



Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2019-20



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Foreword

As Corporate Parents we made pledges as a council in December 2018 to be truly ambitious in supporting and guiding our cared for children and young people and our care experienced adults to strive to reach their full potential. We committed to ensuring that our children and young people had permanent homes that met their individual needs locally so that they could stay connected to their families and communities. We pledged that they would have the very best educational experiences, be healthy, be safe and prepared for their onward journey to adulthood.

The Corporate Parenting Committee have continued to support, challenge and scrutinise the outcomes for our children and young people in line with the pledges that we made. This year we have focused specifically on achieving our vision to create more homes for children locally and I am able to say with confidence that we have been able to achieve this in the mobilisation of new residential children's homes where children have been able to return to the borough and connect once again with their communities.

Children and young people have continued to be at the heart of everything we do, and our Shadow Committee, My Voice, has met throughout the year to raise awareness of pertinent issues that we as a Council have within our gift to influence. As ever my thanks are given to our children and young people in their

efforts in bringing this perspective and challenge to the forefront.

We have been able to celebrate, with our children and young people, all their key achievements, at our annual Star Celebration Event which took place in November 2019. The event was a tremendous success which truly highlighted the wonderful things achieved by our children and young people.

Along with the support and challenge from the Committee, the service also received an ILACS Ofsted Inspection in November 2019. The inspection took place over three weeks and highlighted several areas of strengths as well as areas requiring further improvement. The findings from the inspection have informed our onward journey in improving outcomes for children and young people in Cheshire East.

I am pleased to present the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2019-20. This report highlights the successes achieved in delivering positive outcomes for children and young people and more crucially, the next steps in our journey to success.

Cllr Kathryn Flavell - Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People



The Corporate Parenting Committee

We know that having the right values, beliefs and culture around prioritising and championing the needs of cared for children and young care experienced adults is essential to achieving excellent outcomes for children and young people. Our Corporate Parenting responsibility is a shared one that requires a high level of commitment from the leadership of the Council, as well as the support and ambition of all council employees and partners.

The Corporate Parenting Committee is comprised of eleven cross-party members with Council Officers in attendance to support agenda items, as required. The Committee is administered by Officers from Democratic Services.

The Committee has met on four occasions in 2019-20:

- 18th June 2019
- 17th September 2019
- 12th November 2019
- 21st January 2020

A meeting was planned for 17th March 2020 and papers were published but the meeting was cancelled due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

In preparation for the discussion and challenge at Committee, our Shadow Committee of young people meets in advance with the Chair of the Committee and the Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers to comment on the matters that are to be presented to Committee. They share their lived

experience of how services are designed and delivered and ultimately what it feels like to be a cared for child or care experienced adult in Cheshire East.

Officers and partners present information to the Committee. This can be themed in relation to key areas for children and young people, is responsive to changing times, or provides feedback from external scrutiny, so that members can scrutinise and challenge the service that is being delivered to ensure we are effectively meeting children and young people's needs.

The function of the Committee is to oversee the effective delivery of our Corporate Parenting responsibilities and the pledges that we made in December 2018. The Committee ensures that the statutory duties placed upon Cheshire East Council are met.

Officers support members in ensuring that they have the most up to date information available to them about local and national legislative changes and offer training annually to support this. Two training sessions were delivered in June and July 2019 by senior officers from Children's Social Care and Education.

The Corporate Parenting Committee has reviewed its Terms of Reference for 2019-20 which is attached at Appendix 1.



Corporate Parenting Strategy and Pledges

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-20 sets out a number of pledges we are making to our cared for children and young people and those who are care experienced. These are based on what these children and young people have told us will make the most difference to their lives:

Pledge One

We will be a good corporate parent

Pledge Two

We will improve education, training and employment outcomes

Pledge Three

We will work to achieve permanence and keep children safe

Pledge Four

We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes

Pledge Five

We will prepare young people for adulthood

Each Committee meeting is focused on one of the Corporate Parenting Pledges from the Strategy 2018-20. Performance reporting and impact is scrutinised by the Committee, along with issues and risks.

Five Workstream Groups, aligned to the five pledge areas, are in place to ensure that this strategy is delivered effectively, and in January 2020 workstream one and three merged to strengthen the shared focus.



