

# Corporate Parenting Committee

## Agenda

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**Date:** Tuesday, 7th March, 2017  
**Time:** 5.00 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.

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**

To receive any 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 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2017.

4. **Update on Response from Committee to Children and Young People's Input in January**

Verbal Update.

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5. **Provision and Outcomes for Care Leavers** (Pages 9 - 20)

To consider a report relating to provision and outcomes for care leavers.

6. **Corporate Parenting Committee Update** (Pages 21 - 28)

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

7. **Service Improvement Plan, Children's Social Care** (Pages 29 - 48)

To consider the Service Improvement Plan, Children's Social Care.

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

The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded.

The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

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

9. **Report on Cared For Children and Care Leavers - Vulnerable Groups** (Pages 49 - 72)

To consider a report in respect of cared for children and care leavers vulnerable groups.

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 24th January, 2017 in Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

### **PRESENT**

Councillor G Hayes (Chairman)  
Councillor G Merry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors P Butterill, B Dooley, S Edgar, D Flude, S Pochin and L Smetham

### **Officers in attendance:**

Gill Betton – Head of Children's Development and Partnerships  
P Lambert – Head of Cared for Children  
Nigel Moorhouse – Director of Children's Social Care  
Cherry Foreman – Democratic Services Officer

### **23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Grant, J Saunders, G Wait and M Warren.

### **24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2016 be approved as a correct record.

### **26 INPUT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON FIVE PRIORITY AREAS**

Representatives from the Corporate Parenting Committee Shadow Board of Children in Care and Care Leavers attended the meeting and were introduced to the Committee. The Chairman reported that both he and the Vice-Chairman had met with the Shadow Board previously and been most impressed with its involvement to date.

The Shadow Board had been invited to attend the meeting in order to present to Members some of the issues it had identified as being of concern to children in care, and which they would like the Committee to investigate further. The following common themes had emerged during its discussions:

#### Paperwork and permissions

This included the upset and disappointment caused when permission was not received in time to go to a friend's house for tea or a sleepover; participate in a

school activity; the time taken to obtain a passport or a driving licence for example.

### Education

Additional support was needed for children who had to move from school to school a number of times; greater assistance in helping to understand and access funding for further education; assistance in obtaining a bus pass.

Whilst the young people understood that some difficulties were caused by safeguarding or health and safety issues, they asked if processes could be speedier and easier to understand. There was also concern that the reasons given to them when a delay did occur, or a permission was refused, might not necessarily be the most honest answer and this caused additional frustration.

The Chairman confirmed he would investigate their concerns further with both Members and Officers and respond to the Shadow Board direct.

In discussing the input of the Shadow Board and thanking them for attending the meeting, a discussion ensued on how best to co-ordinate business between it and the Committee. It was agreed that once the Committee meeting dates for the coming municipal year had been confirmed, the Shadow Board would arrange its meetings to fit in with its timetable; this would enable Members to attend Shadow Board meetings at a time and place more convenient for the young people and for them to then report back on its discussions.

*The Members of the Shadow Board were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting.*

With reference to cared for children and education, consideration was given to the input of the Virtual School and whether proposed changes in the application of the pupil premium grant would enable it to be used to assist in improving outcomes of cared for children. The Committee was advised this could be included in the annual report of the Virtual School which was due to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee. In addition a report on the Care Leaver Offer was due to be considered by the Committee at a future meeting and this would encompass some of the concerns with regard to further education.

Members confirmed they had found the input of the Shadow Board very useful and asked how younger children in care could be offered a similar opportunity to make their voice heard; it was agreed this be given further consideration.

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the points raised by the Corporate Parenting Committee Shadow Board of Children in Care and Care Leavers be noted and investigated further, and that a response be presented back to the Shadow Board direct.
2. That consideration be given the role of younger cared for children with the Committee and how to enable them to have a voice and be involved.

The Committee was invited to consider a report prepared for the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board on its role as corporate parent for the health and well being of children in their care. The purpose of the report was to provide assurance to the Board and to highlight any potential areas for service improvement in 2016/17. It recognised both the statutory responsibilities and the role of agencies working together as corporate parents.

The Designated Nurse for Cared for Children presented the report which covered such aspects as the number of children in care in Cheshire East, health indicators, staffing and funding. The report listed 11 priorities and actions and the Committee was advised that a detailed action plan had been produced taking these into account following the Care Quality Commission Inspection report published at the end of last year.

It was noted that multi agency partnerships were being strengthened through working with the Corporate Parenting Operational Group, which reported to this Committee, so enabling greater scrutiny of how local authority and health services worked together in relation to the health of cared for children.

Members expressed concern that Cheshire East only has a Designated Nurse for 22.5 hours per week, when the guidance recommends this should be 37 hours for an area the size of Cheshire East. This was of particular concern in the light of the initial health assessment timescales for completion. It was explained that this is currently being monitored by Health colleagues.

### **RESOLVED**

That a further health report be considered by the Committee in approximately 6 months time.

## **28 CLAREMONT RESIDENTIAL HOME OFSTED REPORT**

Consideration was given to the results of the Ofsted inspection carried out in November 2016 at Claremont Residential Home which had been rated as Good in all categories. The Chairman and the Committee thanked the team at Claremont for their work in achieving this outcome. This was considered to be an excellent report and the focus would now be on sustaining this standard of care.

Members were particularly interested in residential homes within Cheshire East that are not overseen by Cheshire East, the involvement of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in ensuring these are safe, cross boundary work with neighbouring authorities, and the position with regard to cared for children placed outside the area. It was agreed that a further report be considered by the Committee at a future meeting to provide an update and including some of these points.

### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

## **29 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE REPORT**

Consideration was given to an update on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people. National updates included the launch of a consultation by the DfE for the new National Assessment and Accreditation System for child and family social workers (NAAS), and also a working group established by the Department of Health and Education to look into the mental health and emotional wellbeing of looked after children.

Local developments included:

- Local House Project
- Budget proposals
- STAR Awards
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- The Regional Adoption Agency
- Special Educational Needs and Disability – Preparing for Adulthood Policy
- Social worker recruitment strategy
- Signs of Safety Innovation Bid

In addition, as agreed at the last meeting, the first populated scorecard showing measures of performance was considered. Members took the opportunity to explore some of the information in greater detail or to seek clarification.

### **RESOLVED**

That the report and the scorecard be noted.

### **30 MEETING DATES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017**

The Committee discussed the meetings for the forthcoming municipal year. Meetings had been arranged to begin at 5.00pm in order to accommodate the attendance of cared for children. It was suggested, however, that it now be moved to 4.00pm which would still facilitate that but also make it more convenient for some Members.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Officers agree a schedule of meetings for circulation to the Committee.

### **31 SUFFICIENCY STATEMENT FOR CARED FOR CHILDREN 2016 - 2017**

The Committee considered the Sufficiency Statement which had been refreshed following its initial production in 2015. It sets out the vision for Cheshire East to be a place where children and young people thrive and are safe from harm, feel physically and emotionally healthy, have access to outstanding education and feel prepared for, and excited by, adulthood.

The Statement sets out the provision the authority has in place for the children for which it is responsible ensuring it is flexible, diverse and influenced by what they wanted.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Sufficiency Statement be noted.

**32 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

**33 REGULATION 44 INDEPENDENT INSPECTIONS OF CHILDREN'S HOMES ANNUAL REPORT 2015 - 2016**

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.45 pm

Councillor G Hayes (Chairman)

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## Cheshire East Council

### Corporate Parenting Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Report of:** Anji Reynolds, Service Manager, Permanence and Through Care Team

**Subject/Title:** Provision and Outcomes for Care Leavers

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Liz Durham

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#### 1. Introduction- Care Leavers in Cheshire East

Cheshire East currently has 195 care leavers (end January 2017) which we are currently working with aged 16-25 years. Of those 67 are eligible (16/17) who remain cared for and 3 are relevant (16/17) who have left care but living independently. There are 125 former relevant (18+). We also offer a 21+ service giving support, advice and guidance to any who may wish this support up to the age of 25 who are not in FE education, training or doing an apprenticeship. In some instances we would also consider short term allocation to give continuity to the person if required.

