

Council

17 July 2024



Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-24

Report of John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service

Councillor Ted Henderson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services

Councillor Mamie Simmons, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report April 2023 – March 2024, for endorsement. The Annual Report is attached as Appendix 2.

Executive summary

- 2 Over previous years, changes have been implemented to strengthen political and management oversight of the Corporate Parenting Panel and increase the voice of children and young people in our work. This continues, to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for our young people.
- 3 The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference form part of Durham County Council's constitution.
- 4 The Corporate Parenting Panel provide an annual report that will be shared with Council and Scrutiny.
- 5 This is the seventh annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel, following the changes to political oversight.

Recommendations

- 6 Council is recommended to:
 - (a) endorse the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-2024.

Background

- 7 In July 2021, Durham County Council were subject to a remote focused inspection led by Children's Services and Skills on behalf of Ofsted's work into how England's social care system delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the coronavirus pandemic.
- 8 The inspection identified a range of strengths and recognised that the service knows its children well, with Ofsted commenting that the self-assessment provided an accurate picture of children in care.
- 9 The processes in place to listen to the views of children and young people and to ensure their views positively impact service delivery were acknowledged. Inspectors were extremely complimentary about the Children in Care Council, having had the opportunity to meet representatives, to hear about their experiences and achievements.
- 10 On 14 and 15 November 2023 a focused inspection of care experienced young people took place by Ofsted. The visit was to inspect DCC's arrangements for care leavers specifically in relation to the quality of preparation for adulthood, the quality and suitability of accommodation, and care leavers with specific needs. The impact of leaders on practice was also considered as part of this visit.
- 11 Overall, the report presented significant strengths identified within DCC's Leaving Care service and wider systems. Leadership was seen to be robust, ambitious, and tenacious. Leaders have a detailed knowledge of the service and responded at pace to changing needs, which includes development of the Local Offer, the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Team and Care Leaver Hubs. The quality of support offered by Young People's Advisors was positive, including young people in specific circumstances. Service quality and grip from councillors and senior leaders through to front line managers was found to be a strength.
- 12 Ofsted made one recommendation in respect of the written report which was for supervision to ensure it is reflective of the feedback given by the Young People's Advisors. This was already an area for improvement that had been identified by the service.

Development of the Annual Report

- 13 To ensure the voice of the child is reflected in the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, young people from the Children in Care Council, supported by officers from the Participation and Engagement Team, the Partnerships Team and Investing in Children have an

- opportunity to develop the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Reports.
- 14 Young people consider the design, content and language of the Annual Report to ensure it is easy to read and understand.
 - 15 To ensure we continue to raise the profile of the Corporate Parenting Panel, the development of the Annual Report retains a corporate format, whilst ensuring it uses language and design which is also appealing to young people.
 - 16 The Annual Report is hosted on the Durham County Council website, Investing in Children website, and the Children in Care Council website.
 - 17 The Annual Report includes information on:
 - (a) what a Corporate Parent is;
 - (b) the role of the Corporate Parenting Panel;
 - (c) the Corporate Parenting Panel's terms of reference;
 - (d) service updates;
 - (e) key performance data;
 - (f) achievements during 2023/24;
 - (g) priorities for 2024/25.

Conclusion

- 18 Council is requested to endorse the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report which provides oversight of the work undertaken during 2023-24, and the priorities for the year ahead.

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference form part of Durham County Council's Constitution.

Finance

There are no cost implications. The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report has been designed in house and will primarily be shared by email, and hosted on the Children in Care Council, Investing in Children and Durham County Council websites to minimise printing and distribution costs.

Consultation

Young people from the Children in Care Council have been involved in the development of the Annual Report. The consultation has been done in the main through meetings coordinated by Investing in Children.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Services are available to all children and young people in our care, in line with legal duties.

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications

Human Rights

Children and young people have been central to the development of the Annual Report to ensure that their voices are heard.

Crime and Disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

Accommodation

There are no accommodation implications.

Risk

There are no risk implications.

Procurement

There are no procurement implications.

Appendix 2: Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-24

Attached as a separate document.