Corporate Parenting Strategy

Progress

Pledge One

We will be a good corporate parent

Staff and elected members will understand their roles and responsibilities and be **ambitious corporate parents, who advocate and champion** the needs of cared for children and care leavers in everything they do.

We will **know ourselves and the needs of our children and young people well** and design and deliver services that meet these needs.

Decisions about children and young people's lives, and the services that support them, **will be made with them and for them**. We will always value their views.

What the data tells us

- At the end of March 2020 there were 533 children and young people being cared for by Cheshire East. This is an increase of 49 children and young people from March 2019.
- This equates to 70 cared for children per 10,000 of the child population within Cheshire East, which is slightly higher than last year.

What have we done? (Committee and Officers)

- We have continued to monitor and scrutinise the progress and impact of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- We have received quarterly updates on our cared for children and care leavers through the Corporate Parenting Scorecard.
- We have had regular updates from the Participation Team. The Chair of the Committee and the Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers have attended 'My Voice' to develop a direct relationship with some of our cared for children and young people.
- The majority of elected members have undertaken corporate parenting training and completed 'Pen-Pictures'.
- On Sunday 24th November 2019 Cheshire East held the annual Star celebration event at Tatton Park. The theme of the event was princesses and pirates and many of our children, young people, family members and carers dressed up for the occasion. Officers and members supported with the day which was a huge success and celebrated the many achievements of our children and young people.
- We celebrated the Cared for Children and Care Leavers' Service achieving the Investing in Children Award.

TOGETHER: Co-production in Cheshire East

[TOGETHER](#) is our shared definition of co-production in Cheshire East, because TOGETHER is inclusive to all. Our co-production guide sets out how we will work together as equal partners to improve, develop and deliver services towards a common goal for all our children, young people, families and adults. Our guide has been co-produced together with children, young people, families and adults living in Cheshire East.

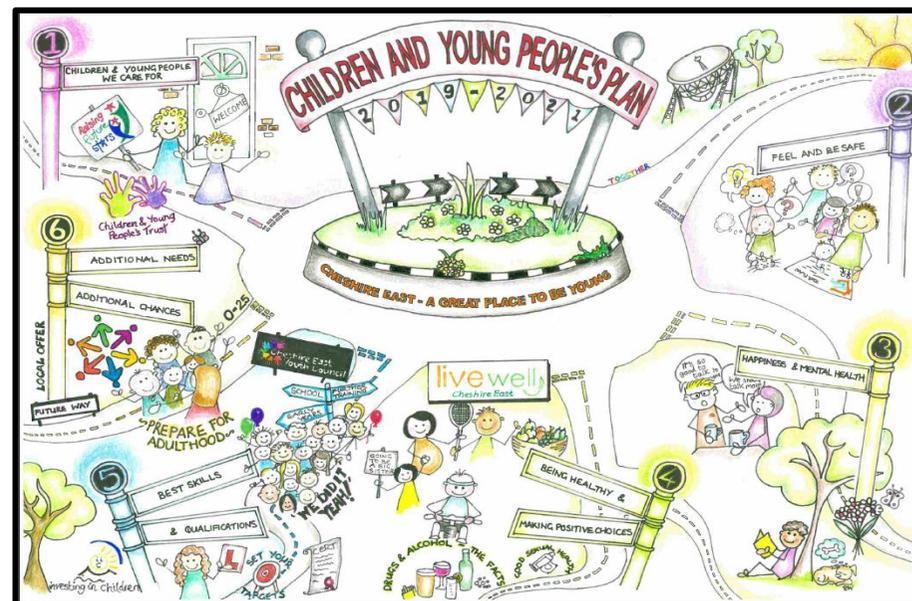
TACT: Language that Cares

A glossary of words and terms that aims to change the language of the care system has been published. [Language That Cares](#) is a collaborative effort led by adoption and fostering charity TACT (The Adolescent and Children's Trust) and the charity's children and care experienced young people, with contributions from 15 local authorities and organisations. Cheshire East signed up to this national initiative and the final document includes input from cared for children in Cheshire East and we continue to work on embedding this language in all areas of our work.

Children and Young People's Plan 2019-21

The Children and Young People's Plan, the overarching plan for children's services, was co-produced with children and

young people. Outcome 1 in the new plan is linked to the outcomes of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.



