

Corporate Parenting Panel

24 November 2017



Establishment of Corporate Parenting Panel Sub Groups for Aycliffe Secure Centre and Virtual School

Report of Helen Fergusson, Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Durham County Council

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To seek approval for the establishment of two sub groups of the Corporate Parenting Panel, namely Aycliffe Secure Centre Sub Group and Virtual School Sub Group and to provide a terms of reference for each sub group.

Background and Legislation

- 2 The Children Act 1989 gave all local authorities the statutory responsibility to act as corporate parents to children whose parents cannot look after them.
- 3 The National Children's Bureau's "Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice" 2013 identified the following factors for a Corporate Parenting Panel where Local Authority services for looked after children were judged to be 'good' by Ofsted:
 - a) Demonstrated a strong cross party commitment to looked after children by championing their rights, having high aspirations for their achievement, monitoring children's progress and challenging outcomes
 - b) Clearly understood its role and the responsibilities of the Local Authority to looked after children and planned for and prioritised their needs resulting in a greater focus on improving outcomes
 - c) Actively engage with their young people for example with the Children in Care Council that is well established and have regular and effective links with senior management and elected members.
- 4 Following an inspection of Durham County Council's Children's Services by Ofsted in February/March 2016 the service was judged as requiring improvement. Since this judgement the service has carried out work to address Ofsted's recommendations and with the Council's Transformation Agenda has made significant improvements in relation to political oversight of Children's Services including the revised terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

- 5 At its meeting on 22 March 2017, Durham County Council formally agreed the terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel. Provision within the terms of reference states that the Corporate Parenting Panel is to act as a governing body for the Virtual School and as a governing body for Aycliffe Secure Centre.
- 6 Terms of reference and membership for the two proposed sub groups are outlined below:

Virtual School

- 7 Terms of reference have been adopted from the Corporate Parenting Panel terms of reference as follows:
 - To monitor looked after children's educational attainment and performance
 - To encourage and support each looked after child to achieve optimum educational outcomes at each stage of their schooling
- 8 Advice and support will be provided to the sub group by appropriate officers of the Council.
- 9 Membership of the Virtual School sub group will be taken from members of the Corporate Parenting Panel including co-opted members, and will be reviewed as and when required by the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 10 Proposed membership of the virtual school sub group is as follows:
 - Cllr Heather Smith (chair)
 - Cllr Joanne Carr
 - Clive Horton, Deputy Virtual School Head, Durham County Council
 - TBC: Rhianna Edwards, Head Teacher, Woodham Burn Community Primary School (co-opted member)
 - TBC: Tim Pinkney, Deputy Head Teacher, Ferryhill Business Enterprise College (co-opted member)
 - TBC: Marie Baister, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding and Looked After Children, North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (co-opted member)
- 11 The Virtual School sub group will report to the Corporate Parenting Panel on a regular basis with all decisions relating directly to the Virtual School being taken by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Aycliffe Secure Centre

- 12 Terms of reference have been adopted from the Corporate Parenting Panel terms of reference as follows:
 - Support and bring challenge to achieve best outcomes for children who are looked after in secure services
 - Agree the themes and performance, on an annual basis that enhance corporate parenting of looked after children in secure services.
- 13 Advice and support will be given to the sub group by appropriate officers of the Council.
- 14 Membership of the Aycliffe Secure Centre sub group will be taken from members of the Corporate Parenting Panel including co-opted members, and will be reviewed as and when required by the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 15 Proposed membership of Aycliffe Secure Centre sub group is as follows:
 - Cllr Peter Brookes (chair)
 - Cllr Mamie Simmons
 - Cllr Ann Reed
 - Cllr Maura McKeon
 - Selwyn Morgans, Aycliffe Secure Services Centre Manager, Durham County Council
 - Helen Fergusson, Head of Looked After Children and care Leavers, Durham County Council
 - Carole Payne, Head Of Early Help, Assessment and Safeguarding, Durham County Council
 - Aileen Conlon, Head Teacher, Aycliffe Secure Centre, Durham County Council
 - Gill Eshelby, Strategic Manager, County Durham Youth Offending Service, Durham County Council
 - Wendy Taylor (co-opted member)
 - Vacancy (co-opted member) secondary school lead
- 16 The Aycliffe Secure Services sub group will report to the Corporate Parenting Panel on a regular basis with all decisions relating directly to Aycliffe Secure Centre being taken by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Recommendations

17 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to agree:

- d) The establishment of two sub group of the Corporate Parenting Panel for the Virtual School and Aycliffe Secure Centre
- e) Terms of reference for each sub group set out in paragraphs 7 and 12 of the report
- f) That membership of the sub groups are taken from the membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Expenses may be incurred by co-opted members for travel costs, this will be paid from Democratic Services general member's expenses budget.

Staffing – Administration of the sub groups will be undertaken by existing officers of Durham County Council.

Risk – N/A

Equality and diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty – N/A

Accommodation – N/A

Crime and disorder – N/A

Human rights – N/A

Consultation – N/A

Procurement – N/A

Disability Issues – N/A

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