In July 2016 the Government published their strategy 'Keep on Caring' Supporting People from Care to Independence and sets out the Government's vision in 5 key outcomes for care leavers (below) which will underpin how we work with care leavers;



## 2. The Care Leaver's Service 2016

In November 2014 the 16+ team merged with the care planning and CWD team to form the Permanence and Through Care Team. Existing Personal Advisers were being supervised by 5 generic Team Managers; one having specialist knowledge of leaving care services.

In time, the Care Leaver service has evolved into a bigger team and the management structure didn't lend itself to being a cohesive group with a clear distinct identity. In January 2016 it proposed an arrangement to move the Care Leavers Service under the management of one interim Care Leavers Team Manager.

In March 2016 we ended our role on New Belongings project working in cluster groups with Trafford, Stockport, Lancashire, Blackpool and Bury. This gave us an existing platform with these outcomes above as we had already put together a CE plan reflecting the above, so thoughts had already been well developed at this point around these themes.

In July 2016 a new permanent Care Leaver manager was recruited. With one Team Manager covering 16 staff members a deputy role was put in place but she left the employment of CE at the end of 2016. With this number of staff and the determination to 'get to good' across all of these areas, this has required a reshaping of our structure and in the way we work. The following aims to set out how we propose to do this;

### I. Work streams and Champion roles

Creating work streams around the strategy allows us to focus on improving outcomes in these key areas – EET, Health, 'Readiness for Independence', Financial Stability and Housing (safe, secure and stable).

We are creating Champion roles as progression routes for Personal Adviser's (PA's) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

We have 3 existing staff members who will take the lead for EET, Health and Readiness for Independence. It is envisaged that from 1<sup>st</sup> October we will consider recruiting another 'Champion' role for Housing and Finance. We envisage this will give us a clear focus on the job role that PA's do – outcomes measured. It will also give clarity in how we do this – working as a team, together, with care leavers. It is intended to improve communication with partners across these strands with one key named worker responsible for developing and working closely with the Team Manager. As a service the PDP targets will be around the 5 outcomes strategy by developing outcome focused work streams with care leavers so we can respond to – How do we know if it's any good?

The Champions will work closely with the Team Manager on the 5 key outcomes to co-ordinate the work streams, develop resources, produce a quarterly report and work closely with care leavers so focus of the work is shaped by their needs and their feedback. Our Champions are:



The 'Readiness for Independence' champion, the EET champion and the Health champion will work closely with the service, care leavers and social workers in these key areas;



# Improved access to Education, Employment and Training

**Cheshire East Council**



- TRAINEESHIPS
- APPRENTICESHIPS
- HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
- WORK BASED OPPORTUNITIES
- CVs, WORK READINESS, COACHING

**health**

**Improved access to health support**

**Cheshire East Council**

- EMOTIONAL WELL BEING
- MENTAL HEALTH
- REDUCE RISK AROUND TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND PARENTING
- SEXUAL IDENTITY AND SEXUAL HEALTH
- HEALTH PASSPORTS FOR CARE LEAVERS

## II. Monthly Challenge Meetings, Quality Assurance and Auditing

In addition to the focus on developing work around the strategy and work streams there's been a drive to improve the quality of pathway plans and the tool used with care leavers. A task group worked on a new look pathway plan and this 'went live' on the children's system on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Service Manager's thematic audits and challenge meetings have explored a range of topics including; adoption

breakdowns in adolescence (13 to date over 16+), University attendees (10), apprenticeships (7-9) (, Pregnant and Parents (24), Foyer accommodation, Staying Put arrangements (16), EEA nationals, UASC support as part of a deeper dive into our work.

### III. Raising the profile of work with Care Leavers

The staff have delivered a number of presentations about the service to care leavers at the Practice and Development Workshops held in Crewe and Macclesfield in March 2016 and in December 2016. We have also delivered a presentation to the Fostering Forum in January 2017 and to the 'Skills to Fostering' training programme to assist foster carers thinking towards independent living and how they prepare cared for children and aid their skills for moving on. These events were well received.

With greater resources to meet the growing demand of the service, earlier allocation of a Personal Adviser to an 'eligible child' is now matched on turning 16 and most certainly by their first pathway plan review. (Due to resources a year ago in February 2016 there were 27 16/17 year olds not allocated to a PA. In February 2017 a review showed that currently 3 not yet allocated.) The PA's role is to support independent living skills.

### 3. What are we doing?

#### Better prepared and supported to live independently / Engagement and Participation

Independence Packs (Bronze, Silver and Gold) designed by the PA's to use as a tools to work with young people in thinking about the work needing done to support their independent skills. A number of social workers are using this tool to assess their young people's independence skills. Tenancy Readiness Programme offers CLs opportunity to think about the merits of having their own property and the responsibilities that may come with this. Four programmes were set up over 2016 and 13 young people engaged in this work over a 4-6 week period, with 4-6 care leavers participating at any one time. 7 have successfully moved to independent living, 2 have moved into Supported Lodgings, 3 have taken part in a trail at the taster flat and one has a moving on plan for semi independence from residential care in the coming months. One care leaver fed back "The course reiterated to him that he is not yet ready for independent living and requires further support from his host."



We now have improved knowledge of our data, better oversight and understanding of our service and a 16/17 year old tracker to think about next steps accommodation options. Better data tracking on numbers in staying put arrangements, semi-independent provisions, Forum Housing and reviewed by the Team Manager in monthly challenge sessions.

Last year 25 young people were referred to the **IGNITION PANEL** which is an innovative project that has been established to support young people to have the best, most appropriate transition for when they leave care. Ignition is for young people aged 15½ plus who are thinking about where and how they would like to live when they leave care (we think the earlier we can plan the better the experience!). Making sure our young people start independence at the right time and in the right place provides the best chance for a positive journey to adulthood and will support the best possible life chances. The panel shares ideas, suggestions, good practice etc. to develop an action plan that will support each young person to achieve their future living goals. This may be accessing a taster house, supported lodging or being supported through a semi-independent setting with a phased transition to young people being in their own property. 3 young people who attended panel availed themselves of the taster flat over a 6 month period. Others obtained advice, more options to consider while others moved on to semi-independent provisions.

There are better 16+ options with ring fenced properties and even closer working with Commissioning services and input into the Sufficiency Statement. Having the training flat aids the work in supporting care leavers make up their minds on their next steps.

We are exploring the House Project as an alternative option to traditional offers. Funding Bid and scoping in progress.

We are working hard to try and reduce the experiences of care leavers facing homelessness and debt issues; with work being developed by the Team Manager and housing providers to prevent debts accruing and threat of eviction so there's a warning bell ringing out to our service long before this is considered an option.

Challenges:

Need earlier intervention so work begins from 14+ and closer working with Care Leavers Forum and the Fostering Forum and with social workers.

## Improved access to Education, Employment and Training



We have been successful with an Innovation Bid and recruited full time worker Mike Woods in October 2016 on a 2 year contract. Mike was a Job Coach prior to this employment with Cheshire East. Mike's role means he has been able to establish very quickly some of the barriers that prevent young people from getting into employment

Targeted approach to improving 16+ destinations for care leavers through funding from the Innovation Fund Bid and employment of a full time staff member who will focus on NEET status of care leavers and another staff member pending to support the work with 16-18 year olds. There is a sub-group called SPEED, which focuses on 16+ Education, Employment Destinations, which is a work group from across the services and focus on tracking 16-18 year olds and also 18-21 year olds.

Improved data reporting and reliance on Liquid Logic (LL) as central point for data collection has been a central feature over the work this past year. There is a Tracker

and measuring of EET in monthly Challenge Meetings held and a staff expectation all NEET are to have a CV updated – we will drive this forward to all young people, no exceptions.