November Children's Rights Month

November Children's Rights Month offered cared for children and care leavers the opportunity to take over various roles such as an Engagement Officer in Cheshire Police and a Team Manager for Cared for Children. One of our care leavers completed a piece of work around the Care Leavers local offer and was supported to write a policy to support young people and professionals around transgender.

Engagement with Corporate Parenting

Officers provided members with a menu of activities to support in the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Elected members were asked to return their preferences of activities by the 6th January 2020 to be able to support functions such as attendance at Corporate Parenting sub-groups and participating in fostering panel. This was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and is a key part of 2020-21 action planning.

The latest version of the options for engagement for Members is included in Appendix 2.

Merging of Workstream Groups 1 and 3 - The new workstream will focus on the following areas:

- Training, support and direct work tools to be developed around **caring for teenagers** and balancing safe risk taking and independence skills.
- Embedding understanding of warning signs of **placement instability** to aid professionals in recognising signs of risk of placement instability, to prevent instability and for children and young people to be better prepared for changes in their home.
- 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 ensure that they have clear support networks outside of the social worker and personal assistant that can remain with them into adulthood.
- Strengthening **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire** resources to triangulate views and to develop a holistic picture of emotional health.
- 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.
- **Corporate Parenting Induction Training** will be established with a rolling pattern of focussed thematic training through the remainder of the year.
- **Corporate Parenting Update Training** will be established for all other elected members.

What impact has it made?

Our Ofsted inspection found that “the voice of the child is a strength” in Cheshire East, and that the Corporate Parenting Committee provided “appropriate challenge to operational services where deficiencies are highlighted. This means that senior leaders are held accountable for the performances of services and the experiences of children.”

The appointment of a specific social worker to support placement stability has led to an increase in stability meetings. These meetings aim to either preserve the existing placement or effectively support transition to a new home. As a result, children and young people have received stronger support to transition to their next home. The next outcome we want to achieve is greater placement stability for children, with more children being able to remain within their current homes, as a result of these meetings.

Our children living at home have much clearer trajectories for their exit from care with the prospect of these children being discharged from care in 2020-21.

Next steps

- We will embed the TOGETHER principles, and our commitment to being active and ambitious corporate parents throughout all our work through the development and launch of a vision for all children and young people in Cheshire East. The Committee will provide scrutiny and challenge to ensure all our work is carried out TOGETHER with children and young people.
- Members of the Committee will be linked to the Corporate Parenting workstreams and will be engaged with service areas that support cared for and care experienced children and young people so they can hear children and young people's views and understand the current key issues for

our children, staff, and services, to enable effective support and scrutiny.

- We will find a different way to celebrate the achievements of our cared for and care experienced children and young people in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic restricting our ability to hold gatherings.
- The Committee will challenge and scrutinise the experience of children at risk of placement instability by examining the impact of the updated Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and additional tools and training for professionals and foster carers in line with refresher Corporate Parenting Training.



Pledge Two

We will improve education, employment and training outcomes

We will have **high aspirations** for every child and young person and will **help them to achieve their ambitions**, using opportunities in the 'family business' and our contacts so that they can be **happy and successful** in their education, training and employment.

Every child and young person will have an **education plan that is targeted to enable them to reach their full potential**.

We will strive to that ensure that every child and young person will have **access to consistent, high quality, well matched, full time opportunities**.

What the data tells us

- From September 2019 to February half term 2020, attendance had increased compared to last year with the average Primary attendance increasing from 90% to 93% and the average Secondary attendance increasing from 90% to 94%.
- 72% of cared for children are in 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools.
- Data from Q4 2019/20 shows that 9% of our care leavers are attending University.

- On average 86% of cared for children have had their Personal Education Plan completed each term.
- 100% of cared for children were accessing 2–4-year-old early education funding.
- In July 2019, the percentage of cared for pupils who gained Level 5 and above in Maths and English was 19%, which is the same as last year and slightly above the national average. 54% of the cohort gained 5+ GCSE qualifications between grades 9 and 1.

What have we done? (Committee and Officers)

- A number of year 10 and year 11 students attended an award event on 6th June 2019 to receive certificates commending them for the work that they had completed whilst on employment placements.
- We are proud of the A level results for our cared for young people last summer. These successes have been possible due to the hard work of the young people and the close working relationships between the Children's Social Care teams and the Virtual School.
- The **Post 16 Education Subgroup** is focusing on achieving apprenticeships for cared for children and care leavers in and out of the council. This is a measurable target within our Corporate Parenting Strategy and local offer. Alongside this there is a drive to strengthen work experience opportunities within the council.

