe, supportive and reliable home environment. The manager and staff's knowledge and professional practice protect children from harm.

Staff understand the impact of children's adverse experiences on their development. They have a clear insight into the reasons behind children's behaviour and provide children with the warmth, structure and consistent boundaries that they need to feel safe and emotionally secure.

Staff speak to children clearly and in ways that the children find easy to understand. The staff do not overload children with too much information. For example, when the manager saw that one child was starting to get anxious about when he was going fishing, she took him through his plan for the day, step by step, and he calmed down immediately.

Staff work positively with children to find the best way possible to support, empower and help them to deal with their feelings. Staff use well-informed strategies that help children when they are having a difficult time. They intervene calmly and confidently, and encourage children to make the right choices. For example, staff helped a child to choose not to get involved in another child's negative behaviour.

The staff are adept at helping children to find their own coping strategies, such as fishing, listening to music or going for a drive with staff. One child has now started to come to staff to let them know when he is beginning to find things difficult and to ask for help. As a result, he has not needed physical help to stay safe in the last least three months. Previously, when living at the home with another child, he had struggled to cope with strong feelings and to manage his behaviour. Both children struggled to get on at times, and this had led to safeguarding concerns because the staff were not always successful in managing risks involving aggression and harmful sexualised behaviour.

The manager took decisive action to deal with these concerns. She worked effectively with social workers, the local authority and police to manage the situation safely. The risk of harm reduced and suitable plans for each child's care and support were developed. This included the professionals recognising that one child's needs were best met by not living with other children.

The manager and staff have put the learning from this experience into practice. For example, they are developing a consistent way to address children's use of racist and sexualised language. However, staff would benefit from opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills regarding the risks associated with harmful sexualised behaviour, such as how to address such harmful behaviour and how to help children to develop safe and healthy relationships.

**The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The manager provides clear and effective leadership. She is ambitious for children to live in a safe and supportive home where they can achieve better outcomes and lead happy and fulfilling lives. The staff share these high expectations and work hard to provide children with the support and guidance that they need.

The manager has a detailed and accurate understanding of the home's strengths, and acts to improve the quality of care that children receive.

The manager has made good use of training, advice and guidance from the organisation's psychologists and behaviour support team to develop a trauma-aware way of working with children. Staff's practice is better informed about the impact of children's experiences on their emotional development and relationships. This approach is having a positive impact on children's sense of safety and emotional well-being.

The manager and staff actively engage with other agencies to make sure that each child's needs are met. The staff communicate clearly with these partners to make sure that everyone has an up-to-date picture of children's lives. The manager challenges other services, including schools, assertively to make sure that children receive the support that they need. The manager is now meeting regularly with the local authority to plan and consider which children the home can best support.

Staff contribute fully to the ongoing assessment of children's needs and the planning for their care. Children's records and person-centred plans now provide a detailed picture of their lives and include accurate information to measure their progress.

The manager provides each member of staff with good support, guidance and encouragement. The staffing arrangements make sure that children receive continuity of care and build safe and stable relationships with the adults looking after them.

Staff have regular opportunities through practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect on their work with children and to improve their practice. However, the records do not always capture the discussions that have taken place about professional practice. For example, they do not show how staff have reflected critically on their work with children, nor do the records identify the staff's learning and how they are using it to find the best ways to support children.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1255796

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Keys Childcare Limited

**Registered provider address:** Maybrook House, Queensway, Halesowen,  
Worcestershire B63 4AH

**Responsible individual:** David Carser

**Registered manager:** Angela Laurie

## Inspector

Nick Veysey, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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## CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

### Purpose

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.

### Terms of Reference

1. Act as advocates for cared for children and care leavers, ensuring that their needs are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council and its commissioned services.
2. Ensure key strategic plans and reports relating to children in care and care leavers including the Children's Improvement Plan, Corporate Parenting Strategy and Sufficiency Statement.
3. Oversee the implementation of Cheshire East's Corporate Parenting Strategy and action plan and monitor the quality and effectiveness of services to ensure they fulfil the council's responsibilities.
4. Monitor the quality of care delivered by Cheshire East's residential children's homes via the provision of regular reports including summary reports of Regulation 44 visits and Ofsted inspections.
5. Review the performance of the Council in relation to outcomes for children and young people in care via the scrutiny of both quarterly performance reports and the annual reports of the Cared for Children Service, the Independent Reviewing Service and the Virtual School.
6. Establish an environment whereby Elected Members and young people work together to address the needs and aspirations of Cheshire East's children and young people in care and empower children and young people to participate in decision making with adults.

7. Oversee, with the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the implementation of best practice principles in all aspects of service delivery, with the aim of producing positive outcomes for children and young people in care.
8. Support the work of foster carers and adopters in making a difference to the care and support they provide to children and young people in care and those adopted.
9. Make sure that staff and partners follow Cheshire East's pledge for cared for children and young people and the care leaver's charter.
10. Receive and scrutinise the Independent Review Officers' Annual Report

### Governance

The Committee will:

- meet bi-monthly;
- report to the Council's Cabinet on at least an annual basis;
- report to the Council's Scrutiny Committee annually: and
- include young people representatives from the Children in Care Council.

### Administration

The Board will be serviced by Democratic Services in line with other Council Committees.

Minutes and agendas will be distributed and published no later than 5 clear working days prior to the meeting.

The meetings will take place out of school hours to enable cared for children and young people to participate.

### Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed yearly.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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