EET PA Champion is liaising closely with all potential providers, agencies and resources within CE and providing more offers and choice of job, training or apprenticeship to care leavers.

3 have progressed and completed Apprenticeships in August 2016. We recently fine-tuned our EET reports to reflect the 16-18 EET figures and the 18-21 year olds data figures and we will test this out in our next SPEED meeting in March 2017. There were 7 \*end of December. Currently 5 listed and 2 x 21 year old FR care leavers doing apprenticeships. Improved tracking of this held within the PTC team.

NEET figure for 18-21 year olds lowered with targeted approach, care leavers being supported by their PA's to have CV's and work ready programmes such as 'Just drop in', Youth Support Team drop in, EET champion and improved funding to support this.

Challenges:

Public Transport links for some care leavers getting to and from their training or work destinations.

A low wage can deter some take up of an apprenticeship.

## Experiencing stability and feeling safe and secure

As already stated above, young people aged 16/17 are being referred to Ignition Panel to consider their next steps to give them choice about the accommodation options they may wish to consider.

Ofsted said we needed more robust risk assessments for our young people in the Foyer at YMCA. As a service we have taken the view that there needs to be a risk assessment on all young people in semi-independent provisions and this is now expected practice.



A working group is set up with commissioning to work closely with care leaver service around the Sufficiency Statement 2017-2018. The housing options have increased and offer;

- 2 YMCA ring fenced flats through IGNITION panel
- 5 ring fenced beds at Watermill House. Occupancy rates equate to 8 care leavers to date in Watermill House
- West Street - 4 beds secured at West Street in Crewe area
- Broad Street – semi-detached house in Crewe area.

Data suggests less than 3% in 'homeless' category.

There is a small % of care leavers that are choosing not to have contact with service –

2 x ARE (appeals rights exhausted) and 3 other (pregnant or new parent) who are only engaging with a SW in CIN/CP teams. Wirral and Tameside Ofsted inspections highlight the need to have closer scrutiny in this area. Clear efforts conveyed in case recording of our attempts to engage them and generally very good compliance with visits and young people seen in line with statutory requirements.

**Challenges:**

Transitions and allocation to adult services worker can sometimes take too long. Macclesfield area suggests potential drop in accommodation options.

**Improved access to health support**



A 16+ health nurse now working with CLS since her employment in July 2016.

A PA worker dedicated to 15 hours of targeted work towards 'Emotional Well-being' and leading a task group looking at research, resources and tools to

support assessment and support.

New tool called 'How am I doing?' being piloted to gauge and better support poor emotional well-being and an evaluation in progress February 2017.

'Pregnancy and Parenting' audit highlighted that we have 24 young women who are either parents or pregnant 16-21 years. A number working closely with CIN/CP teams requiring additional input and support with the care of their baby. We have good relationships with the Family Nurse Partnership but we will build on the offer to support these young mothers by setting up a programme run by the Health Champion. Our deep dive highlighted a high % have interventions and approximately over 25% have had their children removed from their care. We need to do more preventative work around healthy relationships due to high incidence of DV as a factor in these interventions.

Mentoring support offer is now available via Voice for Children (VfC) 6 mentors working with care leavers, mentoring offer from Children's Society, and Pure Insight (in the north of the borough).

KOOTH – workshop in February to discuss the online service to support care leavers with emotional well-being by telephone when they need the service.

**Challenges:**

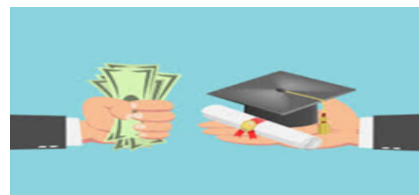
The 16+ time commitment that will be involved in completing Health Passports on all our care leavers. Health Passports need developing for care leavers as tend to feature in Ofsted inspections.

Some Parent Care Leavers child/ren on child protection plans, pre-proceedings or care proceedings due unhealthy relationships with their partners.

Role of CAMHS ending at 19 years and care leavers being placed on waiting lists for a service.

## Achieving Financial Stability

There is now an established link with the DWP lead Debra Washington who has attended our service meetings and recently at the one on the 20th October 2016. As a result 2 PA's will take an active role in closely working with the north and south job centres and attending their 'Comms' meetings and feeding back to the PA forum.



Mike Woods (EET champion) will establish contacts in the local Job Centres throughout CE as part of his role.

Credit Union offer to work with care leavers around budgeting, savings or bank accounts.

Pathway plan tool newly devised budget planner tool and 'live' since 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to support Budgeting Skills work with young people.

One minute guide issued to staff as an aid to assist with care leaver entitlements New financial Entitlements policy in draft. Clear detail. Local Offer being discussed at Benchmarking Forum in March 2017.

Pathway plans now evidencing all the financial entitlements and not authorised when these don't.

Council Tax Exemption and Cheshire East Council identified as one of 5 councils exempting care leavers.

Pathway plans now evidencing all the financial entitlements and sets out Triple Planning in the event young people UASC may not have right to remain in UK.

Challenges;

Working with UASC/EEA nationals and the support offer diminishing to this group with the Immigration Act 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

Delay in publishing our Entitlements Offer owing to the guidance and case law on UASC 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

## Is it any good? Key headlines

Better prepared and supported to live independently / Engagement and Participation	<p>4 Tenancy Readiness Groups took place over 2016 reaching 13 care leavers who participated in the programme. We are currently tracking their pathways to see how this programme assisted their decision making.</p> <p>A weekly Care Leavers Football Group is held on a Monday at Middlewich Leisure Centre with a good number of care leavers (up to 19 in total) have been attending this weekly event regularly with staff. This group has played against Cheshire Police and have a</p>
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	<p>proposed game planned with Cheshire Fire Service.</p> <p>A number of care leavers are known to Youth Justice Services – some on orders now having ended successfully through use of Divert.</p>
Improved Access to Health Support	<p>Immediate support offer to care leavers by telephone contact through commissioning of KOOTH - avoiding need to wait for adult's services referral or waiting lists.</p> <p>PA (15 hours per week) now supporting young people with emotional or MH issues around NEET status to improve confidence, self-esteem getting them re-engaged in a provision.</p>
EET	<p>Audit of Pathway Plans (Q1, Q2) showed there needed to be more evidence of improved outcomes in this area of their work around EET. Part 2 – needed more clarity in the plan as to how this was to be done with the young person i.e. stepping stones. Audits and Coaching sessions to improve written evidence of work done on EET.</p> <p>Over 2016 the CLS has worked hard to get young people work ready, off ESA, JSA and into work readiness programmes.</p> <p>When Ofsted visited in July 2015 our 18-21 NEET figure was 52%, higher than the national average. At the end January 2017 our NEET figure for 18-21 year olds is now below the national average (40%) having attained 36% this past month.</p>
Experiencing stability and feeling safe and secure	<p>We know the whereabouts of all of our young people except for 2 who are ARE (appeals rights exhausted).</p> <p>Keeping in touch - high compliance. 80% of care leavers seen every 2 months.</p> <p>Others are 'exception visits' outside these timescales, Adults with Disabilities, University students and those out of the country for example.</p> <p>The offer of a training flat and trial is working well with our Ignition Panel.</p>
Achieving Financial Stability	<p>More young people having their own bank accounts and ID documents, a good number are holding down tenancies, jobs, training opportunities and making a success of this.</p> <p>Small % that are chaotic and struggle to achieve financial stability with addictions.</p>