- The **School Age Children Subgroup** is also focusing on raising attainment for our cared for children and improving their outcomes. Cared for children can experience unplanned changes to their education when they come into care or during their time in care and therefore there is a greater challenge to ensure that they are supported above and beyond so that they achieve their potential.
- As Corporate Parents we continue to be ambitious around achieving the very best outcomes for children and young people in relation to their education, training and employment. At the end of 2019 the Care Leavers Service and the Virtual School ran a 12-week NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) programme whereby Care Leavers supported a homelessness project with a personal goal of re-engaging in education. From a total of 12 young people, nine successfully completed the course and have remained engaged in education.
- The Care Leavers Service will be strengthened further within the next 12 months by the resources allocated from the Journey First project. This will see additional keyworker capacity to work with our most vulnerable care leavers in being creative in re-engaging them in education, training and employment. The funding will be available over a three-year period which will offer consistency in relationships, a key driver for Care Leavers.
- A new Deputy Head has been appointed to support Virtual Head Laura Rogerson in the delivery of statutory functions to our cared for children and previously cared for children,

as Laura's role has developed and is now responsible for the SEND service.

What impact has it made?

- Cared for children are making educational progress and are supported well in schools. Most cared for children/care leavers have an effective PEP in place to ensure that they have clear SMART targets to support continued progress.
- In our inspection in November 2019, Ofsted found that "The virtual school provides strong leadership, which is leading to improving outcomes for most children. The virtual school's focus on the attendance of children in care has led to improvements in both primary and secondary. The virtual school has an accurate understanding of the work needed to ensure that children's outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 4 are improved."



Next steps

- The Ofsted inspection found that the quality of PEPs are variable, so we will continue to work alongside schools/ settings and social care to further improve the quality and consistency of PEPs for all children and young people.
- Support children and young people to return to education, employment and training from September 2020 following the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring any gaps in learning have been identified and effective interventions and support is in place.
- Continue to develop our support for post-16 to ensure that all have a clear post-16 pathway to reduce the number of care experienced young people who don't go on to education, employment or training.
- Implement the Journey First project, which will provide additional keyworker capacity to work with our most vulnerable Care Leavers in being creative in re-engaging them in education, training and employ

Pledge Three

We will work to achieve permanence and keep children safe

We will strive to ensure that every child and young person will have the **opportunity to live in a good, safe home locally**, either with their family or in another permanent home. All decisions will be made and reviewed with them without delay.

We will **respect those people who are important to our children and young people** and make sure that these safe relationships are sustained.

We will **keep children and young people safe**.



What the data tells us

- 88% for cared for children reviews took place within statutory timescales, with 98% of children participating in their reviews.
- 273 cared for children live with foster families, 39 live with family and friend carers, 58 live with their parents, 15 children are placed for adoption and 40 live within residential care.
- 107 children are living in permanently matched homes with their foster carers and a further 20 have remained in 'staying put' arrangements with their foster carers after they became 18.
- Of the children who ceased to be cared for during the past year, 15 became subject to Special Guardianship Orders, 17 children were adopted, 10 Child Arrangement Orders were made, 6 Supervision Orders and 5 Care Orders were discharged.

What have we done? (Committee and Officers)

- We considered the Annual Independent Review Officers Report and how the outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers are quality assured.
- We considered the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report and about the changes that have been introduced now the LSCB has moved to become the Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

Adoption

Cheshire East Council's adoption performance was praised by the Department for Education. In a letter marking the publication of 2015-18 adoption scorecards, the department recognised the strong performance on adoption 'timeliness' in Cheshire East. The adoption scorecard for Cheshire East shows that the Department for Education's threshold for both time taken to place children with their adoptive families, and for the average time to match an adoptive family for children, was met in 2015-18. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 3.

Fostering

Cheshire East Council commissioned an independent review of the fostering service which made recommendations about how an alternative delivery structure may assist with recruitment and retention of foster carers, a key objective within the post Ofsted Action Plan. A decision was reached to depart from our collaborative relationship with Foster4 and to engage on our own recruitment and assessment processes to recruit new foster carers to Cheshire East. The planning and trajectory for implementation began towards the end of the year with our exit from Foster4 planned for mid-2020.

