

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting: 12 November 2019

Report Title: Corporate Parenting Update Report

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People

1. Report summary

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

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.
 - 2.1.2. Complete the Proforma at Appendix 1 in relation to Elected Member Options for Corporate Parenting Engagement; and
 - 2.1.3. Consider taking part in the November Children's Rights Month challenges set out at Appendix 2.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee is an 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 needs 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

- 5.1. This update report aligns with the pledges of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

6. Pledge 1 - Being a Good Corporate Parent

Star Celebrations update

- 6.1. The Star Celebration Day planning is progressing well and we are now meeting fortnightly to ensure that the day runs smoothly. The celebration will take place this year on 24th November 2019 at Tatton Park. Corporate Parenting Committee members are encouraged to attend the event. The theme for the day is pirates and princess and many of the staff are dressing up this year to add to the ambiance. We have had support from Stockyard North, a prop hire company, who are supporting our event by providing pirate and princess themed props to use for the day. They are delivering and setting these up for us free of cost. Activities on the day for young people include; face painting, arts and crafts, slime making, willow weaving, hair braiding, soft play, sports activities, treasure hunt, African drumming, photo booth and lots more. The aim of the day is to celebrate the success and achievements of all our cared for children over the past 12 months. It's a really good opportunity for our young people to see their social workers, managers and elected members to celebrate their achievements.

Participation update

- 6.2. Recent activity includes:
- Cared for Children and Care Leavers are currently involved in the recruitment process for the Fostering Service Manager.
 - The Participation team would like to invite members of the Corporate Parenting Committee to take part in a Reverse Take Over Challenge for November Children's Rights Month, or potentially offer a Cared for Child or Care Leaver a Take Over Challenge Opportunity on 29th November 2019. This will enable Committee members to experience the barriers and issues that our children and young people face every day (details are attached at Appendix 2) and the application details can be found at https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-children/working-in-partnership/childrens-trust/childrens_rights_month/childrens_rights_month.aspx.
 - My Voice have written and designed the Foster Carer Survey.

- My Voice are currently planning to co-chair the Children's Trust Board on 6th November with a view to challenging members to take action and help recruit new Foster Carers.

TACT update – shortlisted for award

- 6.3. The work that our children and young people completed with 'My Voice' and TACT Fostering and Adoption in developing the 'Language that cares – changing the way professionals talk about children in care' has been shortlisted for the 'children in care' category of the Children and Young People Now Awards. The Awards ceremony will take place on the 28th November 2019 at the Hurlington Club in London.

Engagement activities for CPC

- 6.4. We have produced a list of engagement activities for members of the Corporate Parenting Committee, which is attached at Appendix 1. Members are asked to complete the proforma and return to corporateparenting@cheshireeast.gov.uk asap.

Chromalloy

- 6.5. Chromalloy is a local business based in Crewe who have contacted us wishing to offer support to our Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Examples of activities happening or planned so far include:
- A football match – arrangements are in place for organising the first game with our Care Leavers team
 - New home starter packs – the Care Leaver Manager is liaising with the business regarding a list of items young people require
 - Volunteer mentoring
 - Fostering promotion – our communications team are providing marketing material to enable Chromalloy to promote fostering.
 - Supported Lodging
 - Career Experience Session – being discussed with the Chromalloy management team
 - Maintenance/Skills Offer – being discussed with the Chromalloy management team

Short Break re-tendering

- 6.6. We currently commission 10 different providers to deliver short break services for children with disabilities. These providers form an integral part of the overall local offer for children with disabilities within Cheshire East ensuring that our statutory duty as a local authority is met. The two year initial terms of the contracts (1 September 2017 to

31 August 2019) for the 10 providers have been extended by 1 year and therefore contracts are due to end on 31st August 2020.

- 6.7. Cabinet agreed our plans for recommissioning on the 8th October 2019 and over the coming months we will be working with disabled children and young people, their families and the Parent Carer Forum to co-produce a new specification and will enter into a new procurement exercise.

EU settlement

- 6.8. Due to the uncertainties around Brexit and the need to ensure that our children and young people can achieve permanency and have stability within the country, the service is working hard to identify any children and young people that can be supported to apply for either Citizenship or EU Settled Status. Whilst this process can be supported up to October 2020 we want to ensure that the process has been started for as many of our children and young people as possible. There are difficulties that can slow the process or add additional complexities, such as, engagement with birth families to obtain and consent to documentation, and additional factors of criminal records. Tracking of progress is occurring within supervision, the Permanency Forum and Resource and Accommodation Panel to ensure that our young people have the ability to remain in the security of a home and have financial and economic stability in their preparation for adulthood.