### How do we know?

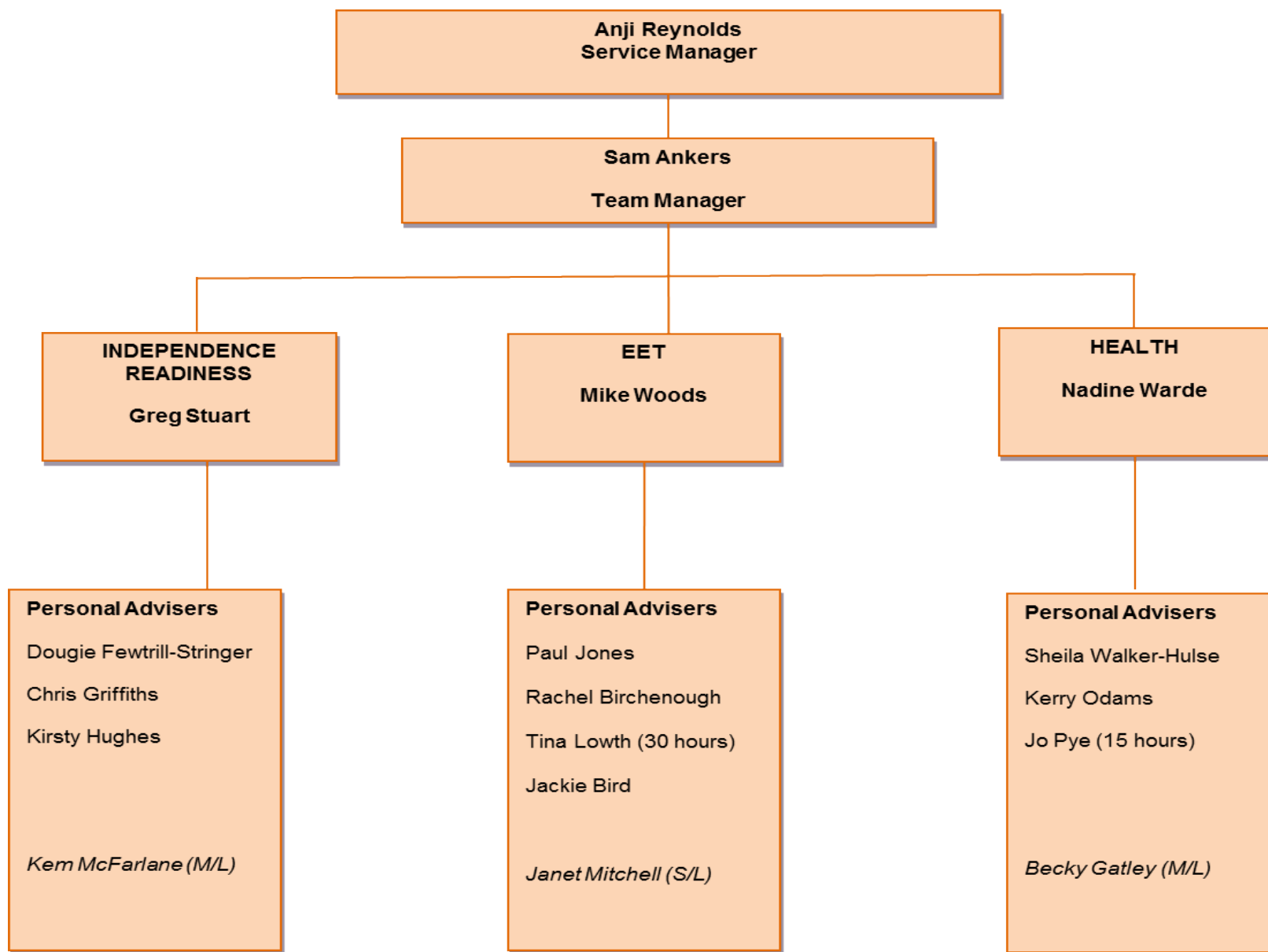
Pathway plans appear to evidence the views and voice of the care leaver who is generally consulted about their plans and participate. All the care leavers have an

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who independently reviews their pathway plan with the care leaver.

Audits capture the views of young people about their pathway plan. In very exceptional cases young people who are not engaging, are unlikely to have their current views in the plan. This related to a small % overall.

New in 2017, there is pre-arranged Children's Society 'drop in' at Cledford House, to speak to staff and cared for children's interest in the Children in Care Council. The Team Manager has now attended the Care Leavers Forum twice in the past 6 months to obtain their views. There's greater scope for our PA champion to develop these links between the service and the care leavers forum as we consider a review of our service plan and refocus on 2017/18.

Over 2017 we will also undertake a survey to obtain feedback from all care leavers we are working with.



## Cheshire East Council

### Corporate Parenting Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Report of:** Pete Lambert, Head of Cared for Children

**Subject/Title:** Corporate Parenting Update

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Liz Durham

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#### 1. Report Summary

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

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
- 2.1.1 Note the contents of the report;
  - 2.1.2 Consider the input of the Committee to the Annual Report as set out at paragraph 5.19; and
  - 2.1.3 Endorse the aims and learning outcomes of the corporate parenting training for elected members set out at 5.6.

#### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

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

#### 4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. None; this is an update report.

#### 5. Background

##### National Developments

##### Apprenticeship Levy

- 5.1. Changes which come into effect from May 2017 in respect of the new Apprentice Levy should make it easier for care leavers to be successful in

apprenticeships. There will be a levy on all large employers which will be used to support apprenticeships across the country. This money will support care leavers in two ways:

- Any employer who takes on an apprentice up to age 24 who has been in care will receive an additional £1000 to give additional support; and
- Training providers who provide the training and assessment element of the apprenticeship will receive £1000 for additional support.

- 5.2. The Virtual School and Social Care will be asking employers/providers how these funds will be used and also to make sure that the young person lets the employer/provider know about their care leaver status when applying.

### Children and Social Work Bill

- 5.3. The new Children and Social Work Bill, currently going through Parliament, has clauses that place new duties on the local authority and the Virtual School. This includes promoting the educational achievement of children adopted from care or who have left care through a special guardianship order (SGO) or child arrangements order (CAO). The legislation will place a duty on local authorities to appoint an officer (the virtual school head) to provide advice and information to parents, funded early years settings and schools; and will place a duty on the school governing body to appoint a designated teacher to support children in the school they attend.

### **Local Developments**

#### Arrangements for carrying out inspections of children's homes (Reg 44)

- 5.4. Quality assurance for the Children's Homes that Cheshire East commission or operate directly is important to ensure the best services for our cared for children. Regulation 44 visits and subsequent reports are an important part of the quality assurance framework surrounding Children's Homes and the greater the level of independence, the better. Each Children's Home is required to appoint an independent person to undertake Regulation 44 visits and to date Cheshire East Council have added support and challenge to the process via local Councillors and Voice for Children attending visits. As the Council moves to the wholly commissioned service model via Bettercare Keys, and also expands the number of Children's Homes to five, it is important that the added value that Councillors and Voice for Children provide is not lost. Bettercare Keys have agreed that our current arrangements for supporting Regulation 44 visits can continue when they mobilise the new Children's Home contract.

#### Update on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

- 5.5. There were no more unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) brought into Cheshire East under the last tranche. Cheshire East continues

to support 6 cared for children and 14 care leavers who were UASC as at the end of February 2017. These young people have settled in well and are receiving good support in Cheshire East.

### Corporate Parenting Training for Elected Members

5.6. Work is currently underway to develop corporate parenting training for elected members as part of a programme of child and adult safeguarding training that aims to:

- Understand the profile and needs of our cared for children;
- Understand their role in CE as corporate parents.
- Promote the welfare of children and adults at risk;
- Raise awareness of the key risk factors of abuse and neglect and how to identify signs and symptoms of concern;
- Have an understanding of current legislation with regard to safeguarding children and adults at risk;
- Know what to do if they are concerns that a child or adult at risk is being abused and how to respond to disclosure;
- Have an understanding of what LADO is and what to do if they are concerned about the behaviour of someone in a position of trust;
- Have an awareness of the role of a council member in relation to safeguarding children and adults at risk;

5.7. Specific learning outcomes around corporate parenting would include developing an understanding of:

- Who are our cared for children
- What are the challenges facing our cared for children
- Outcomes for our cared for children
- Understanding legislation with regard to cared for children
- Elected members role as corporate parents
- The role of the corporate parenting committee

### Foster Carer Survey and Action Plan

5.8. A Foster Carer Survey was commissioned in May 2016. The survey was distributed via an email link in June 2016 with a completion date 10 July 2016. The purpose of the survey was to gather the views of our in house foster carers in order to assist us in shaping the service over the next 12 months and beyond.