Cheshire East submitted a bid to the Department for Education to secure funding for the development of a '**Mockingbird**' fostering initiative to work as part of 'Bespoke' homes for children project. Cheshire East Council were successful in this

bid and the implementation of the project was initiated in October 2019 with a trajectory for the first Mockingbird constellation planned to mobilize mid-2020.

Bespoke Children's Homes

We developed 'Bespoke' and mobilised our new Children's Homes. Bespoke is a hub-based model similar to the North Yorkshire 'No Wrong Door' model which has received national recognition. This will provide wrap around support to children and young people who are in care or on the edge of care.

Following a successful commissioning exercise, the mobilisation of four new residential children's homes are planned to be operational by May 2020 (subject to Ofsted registration) and these will house 12 places for Cheshire East children to reside in their home communities and receive the very best care to achieve their personal goals.

Placement Stability and Quality Assurance

The Cared for Children Team and the Safeguarding Unit facilitate monthly joint performance challenge sessions where this is retrospective analysis of unplanned placement changes. The information gathered from these sessions forms part of the feedback that shapes projects such as the recommissioning of the 16+ accommodation offer. Placement stability is one of the focus areas within the service, this focus was validated during the last Ofsted inspection as a positive area.

Family Time

The statutory requirement to support and facilitate family time between cared for children and those who are important to them was a priority this year and in planning for the sufficiency needs we ended our commissioned relationship with Core Assets and developed a full in house Family Time service within the Cared for Children's Resource Team.



What impact has it made?

Cheshire East Council have been able to support children back into their communities by having a very strong commissioned offer of residential homes in the borough. The review of the fostering service and successful bid to the DfE for innovation funding relating to Mockingbird will see greater opportunity for more Cheshire East children to remain living within their communities. We have also equipped our service to be able to deliver the statutory function of family time by resourcing a service appropriately.

Next Steps

- Continue to work with children and young people to review their changing needs throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, so services can respond and support appropriately.
- Complete the mobilisation of Bespoke and Mockingbird to full capacity.
- Establish our own in-house fostering recruitment service, launch a new recruitment campaign and drive performance in relation to recruitment and retention of Cheshire East Foster Carers.
- Continue to work with Foster Carers to develop our services and support to carers.
- Ensure family time is delivered safely in line with the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, while working to

support children and young people to maintain the relationships that are important to them.

Pledge Four

We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes

We are committed to **understanding the health needs** of our children and young people **as early as possible** and to ensure they are **given the highest priority** in every service.

We will **equip** our children and young people to have **high aspirations for their own health**.

What the data tells us

- 86% of cared for children had an up to date health assessment
- 97% of immunisations were completed
- For children 5 and under 98% of developmental checks were completed
- 75% of dental checks were completed in timescales
- 58% of care leavers received a summary of their health at the time of their 18th birthday. Performance in this area was consistently high during the first 3 quarters of the year however during quarter 4 this work was suspended due to competing priorities relating to Covid-19. A commitment to

ensure all outstanding health summaries are completed by the end of the second quarter of 2020-21 has been made

What have we done? (Committee and Officers)

- We have considered the Annual Health Report for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.
- Following the **'Help me to be healthy' group**, the Cared for Children Specialist Nurses are now regularly attending service meetings to provide an update for social workers around the health processes for cared for children. This will include discussion around the requirements for making a request for an initial health assessment, the role of the nurse specialists, and how the health needs of cared for children are identified and met, with the intention of impacting on timeliness for requests for health assessments.
- The quality of information provided relating to each individual child when a request for an initial health assessment is made by the child/young person's social worker has significantly improved during this year. This enables the medical practitioner to conduct a more thorough assessment of health need with a greater understanding of the child's history and background.
- Accessing annual dental checks is a statutory requirement for all our children and young people and there have been occasions where it has been difficult to obtain appointments with dentists, in particular during Quarter 4 of

this year. The Dental Adviser for NHS England/Improvement has now been added to the escalation protocol, which has recently been reviewed by the group, in order to address any issues with access.

- Cared for children and care leavers have been added to the priority workstream for children living with mental health issues, which is a task and finish group within the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Partnership.