7. Pledge 2 - Education, Employment and Employment Outcomes

Virtual Headteacher's Annual Report

- 7.1. This report is being presented to Committee at the November meeting.

Virtual School – shortlisted for award

- 7.2. The Virtual School has been shortlisted for a 'Children and Young People Now Award 2019'. This is a National award and we are shortlisted as a finalist in the 'Children in Care Award'.

Autumn NEET programme

- 7.3. This is a 12 week programme for young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), and they are offered 2 days per week. There will be opportunities to visit local employers to see the type of work available locally, opportunities available for training, and they will be asked if they would like to take part in a community project and/or have some work experience in an area of their choice. They will also be involved in activities that will enable

them to learn the importance of team work, working on their own initiative and good communication skills. There are 12 spaces available and each young person will be offered an interview before being accepted onto the programme.

- 7.4. By the end of the programme the young people will have:
- Identified their strengths and skills and be able to recognise how these have been identified/improved throughout the programme.
 - Gained a Basic First Aid qualification
 - Gained an ASDAN qualification
 - Learned of different work opportunities available locally
 - Learned of training courses available locally
 - An up to date CV and the opportunity to search and apply for local apprenticeships/jobs.
 - Discussed and planned next steps on completion of the course

8. Pledge 3 - Achieving Permanence and Keeping Children Safe Being a Good Corporate Parent

Care Hubs (Bespoke) Project update

- 8.1. The Bespoke Project Board met on the 19th September 2019. The governance structure for the programme has been agreed, which will include specific workstream concerns Mobilisation of the Children's homes which will be chaired by the Head of Commissioning, The Practice Model, chaired the Head of Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Impact, chaired by the Head of Service for Child in Need and Child Protection.
- 8.2. Meetings have continued to take place with the children's homes providers, Safe Places and Horizon. Unfortunately we have continued to experience delay with Ofsted concerning the registration of the homes which will invariably lead to a delay in the 1st home opening. We now anticipate that this will not happen until December at the earliest. We have taken the opportunity to contact our designated link in Ofsted to ask if there is any way that this process could be expedited.

Fostering and Mockingbird updates

- 8.3. Interviews for the Fostering Service Manager role have been taken place and we are pleased to say that we have appointed to the the post, subject to references and a suitable DBS check. The successful applicant is a highly experienced fostering manager and we would anticipate that they would be in post within the next 3 months. During

the interim period we have recruited an experienced fostering service manager who will oversee the ongoing service developments and our fostering review.

- 8.4. We are delighted to report that we have been successful in the bid that we made to the the Innovation Programme Team at the Department for Education to develop Mockingbird within Cheshire East. We have partnered with the Fostering Network, who are the national support providers for the programme and our first conference with them took place on 22nd October 2019. Over the coming weeks and months we will be developing our governance structure, implementation plan and communication strategy all leading to the development of our first Mockingbird constellation.
- 8.5. The Mockingbird programme delivers the Mockingbird Family Model. This centres on a constellation where one foster home acts as a hub, offering planned and emergency sleepovers and short breaks, advice, training and support, to six to 10 satellite households.



The Fostering Network's Mockingbird programme

- 8.6. Relationships are central to the programme and the hub home builds strong relationships with all those in the constellation, empowering families to support each other and overcome problems before they escalate or lead to placement breakdown and increasing protective factors around children. The constellation also builds links with other families important to the children's care plans and to resources in the

wider community which can provide them with enhanced opportunities to learn, develop and succeed.

Next steps for the Workstream

8.7. A detailed report on this area was presented to the Committee in September. The workstream is continuing to focus on the following areas:

- Training, support and direct work tools are to be developed for social workers, foster carers and family around caring for teenagers and balancing safe risk taking and independence skills.
- Embedding understanding of warning signs of placement instability to aid social workers in recognising signs of risk of placement instability, to ensure support can be offered in a timely manner to prevent a placement breakdown and unnecessary moves for children and young people. Whilst stability meetings have increased, at present the recognition of the need for support and request for meetings has not been progressed as rapidly as we would want.
- Continuation of the use of trajectories, with an aim of all children placed at home having a Signs of Safety trajectory and Safety Plan in place to aid discharge of the Care Order.
- Mobility mapping for all Care Leavers to be developed to ensure that they have clear support networks outside of the Social Worker and Personal Assistant roles that can remain with them into adulthood.
- SDQ working group to ensure that Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire resources are developed and that triangulation of views can be considered, to develop a holistic picture of emotional health.
- Targeted mentoring to be provided from Voice for Children for up to five 16 and 17 year olds that do not yet have the experience and skills to manage semi-supported living without additional support, and are experiencing frequent placement breakdowns.
- Development of life story work and use of words and pictures to help children and young people understand their journey through care and aims for success.