5.9. The survey, which was completed on line, comprised of 20 questions relating to all aspects of fostering and a final question which allowed the carers to give their personal views in terms of how the service could be improved. There were 55 responses in total representing a 38% response rate. The headlines from the survey were as follows:

- a. When asked 'what was very important in motivating you to continue fostering';

- Receiving adequate information about the child (89% of respondents)
  - Support from own children, family & friends (71% of respondents)
  - Well managed payment systems (71% of respondents)
  - Access to specialist help and advice (69% of respondents)
  - Only 37% of respondents thought that guaranteed respite was very important in motivating them to foster.
- b. When asked how satisfied foster carers are with the support they receive from their supervising social worker, 61% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied.
  - c. Over 80% of respondents strongly agree or agree that the training we provide gives good opportunities for development, is good for sharing new ideas and information and provides foster children with the best possible care.
  - d. Around 45% of respondents thought that we gave enough information about the child.
  - e. Over 86% of respondents are very clear or clear about their role in what outcomes need to be achieved for the child in their care.
  - f. Less than 50% of respondents told us that it was very easy or fairly easy to access information from our website. Information foster carers would like to see on our website include a who's who with contact numbers and roles, articles and up to date research and a handbook that is easier to find.
  - g. Comments received at the end of the survey had a number of themes; these were around stability and consistency, better matching of children, less agency staff and for foster carers to be treated as professionals.
  - h. All in all, the results have confirmed what we were hearing from our carers during our day to day conversations and we are now working on an action plan to address the issues that have been raised.

#### Response to the Foster Carer Survey and Action Plan.

- 5.10. We are actively driving forward the recruitment campaign for more foster carers, which in due course should allow for better matching of the children we place. We are specifically targeting the smaller ethnic communities and the LGBT community.
- 5.11. Work is underway in terms of providing more information via the Cheshire East Fostering Website. The aim is to provide up to date contact information, links to helpful resources and easier access to policies and procedures. Training will be offered to foster carers who are not confident using computers.
- 5.12. We are working to improve the support carers receive from their supervising social workers. We have over the last few months recruited several permanent members of staff to bring stability and consistency to the service.

- 5.13. Since June 2016 the foster carer newsletter is now regularly being distributed on a quarterly basis and the foster carer forums have recommenced to keep foster carers up to date and give them the opportunity to air their views. The support groups also continue on a regular basis.
- 5.14. The response to the foster carer survey was relatively poor. We are exploring in consultation with foster carers more productive and efficient methods of gathering feedback over the course of the year as opposed to a single annual survey.

### Foster Carer Fortnight

- 5.15. Foster Care Fortnight is The Fostering Network's annual campaign to raise the profile of fostering and to show how foster care transforms lives. It is also the UK's biggest foster carer recruitment campaign. Foster Care Fortnight 2017 will take place from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May.
- 5.16. Planning is underway to raise awareness of Foster Carer Fortnight in Cheshire East and to maximise our foster carer recruitment campaign. Essentially, there will be advertising digitally and PR activity via the 'You Can Foster' campaign. We are also looking at more advertising on Facebook, our internal communication channels and a partnership newsletter. We are also exploring the idea of targeting the schools with a financial incentive if a carer is recruited and approved at panel. We are currently looking at the costings for some banners to be placed outside our corporate buildings.

### Post-16 Tutor

- 5.17. Work is underway to appoint a Post-16 Tutor in Cheshire East. This is to support the learning of those post-16 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or struggling with education. College courses tend to be offered only in September and only on a full time basis; the Tutor will allow young people to improve and gain qualifications in core skills while they wait for a college place or if they cannot attend full time, eg, if they have young children. The tutor will also be able to offer 1:1 support for any young person in education or an apprenticeship, but who is struggling to complete all the work set. This should help to reduce any dropping out.

### Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report

- 5.18. The Corporate Parenting Committee is expected to provide an annual report on its work an impact as part of its advisory role to the Cabinet. The Committee is asked to consider what to include in the report and what input is required from Members.
- 5.19. The following are suggested areas that could be included in the report:

- Foreword
- Introduction and Purpose of Report
- Cheshire East profile - our children and young people
- Governance, including role of the Corporate Parenting Committee
- Frequency of meetings and attendance
- Listening to our children in care and care leavers
- Corporate Parenting Strategy - progress
- Work of the Corporate Parenting Committee 2016-17
- Our priorities for 2017-18
- Forward Plan 2017-18

#### Signs of Safety Innovation Bid

5.20. As at the end of February 2017, Cheshire East has still not heard the outcome of the bid to the DfE on its collaborative bid to implement Signs of Safety as a way of working in the borough. We have been given no indication of when a decision will be made but one delaying factor is that any decision cannot be signed off until Edward Timpson returns from paternity leave.

### **6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members**

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

### **7. Implications of Recommendation**

#### **7.1. Policy Implications**

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

#### **7.2. Legal Implications**

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

#### **7.3. Financial Implications**

7.3.1. The Innovation Fund Bid, when known, will bring further funding into the Council. This is matched funded with a budget that has already been secured through transition funding.

7.3.2. There will be a cost for the Post-16 Tutor, but this will be met from existing budgets.

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

7.4.1. The Post-16 Tutor will be recruited following Cheshire East's policies and procedures.

#### **7.5. Equality Implications**

7.5.1. There are equality implications as a result of this paper.

#### **7.6. Rural Community Implications**

7.6.1. None.

#### **7.7. Public Health Implications**

7.7.1. None identified at this stage.

### **8. Risk Management**

8.1. 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.

### **9. Contact Information**

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

**Name:** Pete Lambert  
**Designation:** Head of Cared for Children  
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**Email:** [pete.lambert@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:pete.lambert@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

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# Putting Children and Young People **First**

## Our Service Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care



## About our Plan

We want all our children and young people to be happy, healthy, and safe, and to be able to live a life that is full of fun and opportunities to learn and develop. Where possible, we want to support our children and young people to remain with their families within a loving, caring, safe and stable environment. When children are unable to remain in the care of the families, we want to ensure they receive a permanent loving home as soon as possible.

Children, young people, parents and carers have told us they want:

- **To be listened to**
- **To be included in their plans**, and **understand what the concerns are** and why they need a plan
- For **professionals to be clear with them** about what is going to, or could happen

This is our plan for how we in Children's Social Care Services, **will put the needs of our children and young people first and foremost in everything we do**, and deliver the very best service to all families that need our support.

Our service exists to support families at the times when they are most in need. The people who are best placed to tell us what they need, and how we can best offer support, are the families we work with, which is why involving children, young people, parents, carers and other family members is a large part of our plan.

Our plan focuses on the four key things we think **will make the most difference** to improving the lives of our children and young people. If we can consistently live, breathe and deliver these four priorities, the quality of our service and the outcomes for our children, young people and families will significantly improve:

1. We **always** put children and young people **first**
2. We understand **what impact** the situation is having on the child or young person
3. We **take action** to make positive change a reality
4. We work **with** families to achieve long lasting change. Children and young people get the **right service** for them, at the **right time**

In developing this plan, we have considered a range of sources that tell us how well our service is performing. This has included performance reports, audits on our work with families, the views of children, young people and families we work with, the views of our professionals, and the findings of the Ofsted safeguarding inspection which was carried out in July 2015. This plan addresses the areas we want to improve, but also recognises and builds on the strengths we have within our services.

We have a lot of strengths in Cheshire East; the most important of these is the passion, dedication, enthusiasm and creativity of our professionals. Therefore we will continue to invest in developing, supporting and empowering our workforce at every level in our new plan.