Emotional wellness

The subgroup also focuses on how we understand the emotional well-being of our cared for children and care leavers. Pure Insights attended the meeting in November 2019 and highlighted the benefits observed from the support offered by their emotional well-being worker, ultimately avoiding escalation into services such as CAMHS.

What impact has it made?

In the context of rising numbers of cared for children, the overall performance in relation to the health outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers remains stable, however our ambition and focus remains for this to improve.

Next steps

Partnership working between health and children's social care needs to continue to be a priority in order to see improvements in the timeliness of requests for Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments.

Our focus on health passports for care experienced adults has begun to impact of the way our young adults understand their health care journey, an area that we aspire to see greater improvements.



Pledge Five

We will prepare young people for adulthood

We will **support young people early with the skills needed** to prepare for their future through access to a range of good quality services.

We will be a **consistent guide** for our young people. We will **celebrate their successes** and **support them when things don't go well**.

We will **respect our care leavers as young adults** and adapt our relationships to their needs.

What the data tells us

- There were 274 care leavers eligible for services.
- 95% of Pathways Plans were completed within timescales.
- Pathway Plans are reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer, and by implementing a phased approach to reviews there has been success in a significant increase in participation of young people in their reviews, from 5% to 66% this year.
- 25% of 16 to 18-year-old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Whilst there have been improvements in the number of NEET care leavers over the past 12 months due to the direct work being undertaken by the Personal Assistants, we know that this is an area that requires additional focus.

What have we done? (Committee and Officers)

Supporting our care experienced adults and celebrating success

We have had a care leaver give birth to her second child, she is a great mother to both children and is not receiving any intervention. She has been able to provide them with positive parenting experiences following clear support and intervention for her, and we are very proud to be corporate grandparents!

One young person is completing her final year in her Social Work Degree at university and will be completing her final placement with Cheshire East Child in Need/Child Protection Team. She will be a fantastic contributor to developing our family business. She continues to be a fantastic mother to her daughter balancing full time care and study.

A care leaver within the service has completed a work experience for a week in Italy working in a summer camp with children. She also volunteers every Saturday at a charity shop and is working really hard.

Recommissioning of 16+ accommodation

Cheshire East will begin to tender for the 16+ supported accommodation offer in Spring 2020. The commissioning and children's teams have already begun to write the specification with children and young people in order to ensure that their experiences inform the types, locations and support made

available from any future procured providers. The recommissioning has embraced the feedback from the Ofsted inspection in the need to tailor of deliver model when young adults are accessing emergency accommodation.

There has been a recent focus on care leavers experience of loneliness and how we can as corporate parents support our care leavers to be in touch with members of the community. Pure Insights, a commissioned provider, support many of our care leavers to be included in families and wider community events.

Committee have considered the Care Leavers Annual Report

Committee have considered that annual performance of our care leavers service in preparing care experienced young people for their transition to adulthood.

Review of the Local Offer for Care Leavers

The Care Leavers Service scheduled a review of the Local Offer for Care Leavers, in consultation with Care Leavers. The initial plans were to consult with the Ambassador for Care Leavers, Mark Riddell, however these plans were postponed because the gradual impact of Covid-19 in March 2020. This work is now scheduled for January 2021.

What impact has it made?

Care experienced adults in Cheshire East have been able to reconnect with the service when they were in need which is a clear demonstration of our corporate parenting approach. Their Pathway Plan review performance further demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that their needs are very clearly articulated, and action plans put in place to deliver co-produced plans for care leavers.

Next steps

- Recommission of the 16+ supported accommodation offer.
- Review the local offer to care leavers.
- Agree a whole Council approach to prioritise and support care experienced adults into employment, education and training. Implement the Journey First project, which will provide additional keyworker capacity to work with our most vulnerable Care Leavers in being creative in re-engaging them in education, training and employment.

Priorities for 2020-21

- **Update the Corporate Parenting Strategy.**
- **Coproduce a review of the local offer for care leavers.**
- **Fully mobilise Bespoke residential homes for children, and Mockingbird, to offer more local homes for Cheshire East cared for children and young people.**
- **Ensure that children are cared for with the right package of support and timely discharges from care, and that adoption and permanency planning is prioritised and achieved within children's timescales.**



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Cheshire East Corporate Parenting Committee

Functions

This is a cross party advisory committee appointed by the Cabinet.

