

Corporate Parenting Panel

13 September 2024



Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference

Report of Martyn Stenton, Head of Early Help, Vulnerable Children, and Inclusion, CYPS, DCC and Rachel Farnham, Head of Children's Social Care, CYPS, DCC

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present Terms of Reference (TOR) to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Corporate Parenting Panel's TOR form part of Durham County Council's (DCCs) constitution, and as such we have regular reviews to ensure the work of the Panel as well as our commitment to wider regional work remains fit for purpose, and continues to meet the needs of the children in our care to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes.

Recommendations

- 3 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to:
 - a. Review the TOR to ensure they remain fit for purpose and continue to raise the profile of the panel's work.
 - b. Agree to give delegated authority to the Head of Children's Social Care and the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children to manage the Corporate Parenting Panel's work programme.

Background

- 4 In March 2016, DCCs Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted who found that services required improvement and made fourteen recommendations including 'Review existing arrangements to ensure that political and senior leaders have access to improved quantitative and qualitative performance information that enables them to have an accurate picture of the current practice delivered to children, so that they can develop strategies to maintain and improve the quality of front line practice'.
- 5 An Ofsted Improvement Plan was developed which had four themes, one of which was 'Strengthening Political and Management Oversight', and the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel was reshaped and strengthened. This led to changes to political oversight, including the functions, membership, governance and administration of the Corporate Parenting Panel, and the TOR were developed.
- 6 Since 2016, work has continued to develop the Corporate Parenting Panel and subsequent inspections indicate that we are making significant improvements, both locally and also in relation to our commitment to wider regional work.
- 7 In September 2019, DCC's Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted. The inspection report stated that since previous inspections (JTAI in July 2018, and focused CIN visit in January 2019) 'the local authority has taken swift and decisive action to strengthen services. Pace has increased since the focused visit, and solid improvements can be seen in many service areas, including at the front door and for children in care. Firm foundations are in place to sustain and build on the improvements made'. The report also stated that 'The Corporate Parenting Panel is effective and is maintaining good political and strategic governance of children in care and care leavers.'
- 8 In July 2021, DCC 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. 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. The processes in place to listen to the views of 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.

- 9 These comments were echoed in the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection, which took place in May 2022.
- 10 In November 2023 an inspection of care experienced young people took place. Ofsted inspected 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. 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. 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.
- 11 The Corporate Parenting Panel's TOR include the functions described in the Constitution with the responsibilities of the Panel in relation to each of the functions clearly set out.
- 12 The Corporate Parenting Panel has a work programme which is managed by Corporate Affairs and aligns to the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) in the LGAs Corporate Parenting Resource Pack (Appendix 3).
- 13 Delegated authority is requested for the Head of Children's Social Care and the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children to agree the Corporate Parenting Panel's work programme and subsequent meeting agendas.

Conclusion

- 14 The Corporate Parenting Panel will ensure the TOR are accurate and up to date and continue to reflect the responsibilities for the Panel under the five functions described in DCC's Constitution. The TOR will be reviewed annually as part of the Annual Review of the Constitution, to ensure that governance arrangements remain fit for purpose and reflect best practice.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Corporate Parenting Panel TOR form part of DCCs constitution.

Finance

N/A

Consultation

A range of consultation is undertaken with the children in our care, and their parents / carers using a range of consultation methods.

Young people from the Children in care Council have co-opted membership on the Corporate Parenting Panel, and attend each meeting to provide feedback from a care experienced perspective, as well as sharing information with the CiCC.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

All members of the Council are Corporate Parents and the role of the Panel will ensure that the needs of all children in the care of the local authority are considered.

Climate Change

N/A

Human Rights

The rights of children are considered in all of the work across CYPS

Crime and Disorder

The CPP acts as the governing body for Aycliffe Secure Services, monitoring and ensuring the quality of secure accommodation.

Staffing

N/A

Accommodation

N/A

Risk

N/A

Procurement

N/A

Appendix 2: CPP Terms of Reference

Attached as a separate document

Appendix 3: LGA Resource Pack (including KLOEs)

Attached as a separate document