## What we will do

This year we will be **changing how we deliver our services** to put the needs of our children and young people right at the heart of our service, and to support our families to develop long lasting, sustainable solutions. We will be adopting Signs of Safety as our new approach to working with families. This approach focuses on listening to the views of children and young people, and using these to show parents and carers what needs to change. It also focuses on working **with** parents and carers, and extended family members, recognising their strengths as a family, being very clear about what we want to achieve, why and by when, and supporting families to determine how they will make this happen.

This approach will:

- Put the needs of children and young people first
- Focus our work on the key issues for families
- Support us to build relationships with families and work together to achieve better outcomes for children and young people, so that families are involved in their plans and understand professional concerns and what safety looks like
- Recognise the strengths within families
- Support and empower families to create their own solutions
- Develop a shared language and understanding between families and professionals
- Deliver good outcomes for families that are sustainable in the long term.

We will also ensure our professionals have the **right support and tools in place** to enable them to conduct high quality work. This

includes management support, training and development opportunities, effective caseload management, policies, procedures and practice guidance, tools for working with families, the child's record system and ICT support and equipment.

We will align our audit and quality assurance process with the Signs of Safety approach. Audits will be completed by team managers **with** social workers, recognising their strengths, and supporting them to reflect on the quality of their work and identify areas they can learn from and improve on in future work. Our model of supervision will also be changed to reflect the Signs of Safety approach and will include group supervision to develop strong team working, sharing good practice and learning.



We will be offering '**Master Classes**' - **specific in-depth training available to all social work staff** on a monthly basis. The topics of the Master Classes will change each month and these sessions will cover areas of practice that we know we need to improve. These sessions will be responsive to findings from our audits and to feedback from staff on the areas they would like to feel more confident about or would like more support with.

We will also be working closely with our partners to ensure we have a joined up approach to working with families. Partners will receive briefings on the Signs of Safety approach, and we are implementing a **campaign for change across the partnership** to develop a shared culture and ambition for children and young people in Cheshire East, and improve the quality, consistency and ownership of partnership work. This approach will focus on key practice areas to raise awareness of good practice and expectations, and provide professionals with the mandate and support to challenge instances of poor practice.

## Making Change a Reality

We have already established successful ways of driving improvements to our practice, and we will continue to use these this year. This includes but is not limited to:

- **Listening to the views of children, young people and parents** as part of our audit process, feedback surveys, and through our compliments, complaints and comments process
- **Involving children and young people in service design** and development through the work of our partnership boards

- **A coaching approach in our audits**, supporting professionals to reflect on their practice
- Communicating the **key messages from our audits in a newsletter to all our professionals**
- **Practice Challenge sessions**, where performance is scrutinised down to individual practitioner level to ensure we are focused on achieving good outcomes for children and young people
- **Practice and Performance Workshops**, where professionals are involved in developing our service and good practice is shared
- **Practice Champions**, who champion good practice within their teams, develop resources for professionals and troubleshoot and respond to issues raised by professionals.
- Actively seeking and developing our service in response to feedback from our professionals through the **Annual Social Work Staff Survey**
- Our **IRO Practice Alerts**, which challenge poor practice, including partnership practice, and recognise good practice
- Our successful **Recruitment and Retention Strategy** and steering group which has supported us to build a stable workforce.

Progress against our plan will be reviewed and scrutinised by senior managers, including the Executive Director of People's Services and Deputy Chief Executive, Kath O'Dwyer, on a quarterly basis to make sure we are on track and we achieve what we have set out in this plan. The sources we will use to evaluate whether we have made a difference are outlined against each of our priorities.

### Nigel Moorhouse

Director of Children's Social Care and Deputy Director of Children's Services, Cheshire East Council

# We **always** put children and young people **first**

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
	<p>We will introduce Signs of Safety as our approach to working <b>with</b> families to put the needs of their children and young people <b>first</b>. This approach is focused on capturing the voice of children and young people, and using their worries, hopes, and good things they appreciate within the family to motivate families to make changes to improve their lives.</p> <p>The approach involves developing a supportive culture of honesty and transparency, and shared reflective practice and continual learning. Our implementation of this approach will include a review of our processes to ensure they are centred around the needs of children and young people, support best practice, and make the most efficient use of professionals' time so they can maximise their time with families.</p> <p>We will embed this as our way of working through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete commitment to the approach as our way of working from senior leaders, who will also be trained in the model</li> </ul>		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involving families in the development of the approach, including co-developing communication materials for families on what the approach involves</li> <li>• Involving professionals in the development of the approach, including the production of good practice examples</li> <li>• Training all children's social care staff in the approach, including advanced training for Practice Leaders, our Team Managers, who will champion and support the approach within teams. Frontline partnership staff will also receive half day workshops on the approach so they understand their roles</li> <li>• Introducing supervision in line with the model, including reflective group supervision</li> <li>• Introducing direct work tools to capture the views, wishes and worries of children and young people in line with the model</li> <li>• Introducing a quality assurance framework and audit process that evaluates the impact on children and young people and supports reflective practice</li> <li>• Aligning our policies and procedures and practice guidance with Signs of Safety</li> <li>• Aligning the child's record system with Signs of Safety</li> </ul>	September 2017	Lauren Conway, Project Manager

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
2	We will develop bespoke management training for team managers to ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need to support, inspire and challenge their teams to always put children and young people first	March 2017	Jacquie Sims and Pete Lambert, Heads of Service
3	We will implement a new way of gaining feedback from children, young people, parents and carers on a routine basis across children's social care – to be coproduced with children, young people and parents and carers who are using our services. Findings will be shared with professionals through e-bulletins, team meetings and Practice and Performance Workshops.	September 2017	Lauren Conway, Project Manager
4	A Business Improvement review will be completed on the role of Unit Coordinators and Senior Unit Coordinators in supporting teams and communication with families to identify any areas for improvement, and develop and define the Unit Coordinator role so that it best supports improved outcomes for children and young people.	March 2017	Glynis Caulfield, Senior Business Improvement Analyst
5	<p>All Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Child Protection Chairs will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they understand the views of child or young person</li> <li>all child protection plans have the child or young person at the centre</li> <li>all child protection plans are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely), and are focused on achieving positive change for the child or young person</li> </ul> <p>Child Protection IROs will develop strategies to better prepare children, young people and parents for initial and review conferences and increase their understanding of the child protection process prior to their first conference.</p>	July 2017	Susanne Leece, Safeguarding Manager for Child Protection Independent Reviewing Officers
6	<p>All cared for IROs will ensure that our cared for children and young people's views and needs are at the heart of all their reviews, and that the right children and young people have an Independent Visitor. This will be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in the number of children and young people who chair their reviews</li> <li>All children and young people participating in their reviews</li> <li>An increase in the number of young people participating in the review of their pathway plans</li> </ul> <p>Cared for IROs will send a personalised response to all children and young people following their review which sets out their plan in terms of the issues that are important to them.</p> <p>Children and young people's views on how to improve the service will be sought through joint audits with young people of care and pathway plans.</p>	April 2017	Anna Connelly, Safeguarding Manager for Cared for Independent Reviewing Officers

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
7	The Care Leavers' service will establish close working relationships with the Care Leavers' Forum to ensure our services develop with young people at the core.	December 2017	Peter Lambert, Head of Service for Cared for Children and Anji Reynolds, Service Manager for Permanence and Through Care
	We will publish our offer to Care Leavers to make our commitments to them clear.	March 2017	
8	Services to children with disabilities will be developed further, alongside early help and special educational needs services, to ensure the child is always at the centre of our provision.	April 2017	Peter Lambert, Head of Service for Cared for Children, Ian Donegani, Head of Service for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and Keith Martin, Service Manager for Children with Disabilities Team
9	We will facilitate the growth of the fostering service, via innovation and working in partnership with other local authorities, to ensure children can be matched with the best placements to support placement stability.	July 2017	Pete Lambert Head of Service for Cared for Children, and Gill Brookes, Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption
10	All teams will celebrate the importance of involving children and young people in decision making throughout November as part of November Children's Rights Month	November 2017	All Teams

# How will we know if we've made a difference?

Measuring our performance	Thresholds		
	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Activity has improved outcomes for the child or young person (audit measure)	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%

Is anyone better off?			
Evaluating how well we did it	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff	Feedback from Partners

**Audit Reports** show that children and young people's needs are understood and are the focus of the plan, and that timely action is taken to achieve the best outcome for children and young people

**Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report and feedback surveys from children, young people, parents and carers** show that families feel listened to by professionals, and received a service that helped them

**Annual Social Work Staff Survey, Practice Champions Group and feedback from the Practice and Performance Workshops** shows professionals live and breathe our values and are committed to putting children and young people first. Professionals report that they are supported by managers at all levels to put this into practice and can see the positive impact this has on outcomes for our children and young people.