It has 12 Members who are appointed on a politically proportionate basis and nominated by the political groups.

The Committee is informed by representative young people from the Children in Care Council to advise the Committee.

Purpose

The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Committee in its role as an advisory committee to the Cabinet is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from 0- 25 years of age and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities.

Terms of Reference

1. Act as advocates for cared for children and care leavers, ensuring that their needs are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council and its commissioned services.
2. Ensure key strategic plans and reports relating to children in care and care leavers including the Corporate Parenting Strategy, Sufficiency Statement and Children and Young People's Plan.
3. Oversee the implementation of Cheshire East's Corporate Parenting Strategy and action plan and monitor the quality and effectiveness of services to ensure they fulfil the council's responsibilities.
4. Monitor the quality of care delivered by Cheshire East's residential children's homes via the provision of reports including summary reports of Ofsted inspections.
5. Review the performance of the Council in relation to outcomes for children and young people in care via the scrutiny of both quarterly performance reports and annual reports, including the Health of Cared for Children and Care Leavers, the Virtual School, Fostering and the Independent Reviewing Service.

6. Establish an environment whereby Elected Members and young people work together to address the needs and aspirations of Cheshire East's children and young people in care and empower children and young people to participate in decision making with adults.
7. Oversee, with the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the implementation of best practice principles in all aspects of service delivery, with the aim of producing positive outcomes for children and young people in care.
8. Support the work of foster carers and adopters in making a difference to the care and support they provide to children and young people in care and those adopted.
9. Make sure that staff and partners commit to follow the pledges to cared for children and young people and care leavers set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Governance

The Committee will:

- meet bi-monthly;
- report to the Council's Cabinet on at least an annual basis;
- report to the Council's Scrutiny Committee annually; and
- be informed by young people representatives from My Voice (Cheshire East's Children in Care Council); and
- review its terms of reference annually.

Administration

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

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

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

Engagement options for members of the Corporate Parenting Committee

Member Name:

Activity Area	Frequency	Detail	Preference (please rate 1-3 where 1 is your preference)
Workstreams 1 and 3 - Being a Good Corporate Parent and Permanency	Bi-monthly	This workstream covers both Pledge 1 – Being A Good Corporate Parent and Pledge 3 - Achieving Permanence and Staying Safe: <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 understandings of impact on placements and how to minimise disruption. 	
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 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 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	This includes opportunities to engage with the service, team meetings and (with consent of the young people) the Shadow Committee, attend group activities such as the autumn programme supporting care leavers around young people who are NEET and confidence and self-esteem training, and monthly Care Leavers' activities. The NEET programme is starting on 3 rd November for 12 weeks, with the first sessions taking place on Tuesday 3 rd and Thursday 5 th November. Further details will be available in due course.	
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 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.	

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 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 2nd 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	

– C&F Portfolio Holder to attend)		Parenting Committee. All themes include the five main pledges of the Corporate 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	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 Thursday 17th September 6pm – 7:30 pm via Microsoft Teams and the next one is in November (date TBC).	
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



Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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tel: 0370 030 2268 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Councillor Rachel Bailey
Cheshire East Council
Municipal Buildings
Earle Street
Crewe
CW1 2BJ

25 March 2019

Dear Rachel,

As you may be aware, the 2015-18 Adoption Scorecards were published today and I would like to congratulate Cheshire East for your strong performance on adoption timelines.

Cheshire East has met the government's threshold for both the time taken to place children with their adoptive families, and for the average time between a local authority receiving a court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family for children adopted in 2015-18. Your performance has reduced unnecessary delays and has improved the outcomes for children in Cheshire East.

I am delighted with the work Cheshire East has done to ensure that children are found a permanent home without delay and I hope that you can continue to perform strongly in this area. Although the national average is steadily improving, there is still more that can be done and I hope that through your work with Adoption Counts RAA you are able to have an impact on other local authorities by sharing best practice and driving improvements throughout adoption.

I am copying this letter to: Councillor Jos Saunders, Children and Families Portfolio Holder; Kath O'Dwyer, Acting Chief Executive; Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People, and Sue Westwood, Head of Service Adoption Counts.

Yours sincerely,

Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families