

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting: 29 September 2020

Report Title: Engagement options for members of the Committee

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe – Executive Director of People

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the options for members of the Corporate Parenting Committee to engage with cared for children, care leavers, and the range of services and workstreams that support them.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.
 - 2.1.2. Complete the proforma in Appendix 1 to indicate their preferences for the options which are offered.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. It is important for members to have an overview of the issues affecting cared for children, care leavers, and the services that support them. COVID-19 is having a significant impact on our children and young people, practitioners, and demand to frontline services, so it is particularly important that members are sighted on this and their changing needs as we move forward.
- 3.2. These engagement activities will enable members to effectively carry out their role as corporate parents.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. There is the option to continue to delay engagement activity until all activities can be carried out in person. However, we know our working practices will need to adjust to Covid-19 for a considerable period to come, and it is important that members are sighted on the key issues for children and young people during this unprecedented time.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Committee has previously considered different engagement options, but due to COVID-19 and the lockdown which took place from March 2020 arrangements were not able to be put into place. These options have now been revised to reflect current working arrangements.
- 5.2. Some options will be able to be carried out remotely and some will be offered face to face.
- 5.3. The options include:
- Participating in a workstream to help develop services in line with one of the pledges from the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
 - Visits to frontline teams and residential homes.
 - Attending decision making meetings for young people, such as the Ignition Panel, Adoption Panel and Fostering Panel.
 - Directly engaging with cared for children and young people alongside our participation service.
 - Being part of the Governing Body for the Virtual School.
- 5.4. It is proposed that a consistent person will be identified for each activity, and that members will feedback to the Committee on the successes and issues they have identified for cared for children and young people, and care leavers as a result of this activity.
- 5.5. The full range of options is detailed in the Appendix.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. We advise that all members who are participating in the engagement activities also complete the member GDPR training.

6.1.2. Members are not required to undertake DBS checks to participate in these activities, as they will be accompanied by a member of staff, however, all members are encouraged to undertake DBS checks to enable them to effectively discharge other corporate parenting roles.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. None.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. As a result of these activities, elected members may raise issues that have policy implications. These would follow due process.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. There are no equality implications.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. These activities involve elected members engaging with cared for children, care leavers, and practitioners within different services. Previous feedback from practitioners from other work with elected members is that visits/engage with members and discussions about their work makes them feel valued.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. Scrutiny and engagement from members will help to identify areas where services can improve and will help to prevent risks.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

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

6.8.1. These engagement activities will support the Committee to hear children and young people's views, understand the current issues cared for children and care leavers are facing, and ensure that we are effectively supporting children and young people as their corporate parent.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. Appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure children, young people, practitioners and members are protected from the risk of Covid-19 during these activities.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. Carrying out activities virtually will enable us to reduce our carbon footprint.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. There are no direct implications for individual wards.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. Not applicable.

9. Access to Information

9.1. There is no additional information.

10. Contact Information

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

Name: Jacquie Sims

Job Title: Director of Children's Social Care

Email: Jacquie.Sims@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 1:

Elected Member Options for Engagement around Corporate Parenting

Member Name:

| Activity Area | Frequency | Detail | Preference (please rate 1-3 where 1 is your preference) |
|---|------------|--|--|
| Workstream for Pledges 1 and 3 - Being a Good Corporate Parent and Achieving Permanency | Bi-monthly | <p>This workstream covers both Pledge 1 – Being A Good Corporate Parent and Pledge 3 - Achieving Permanence and Staying Safe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• developing direct tools, resources and practice guidance around permanence, stability and managing risk, embedding and challenging understanding of impact on placements and how to minimise disruption. | |
| Workstream 2 - Education and employment outcomes | Bi-monthly | <p>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.</p> | |

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| 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 the 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 virtually visiting the Specialist Cared for Children Nursing 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 the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Service | Quarterly | <p>This includes opportunities to engage with the service, team meetings and (with consent of the young people), attend group activities such as the autumn programme supporting care leavers around young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and confidence and self-esteem training, and monthly care leavers' activities.</p> <p>The NEET programme is starting on 3rd November for 12 weeks, with the first sessions taking place on Tuesday 3rd and Thursday 5th November. Further details will be available in due course.</p> | |
| Visits to Cheshire East Residential Homes | Every 2 months | Opportunity to engage with young people in the places they live, support the 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 panels are usually held at the YMCA in Crewe, and lasts two hours, they are currently happening virtually on the second Wednesday of each month. | |

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| Fostering Panel | Usually every 3 weeks | <p>The Fostering 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 the 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 held with the Fostering Service.</p> <p>Panels start at 9am and usually last approx. 3 hours, they are currently being held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Dates of future panels are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 28th September • Friday 02nd October • Monday 19th October • Friday 23rd October • Monday 09th November • Friday 13th November • Monday 30th November • Friday 04th December • Monday 21st December | |
| 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 five main pledges of the Corporate | |

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| C&F Portfolio Holder to attend) | | Parenting Strategy. | |
| 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. The Governing Body is currently being set up and the first meeting is hoped to take place in September. | |
| Tuition support | Ad hoc | To offer revision support and guidance to children through online/verbal feedback. | |
| Independent Visitor group meetings | Every 2 months | <p>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.</p> <p>The next Volunteer meeting is on Thursday 17th September 6pm – 7:30 pm via Microsoft Teams and the next one is in November (date TBC).</p> | |
| Adoption Panel | Every 3 weeks | Opportunity to influence adoption decisions for children and understand frontline Social Work practice being an Adoption Panel member, these panels run every 3 weeks. There is a commitment with preparation for reading materials prior to panel and attendance at 3-weekly virtual panels. | |

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

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