

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 September 2018



Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report Annual Report 2017-2018

Report of Margaret Whellans, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report April 2017 – March 2018. The Annual Report is attached as Appendix 2 of this report.

Background

- 2 In March 2016, Durham County Council's Children's Services were inspected by OFSTED who found that services required improvement. Their report 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."
- 3 Following the publication of the Ofsted Inspection report an Ofsted Improvement Plan was developed and was grouped into four themes, including The Strengthening Political and Management Oversight theme.
- 4 Benchmarking was undertaken, and as a result changes were made to political oversight arrangements, including the functions, membership, governance and administration of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 5 Work has also been undertaken to raise the profile of the Corporate Parenting Panel's work.
- 6 Further work has been done following the approval of changes to the constitution, and terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel were agreed, which incorporates all aspects of the constitutional changes.
- 7 The terms of reference include the functions described in the Constitution with the responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel in relation to each of the functions clearly set out.

- 8 The terms of reference make specific reference that the Corporate Parenting Panel will prepare and provide an annual report that will be shared with Cabinet and Scrutiny.

Development of the Annual Report

- 9 To ensure the voice of the child is reflected in the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, it was agreed that young people from the Children in Care Council, supported by officers from Transformation and Partnerships, would develop the Corporate Parenting Panel's Annual Report for 2017-18.
- 10 The young people have worked on the design, layout, content and language of the Annual Report to ensure it is easy to read and understand.
- 11 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) The Durham County Council 'Promise' to Looked After Children
 - (e) Key performance data
 - (f) Engagement mechanisms
 - (g) You Said – We Did, evidencing the changes made as a result of consultation with young people
 - (h) The Corporate Parenting Panel's areas of work for the future

Terms of Reference

The five functions of the Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference, which were agreed by the Panel at the meeting on 30th June 2017 are as follows:

- (a) Ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parent to children and young people in care and care leavers including:
 - (i) Young people in residential care
 - (ii) Children and Young People in foster care
 - (iii) Children placed for adoption
 - (iv) Children placed at home under Placement with Parents Regulations
 - (v) Young people who are living in supported lodgings
 - (vi) Young people in Secure Services
 - (vii) Young people in custody.
- (b) To engage and listen to the views of children, young people and their carers for whom the Council is the parent.

- (c) To work in partnership with other statutory agencies to drive forward improvements in care.
- (d) To act as the governing body for the Virtual School for looked after children and young people.
- (e) To act as the governing body for Aycliffe secure services, monitoring and ensuring the quality of secure accommodation.

Key Successes 2017/18

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- (a) A care leavers event was organised in Durham earlier in the year, inviting care leavers to have a say on the things they wanted improved. One proposal, which it is pleasing to report is now in place, is that care leavers no longer have to pay council tax.
 - (b) Over the past year the CICC website has grown and developed with the help of young people. A page has recently been created to inform young people about their corporate parents and how to contact them. This suggestion was made by young people wanting to know who their Local Councillor/Corporate Parent is in their area and the Corporate Parenting wanting to create better links and relationships with looked after children and young people. The website is very well used and, on average, has over a thousand hits a month.
 - (c) Regular meetings have taken place with the Chief Executive of Durham County Council, staff at the Council and the Children in Care Council. The main aim of the meetings was to look into the Council creating more opportunities for care leavers within 'The Family Business – The Council'. The Council now offer a number of apprenticeship vacancies targeted at care leavers.

Priorities 2018/19

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- (a) To improve the experience of children and young people when coming into care.
 - (b) To create more 'job opportunities for care leavers within the Council
 - (c) To increase the number of new DCC Foster Carers and dispel any myths around foster care.

Recommendation

- 14 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:
- (a) Note contents of report.

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Appendix 1: Implications

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

Staffing - There are no staffing implications.

Risk – There are no risk implications.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – Looked After Services are available to all children and young people in line with legal duties.

Accommodation - There are no accommodation implications.

Crime and Disorder – There are no crime and disorder implications.

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

Consultation – Young people from the Children in Care Council have been involved in the development of the Annual Report.

Procurement - There are no procurement implications.

Disability Issues – There are no disability implications.

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

Appendix 2: Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2017-18

Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2017-18 is attached as a separate document.