9. Pledge 4 – Health and Wellbeing

Psychological Wellbeing Worker

9.1. As a result of a successful charitable funding bid, we now have a psychological wellbeing worker employed by Pure Insight (an

organisation formed in January 2013 as a direct response to the needs of local care leavers). The funding for this service has been agreed for 2 years.

Health passports

- 9.2. Completion rate of health passport documents is improving consistently, however there has been no recent involvement of children and young people in the development of this document. We are therefore setting up a Review and Redesign working group with young people.

Health Training for Foster Carers

- 9.3. Following the successful health training for foster carers which took place over the summer, additional events have been held during September and October

10. Pledge 5 – Preparing for Adulthood

Care Leaver Survey

- 10.1. In August 2019 the Local Authority received the findings from the bi-annual Care Leaver Survey. The Survey aims to gather the thoughts, wishes and feelings of our Care Leavers so we can develop services that would best meet their needs. The survey was split into parts which reflected the five strands of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- 10.2. More detail on the findings of the survey, and our proposed response, will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

16+ Accommodation Tender

- 10.3. Cheshire East are currently going through a process of recommissioning our housing related support for 16 years plus. Supported Accommodation is an essential service for our Care Leavers and Cared for Children in providing effective pathways to independence and preparation to be tenancy ready. Recommissioning is providing us with an opportunity to consider our current provisions and support, areas that are working well, and new opportunities to strengthen our offer. The formal procurement period is between 21st October and 21st November 2019, with an aim to award the contract by 20th December with a mobilisation period of January to March 2020.

11. National or legislative changes

Liberty Protection Standards

- 11.1. The Mental Capacity (amendment) Act 2019 received Royal assent in May of this year, although it is not anticipated that this will become statute before October 2020. In preparation for this we have established a Liberty Protection Standards Steering Group which last met in September. The Steering Group follows the work being completed at a national level and looks at how this will be imbedded across Cheshire East. Our group is led by Adult Services, with representation from Children Social Care, Public Health, Commissioners and wider Health Colleagues.
- 11.2. The group has been working on the development of an Impact Assessment for LPS, developing a code of practice, developing a workforce strategy and a communication strategy

Transition for young people with Autism

- 11.3. We recently completed a piece of research with colleagues from Adult Services, the Chief Social Worker for England (Isabelle Trowler) and three other Local Authorities across the country. The research concerned an exploratory study of social work practice with autistic children and young people transitioning to adult services. All of the cohort that we studied in Cheshire East were cared for young people with a diagnosis of Autism.
- 11.4. The study is about to be published with recommendations for an update to several pieces of statutory guidance, the development of new commissioning guidance for Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups, as well as a call for additional innovation funding being made available by the government. We are waiting in anticipation to learn the Department of Health's response to this work

Updated Guidance

- 11.5. CoramBAAF, the Adoption and Fostering Academy have just published updated guidance on regulations, process and good practice in fostering panels in England. This is being used within our foster panel development session, which is taking place on the 4th November and within the development discussions which are in place with our Foster Panel Chair.

12. Implications of the Recommendations

12.1. Legal Implications

12.1.1. Legal advice will be sought, as appropriate, upon all relevant emerging issues.

12.2. Financial Implication

12.2.1. There are no direct financial implications of this report.

12.3. Equality Implications

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

12.4. Human Resources Implications

12.4.1. There are no direct human resource implications of this report.

12.5. Risk Management Implications

12.5.1. 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.

12.6. Rural Communities Implications

12.6.1. There are no direct rural communities' implications of this report.

12.7. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

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

12.8. Public Health Implications

12.8.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

12.9. Climate Change Implications

12.9.1. The development of Bespoke and Mockingbird will result in children and young people being placed within Cheshire East. This will therefore result in both Cheshire East officers and members of the wider support network having to travel fewer miles than if these same children were placed in provisions outside of Cheshire East. The majority of this travel is undertaken in cars, therefore there will be reduction in reliance on fossil fuels and a reduced carbon footprint.

13. Ward Members Affected

13.1. 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.