Feedback from Partners from our **Multi-Agency audits, the LSCB Board, Quality and Outcomes Sub Group, and the Safeguarding Children Operational Group** shows that professionals live and breathe our values and are committed to putting children and young people first.



# We understand **what impact** the situation is having on the child or young person

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
11	<p>We will deliver 'Master Classes' – specific in-depth training in response to our areas for improvement. These sessions will be delivered on a monthly basis and will be open to all children's social care staff. Master Classes are currently planned on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing Parental Capacity to Change</li> <li>• Exercising Professional Judgement</li> <li>• Parenting Assessments</li> <li>• Placement Planning</li> <li>• Leading and Chairing Effective Multi-Agency Meetings</li> <li>• Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing from Home and Care</li> </ul> <p>Future sessions will continue to respond to findings from audit and staff suggestions.</p>	March 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
12	<p>The assessment, plan and review document for work with cared for children will be aligned into one document to streamline work for practitioners, ensure the information in each documents informs each other, and that are all reviewed regularly at the young person's review meeting.</p>	March 2017	Pete Lambert, Head of Service for Cared for Children
13	<p>We will adopt Signs of Safety as our way of working, which will support a continual questioning approach to explore and understand the strengths and risks within families. The approach includes capturing the child or young person's thoughts, worries and wishes, and this underpins and drives all the work with the family.</p> <p>We will implement the use of genograms as a direct work tool with children, young people and parents to inform Signs of Safety planning and identifying a safety network of people to support the family</p>	September 2017	Lauren Conway, Project Manager
14	<p>We will produce good practice examples of assessments evidencing analysis and rationale for decisions to support professionals.</p>	April 2017	Practice Champions

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
15	The audit process will be redesigned to focus on the quality of the outcomes achieved for the child or young person to drive improvement and recognise and embed good practice.	April 2017	Kate Rose, Head of Service for Children's Safeguarding and Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
16	All Child Protection Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) will ensure the daily lived experience of children and young people is clearly understood by everyone at Conference, that the plan addresses the key areas that need to change, and contains measurable outcomes for children and young people. Child Protection IROs will lead Pan Cheshire workshops on understanding the impact on children and young people to share and develop good practice. A peer review in April 2017 will provide external validation of our progress in this area.	April 2017	Susanne Leece, Safeguarding Manager for Cared for Independent Reviewing Officers
17	The IRO Service will lead a cross-departmental task and finish group to develop a clear RAG (red, amber, green) rating tool to evaluate the quality of assessments. This will allow good practice to be recognised, and will increase awareness of good practice and drive up standards. It will support comprehensive information gathering and evidence based risk and needs analysis, alongside evidence of the child/ young person, and parent, carers and family participation in the assessment.	March 2017	Anna Connelly, Safeguarding Manager for Cared for Independent Reviewing Officers
18	All Cared for IROs will ensure that their recommendations from reviews are clearly linked to how this will positively impact on the child or young person. Biannual audits will be completed to support strong practice in this area.	February 2017	Anna Connelly, Safeguarding Manager for Cared for Independent Reviewing Officers
19	We will hold a Teaching Partnership annual conference for children's care professionals with key note speakers which celebrates social work practice and raises the profile of making professional judgements as social workers	December 2017	Sarah Flint, Practice Development Manager
20	We will revise and relaunch our strategy to tackle neglect, which will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completing a training needs analysis on neglect to ensure training can be tailored to meet partnership needs</li> <li>• adopting the updated and improved version of the graded care profile - graded care profile 2</li> <li>• working with young people to better understand neglect from their perspective</li> </ul>	June 2017	Nigel Moorhouse, Director of Children's Social Care and Deputy Director of Children's Services

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting the 'Act on Neglect' Campaign across the partnership, and raising awareness with multi-agency professionals that all professionals can use, and are expected to use, the graded care profile in neglect cases to assess and evaluate the impact of neglect on the child or young person</li> <li>• developing good practice examples</li> <li>• revising the neglect scorecard to incorporate more targets on which to measure success</li> </ul>		
21	We will introduce 'Lessons Learned' meetings between children's social care and legal services to review key cases where the outcome we expected in court was not achieved to identify learning and any areas for improvement	June 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
22	We will develop and implement standardised tools that will support IRO scrutiny of the quality of consultation with children, young people, parents and carers when managing risk plans at trigger Level 1 and Level 2 missing from home and care meetings	February 2017	Anna Connelly, Safeguarding Manager for Cared for Independent Reviewing Officers



# How will we know if we've made a difference?

Measuring our performance	Thresholds		
	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
Social worker identified and challenged safeguarding concerns (audit measure)	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
Percentage of good or better quality combined assessments (audit measure)			
Percentage of good or better quality assessments for cared for children (audit measure)			

Evaluating how well we did it	Is anyone better off?		
	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff	Feedback from Partners

**Audit Reports** show that children and young people's needs are understood: assessments identify the key issues which are having the most impact on the child or young person, and professional analysis and rationale for decision making is clearly evident in the child's record.

**Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report and feedback surveys from children, young people, parents and carers** show that families feel listened to by professionals, and received a service that helped them

**Feedback from the Master Class Sessions, Practice Coaching Audits, Practice Champions Group, and Annual Staff Survey** shows professionals are confident in assessing the impact of situations on children and young people and feel supported to reflect on their practice.

**Feedback from Partners from our Multi-Agency audits, the LSCB Board, Quality and Outcomes Sub Group, and the Safeguarding Children Operational Group** shows that professionals understand the impact of situations on children and young people and support them effectively.



# We take action to make positive change a reality

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
23	We will undertake a review of the front door to early help services, and map the pathways from referral to allocation to ensure families receive a timely service	February 2017	Tracy Ryan, Director of Prevention and Support, Lindsay Thompson, Service Manager for Family Focus and Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
24	We will complete a deep dive investigation on children seen within 10 days of the assessment to understand and address the areas for improvement	February 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
25	A core aspect of the Signs of Safety approach is identifying the timescale for when change should be achieved for every plan, which makes plans more timely. The risk for the child or young person is evaluated at every planning meeting which requires that all professionals reflect on the progress achieved so far.	September 2017	Lauren Conway, Project Manager
26	Child Protection Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) will support timely action for children and young people through ensuring all child protection plans are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) and contain strong contingency plans. IROs will robustly challenge any incidences of drift and delay.	February 2017	Susanne Leece, Safeguarding Manager for Child Protection Independent Reviewing Officers
27	Cared for IROs will continue to actively track the progress of children's care plans, particularly when they are in care proceedings, and will appropriately escalate any cases that are not progressing within the child's timescale. Biannual audits will assess progress and support learning within this area.	February 2017	Anna Connelly Safeguarding Manager for Cared for Independent Reviewing Officers
28	The IRO Service will produce quarterly data reports on Practice Alerts, the formal dispute resolution process, and Partnership Alerts. These reports to be presented at Service Managers' meetings for discussion, reflection and agreeing action in response to any areas for improvement. Themes from the annual report will be shared with all children's social care professionals at the Practice and Performance workshops.	May 2017	Anna Connelly and Susanne Leece, Safeguarding Managers

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
29	We will develop a robust system to ensure there is effective management oversight, at all levels across the service, of children and young people where improved outcomes are not being achieved within the child or young person's timescale. We will review Performance Challenge Sessions to ensure they focus on the quality of our services, and the impact on children and young people, and that they drive improved outcomes to high risk children and young people.	May 2017	Jacquie Sims and Pete Lambert, Heads of Service
30	Drift and delay for children and young people will be challenged within audits, and timely practice will be recognised and celebrated to drive improved outcomes for children and young people	March 2017	Auditors and Team Managers
31	We will update the policy and procedure for private fostering arrangements to ensure the process and expectations on timescales are clear	June 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
32	The process within the child's record system for private fostering will be streamlined to ensure the system supports efficient and timely practice	April 2017	Pete Lambert, Head of Service for Cared for Children
33	We will hold a workshop on improving our processes around Public Law Proceedings to make our action more timely for children and young people, and establish an action plan, which will be delivered by task and finish groups.	May 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
34	We will develop performance reports and a tracker for court work to support monitoring of timeliness for pre-proceedings and Legal Advice Meetings which will be scrutinised at monthly legal liaison meetings. Cared for IROs will actively track the progress of children where there is a court timetable and escalate where there is delay. Use of the Permanence Tracker will continue to support the timeliness of placement planning.	May 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for CIN&CP and Anna Connelly, Cared for IRO Manager, Pete Lambert, Head of Service for Cared for Children
35	We will ensure that all social workers receive regular, good quality supervision which supports reflection and learning so we can effectively support our children and young people. We will do this through tracking the frequency of supervisions and monitoring and challenging this in Performance Challenge Sessions, and completing a six monthly deep dive audit on the quality of supervision to identify and address any areas for improvement.	February 2017	Jacquie Sims and Pete Lambert, Heads of Service
36	We will embed good quality Pathway Plans to ensure best outcomes for care leavers. This will be achieved via team audits and team learning events.	April 2017	Pete Lambert, Head of Service for Cared for Children

# How will we know if we've made a difference?

Measuring our performance		Thresholds		
		Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
No drift or delay in actions being completed (audit measure)		60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
Is anyone better off?				
Evaluating how well we did it	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff	Feedback from Partners	
<p><b>Audit Reports</b> show that timely action is taken to achieve the best outcome for children and young people</p> <p><b>Supervision Audit Report</b> shows that staff receive regular supervision and good quality support which supports improved outcomes for children</p>	<p><b>Compliments, Comments and Complaints Report and feedback surveys from children, young people, parents and carers</b> show that families received a responsive and timely service that helped them</p>	<p><b>Feedback from the Annual Staff Survey and Practice Coaching Audits</b> shows that professionals feel supported and challenged to take timely action for children and young people</p>	<p>Feedback from Partners from our <b>Multi-Agency audits, the LSCB Board, Quality and Outcomes Sub Group, and the Safeguarding Children Operational Group</b> shows that professionals are responsive to children's needs, taking action in a timely way</p>	

# We work **with** families to achieve long lasting change. Children and young people get the **right service** at the **right time**

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
37	We will develop and implement a work plan for the LSCB Early Help Sub Group to drive developments across the partnership and ensure we support families at the earliest possible stage	March 2017	Tracy Ryan, Director of Prevention and Support
38	We will carry out a deep dive analysis of Child in Need cases to ensure they are at the right level of need	May 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
39	We will review the role of the Family Support Service to ensure they are working at the right level of need, and review the timeliness of step up to social care	June 2017	Jacquie Sims and Jonathan Potter, Heads of Service
40	We will review and revise the step down process, ensuring that step down requires that strong contingency plans are in place	June 2017	Jacquie Sims and Jonathan Potter, Heads of Service
41	We will launch 'Project Macc' as part of our demand management strategy. Project Macc will mirror our successful Project Crewe service, working intensively with low level children in need cases to achieve sustainable change for families.	August 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection
42	We will complete an early help needs analysis for Cheshire East	March 2017	Jonathan Potter, Head of Service for Prevention
43	We will map the full range of early help services and undertake a demand-led review of future provision requirements	July 2017	Tracy Ryan, Director of Prevention and Support and Jonathan Potter, Head of Service for Prevention
44	We will develop a demand management strategy for Children's Social Care services	March 2017	Jacquie Sims, Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
45	The Signs of Safety approach will focus on identifying the key risks ('danger statements') which parents need to address to keep their children safe. The work in the plan will be focused around addresses these issues. Signs of Safety focuses on parents and carers identifying and demonstrating change, including a safety network of people that will monitor and support the family once services are no longer involved, which supports sustainable change.	September 2017	Lauren Conway, Project Manager
46	Regular CAF (Common Assessment Framework) audits will be instated and reported to the Local Safeguarding Child Board (LSCB) to identify areas for partnership improvement.	March 2017	Lindsay Thompson, Service Manager for Family Focus
47	We will improve reporting around step down and CAF take up in order to drive effective challenge within the LSCB on partnership working, and establish an Early Help Performance Management Framework.	June 2017	Tracy Ryan, Director of Prevention and Support, and Lindsay Thompson, Service Manager for Family Focus
48	We will re-establish the CAF team, CAF training, and relaunch this with partners.	July 2017	Tracy Ryan, Director of Prevention and Support, and Lindsay Thompson, Service Manager for Family Focus
49	We will agree as a partnership how the Signs of Safety framework will be applied to our thresholds, and review, revise and relaunch the thresholds of need	August 2017	LSCB Early Help Sub Group
50	<p>Child Protection Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) will ensure that parental motivation and capacity to change is a central consideration in all Child Protection Conferences and planning, and positive change for the child or young person, and that the family can sustain this, is clearly evidenced where cases are stepped down.</p> <p>IROs will track and provide additional scrutiny for children and young people who are on a second or subsequent plan through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audits to identify learning points</li> <li>• Effective gatekeeping at the point of conference request</li> <li>• Robust contingency planning</li> </ul>	March 2017	Susanne Leece, Safeguarding Manager for Child Protection Independent Reviewing Officers

Ref	What we will do:	When will we see an impact?	Who's responsible:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate escalation</li> </ul> <p>IROs will ensure that there are clear contingency plans in place when cases are stepped down from child protection to ensure that the right action is taken immediately if outcomes for the child or young person start to deteriorate.</p>		
51	Cared for IROs will track the effectiveness of services provided to our cared for children and young people to promote achieving the very best outcomes for them	April 2017	Anna Connelly, Safeguarding Manager for Cared for Independent Reviewing Officers
52	We will ensure that the move into the Regional Adoption Agency realises best outcomes for our children in care by effective and prompt planning for adoption including best practice for concurrency planning and foster to adopt.	April 2017	Pete Lambert, Head of Service for Cared for Children



# How will we know if we've made a difference?

Measuring our performance	Thresholds		
	Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding
The social worker took the right action at the right time to protect the child or young person and their siblings (audit measure)	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%

Evaluating how well we did it	Is anyone better off?		
	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff	Feedback from Partners

**Audit Reports** show that children and young people's needs are met at the right level at the right time, and that step up and step down to services is robust

**Feedback surveys from children, young people, parents and carers** show that families received a service that helped them and they feel they can sustain the outcomes they have achieved in the long term

**Annual Social Work Staff Survey and feedback from the Practice Champions Group** shows professionals report that step up and step down is robust and there is a joint understanding and application of thresholds across the partnership

Feedback from Partners from our **Multi-Agency audits, the LSCB Board, Quality and Outcomes Sub Group, and the Safeguarding Children Operational Group** shows that step up and step down arrangements are robust and there is a joint understanding and application of thresholds across the partnership



# Your thoughts matter

If you have any thoughts or views on this plan, or how well we are progressing, please do contact us at **[ChildrensImprovement@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:ChildrensImprovement@cheshireeast.gov.uk)**



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