14. Consultation & Engagement

14.1. None.

15. Access to Information

15.1. None.

16. Contact Information

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

Name: Keith Martin
Job Title: Head of Cared for Children & Care Leavers
Email: Keith.Martin@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Elected Member Options for Engagement around Corporate Parenting

Member Name:

Activity Area	Frequency	Detail	Preference (please rate 1-3 where 1 is preference)
Workstream 1 - Being a Good Corporate Parent	Every 3 months	This workstream covers participation with children and young people, elected member and workforce development, developing the corporate parenting role, quality assurance and evaluation of the impact of the corporate parenting strategy	
Workstream 2 - Education and employment outcomes	Bi-monthly	The purpose of the RAIC/SPEED group is to plan, implement and monitor co-ordinated actions to support the engagement, achievement and progression of cared for children and young people from age 5 -age 16+ and care leavers.	
Workstream 3 - Achieve permanence and keep children safe	Bi-monthly	This work stream covers developing direct tools, resources and practice guidance around permanence, stability and managing risk, embedding and challenging understandings of impact on placements and how to minimise disruption.	
Workstream 4 - Improve health and wellbeing outcomes	Bi-monthly	This workstream aims to ensure that all cared for children and care leavers have equitable access to health services to enable them to achieve their optimum health potential and have the same opportunities as children who are not cared for. The group monitors progress of the actions identified to meet the health needs of cared for children and care leavers, and identifies new opportunities to improve services available. Opportunities for members of the Corporate Parenting Committee to gain a deeper understanding of the health needs of cared for children and care leavers, and the processes involved in meeting those needs could be achieved by visiting the Specialist Cared for Children Nursing Team, based at Cledford House in Middlewich. Discussions with various team members could provide a comprehensive overview of the work of the team.	

Workstream 5 - Prepare young people for adulthood	Bi-monthly	This is a bi monthly group where the actions of the corporate parenting strategy are discussed and we also look at how we can improve the preparation for adulthood for our Cared for Children and Care Leavers. The group consists of the Care Leavers Service, Fostering, The Children's Society, the Participation team and occasionally local accommodation providers. We look at new initiatives, how we can move the service forward and then feed back into the corporate parenting operational group.	
Frontline visits to Cared for Children and Care Leavers Service	Quarterly	This includes opportunities to engage with the service, team meetings and (with consent of the young people) the shadow committee and support statutory visits, attend group activities such as the autumn programme supporting care leavers around young people who are NEET and confidence and self esteem training, the monthly care leavers activities.	
Visits to Cheshire East residential homes	Every 2 months	Opportunity to engage with young people in the places they live, support quality assurance role and also challenge and feedback to committee on challenges for young people in residential settings, local and community issues.	
Ignition Panel	Monthly	A monthly panel that meets to educate young people on their accommodation options. The panel empowers young people by giving them a choice to make their own decisions with the support of their Social Worker. The panel is held at the YMCA in Crewe, it lasts two hours. Next panels are: 13th Nov (1pm), 11th Dec (1pm) and will be the second Wednesday of each month in 2020.	
Star Awards Planning and Celebration Day	Monthly planning meetings and annual event	The theme for this year's event, which takes place on Sunday 24th November at Tatton Park, is pirates and princesses, and many staff will be dressing up to add to the ambiance. Activities on the day include, face painting, arts and crafts, slime making, willow weaving, hair braiding, soft play, sports activities, treasure hunt, African drumming, photo booth and lots more. The aim of the day is to celebrate the success and achievements of all our cared for children over the past 12 months. It's a really good opportunity for our young people to see their social workers, managers and elected members celebrating with them outside of the day to day role.	

Foster Panel	Usually every 3 weeks on a Monday	The Foster Panel makes recommendations for approval, changes to approval and deregistration of foster carers. It also makes recommendations relating to placement and long term matching of cared for children and young people. It is expected that members have prepared well by reading the papers that are provided one week prior to Panel. This may take several hours as there are usually large numbers of papers to read. It is easier to take notes while reading so that main issues can be identified at panel quickly. Panel members are expected to contribute to the discussion both prior and post attendance of applicants / foster carers presenting at Panel. These discussions include identification of strength and vulnerabilities of carers drawn from the paperwork, gaps in assessment and compliance with checklist, for example medicals and DBS checks. Panel members are expected to agree questions to ask Carers and who is asking which question. This provides a structure for the carers' attendance. Panel members are expected to contribute to the discussion on recommendations to be made to the Agency Decision Maker. All Panel members are appraised annually by the Chair and the service adviser. In addition it is expected that Panel members attend the annual development session withheld fostering service.	
Participation with children and young people	Ongoing	As well as My Voice being a powerful voice for cared for children and care leavers, there are also wider opportunities for young people who do not attend My Voice to have their voices heard and shape services in Cheshire East. This includes commissioning; being on interview panels, service design, helping to write strategies etc. This is done in a variety of methods including group discussions, meetings, events etc.	
My Voice (Shadow Committee link)	Bi-monthly	Cheshire East's Children in Care Council meet with the chair of Corporate Parenting Committee and Head of Service to discuss the theme of the following Corporate Parenting Committee. All themes include the 5 main pledges of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.	
UASC / Asylum Seeker Social Group	Fortnightly	Fortnightly starting on 7th November at the YMCA in Crewe. This is a drop in group whereby our UASC can meet, have some food and play some games.	
Tenancy Readiness Course	4-weekly	Tenancy Readiness Course - 4 weekly courses held x3 times per year. Twice in Crewe and once in Macclesfield. The course aims to help improve and develop young peoples independence skills so that they are better equipped to manage when they leave care.	

Care Leaver activities	Date tbc	Opportunity to attend the annual Christmas meal.	
Governing Body for Virtual School	Once per term (3 per year)	The aim of the Governing Board of the Virtual School is to promote high aspirations for the educational progress, attainment, achievement and attendance of Cheshire East Cared for Children; working with key partners to close the attainment gap between Cared for Children and their peers and to ensure that their voice is heard and their full potential is reached.	
Tuition support	Ad hoc	To offer revision support and guidance to children through online/verbal feedback.	
NW Designated Teacher Leads (Virtual Leads)	Next in March 2020	North West Designated conference for lead teachers and schools, hosted by Northwest Virtual Heads. Key speakers from Ofsted, DfE, NAVSH. Tuesday 10th March - Manchester Cricket Club	
Independent Visitor group meetings	Every 3 months	Opportunity to visit our Independent Visitor group meetings, meet volunteers and find out from them how they are supporting children and young people, and also to offer any support in the recruitment of Independent Visitors. The next Volunteer meeting is on Wednesday 30th October at 6:15pm at Winsford Academy.	

Please complete this form and return to corporateparenting@cheshireeast.gov.uk

NEW MENU LAUNCHING ON 1ST NOVEMBER 2019

-MAIN MENU-

GOING THE DISTANCE FOR NOVEMBER CHILDREN'S RIGHTS MONTH

-STARTERS-

This November you can support Children's Rights Month in Cheshire East by selecting one or more of the challenges below. The challenges have been designed to give you an insight into the issues that children and young people face everyday in our borough. This year we are doing it differently as each challenge has been matched to an outcome area in the new Children and Young People's Plan 2019-21.

-MAIN COURSES-

GOING THE DISTANCE DAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2019—

Hampers will be placed across the following sites where you can donate food and toiletries to our children and families that are most at risk:

- Macclesfield Family Centre, Macclesfield Town Hall, SK10 1EA
- Westfields, Middlewich Road, CW11 1HZ
- Crewe Youth Support Hub, 23-25 Market Street, Crewe, CW1 2EW

AFTER MAKING YOUR DONATION YOU WILL THEN MAKE A PLEDGE OF HOW YOU WILL "GO THE DISTANCE" FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGHOUT 2020.

TAKE OVER CHALLENGE— If you have an opportunity for a young person to work within your team on Friday 29th November then please select this course.

THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WE CARE FOR, "LIFE WITH NO INSTRUCTIONS"— These challenges give us an idea of the challenges that Care Leavers face when moving into their own home after leaving care. You can choose from the following:

- Team bake off, no instructions
- Make flat pack furniture, no instructions

-SIDE DISHES-

THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WE CARE FOR, "£21 CHALLENGE"— After paying household bills, Care Leavers are only left with £21 for food, travel, phone and social activities. Let's see if you can do the same.

FEEL & BE SAFE, "A HELPING HAND"— As a team or individually collect food and toiletries for our children, young people and families that are most at risk of homelessness.

HAPPINESS & MENTAL HEALTH, "SPONSORED SILENCE"— You can raise money for any charity whilst experiencing the isolation and loneliness that children and young people with mental ill health.

BEING HEALTHY & MAKING POSITIVE CHOICES, "MAKE A HEALTHY MEAL ON A BUDGET AND SHARE YOUR RECIPE"— With a £2 budget you will make a healthy meal and share your recipe; this will go into a recipe book for our young people.

BEST SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS, "TAKE A GCSE EXAM"— Gain first hand experience of the stresses and difficulties that our young people face in school.

-DESSERTS-

BEST SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS, "THEORY AND HAZARD PERCEPTION TEST"— Passing your driving test is much more difficult than back in the day, try out the test to see if you'd pass.

ADDITIONAL NEEDS, ADDITIONAL CHANCES, "EHCP EXPERIENCE"— Find out how it feels for our children and young people to be assessed and reviewed for an Education, Health and Care Plan.

A BIG THANK YOU TO CHESHIRE EAST YOUTH COUNCIL FOR DESIGNING OUR MENU THIS YEAR

