

# **Staffordshire Corporate Parenting Panel**

## **Annual Report 2019-20**

### **Chairman's Forward**

This year the Corporate Parenting Panel have continued to meet and hold workshops to increase members involvement in what is being achieved for 'Children in our Care'. The panels work programme is developed from the 'Children in our Care' strategy and therefore has a focus on the strategies six key objectives.

Two highlights from this year programme were firstly; the Children in Care Council 'Take over day' when young people run the panel and share their life experiences and secondly; when the panel met Mrs Jean Foster MBE following her award of an MBE in recognition of over 30 years service as a foster carer.

Although the end of the year coincided with the COVID -19 pandemic and the work programme was not fully completed I together with panel members are looking forward to being able to continue the panels positive influence on the lives of children in our care.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the panel members for their commitment to improving the lives of the children in our care.



County Councillor Mark Sutton

Chairman of Corporate Parenting Panel  
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

## Purpose of Corporate Parenting Panel

1. The Corporate Parenting Panel is the means by which the Council discharges its responsibility as a corporate parent and brings together councillors, senior officers in children's social care and partner agencies to consider key issues which affect looked after children and care leavers.
2. The Panel actively engages with and challenges key partners to provide good support and is ambitious for the children in its care.
3. The Panel works closely with our Children in Care Council and Care Leaver forums to ensure all our looked after children have the best possible care, are safe, healthy, happy and achieve. In order to achieve this, the Panel has an annual thematic work programme in which all partners are called to account.

## Governance and membership

4. The Panel provides a key role in supporting members to play their role in ensuring accountability for our looked after children. Whilst all members of the County Council are corporate parents, members of the Corporate Parenting Panel champion and challenge on behalf of looked after children and Care Leavers. The panel is proactive in challenging service delivery and advocates for children in our care and for strong governance principles.
5. The Panel looks to see that the voice of the child is imbedded across services and informs decisions making.
6. The Work Programme is a working document and as such the Panel have requested supplementary reports in order to further explore any areas of concern or challenge.
7. The Panel comprises of 15 elected members of the County Council, including the Chair who is the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Chairman of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee. Members are appointed annually at the Council meeting in May.

The current members and their attendance record in this period are:

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| Gill Burnett (8/9)<br>Janet England (6/9)<br>John Francis (7/9)<br>Gill Heath (2/9)<br>Michael Greatorex (to Oct 2019) (2/4)<br>Phil Hewitt (8/9)<br>Bryan Jones (vice chairman) (9/9)<br>Jill Hood (6/9) | Bernard Peters (5/9)<br>Natasha Pullen (2/9)<br>Paul Snape (8/9)<br>Mark Sutton (chairman) (8/9)<br>Carolyn Trowbridge (8/9)<br>Ron Clarke (8/9)<br>Maureen Compton (6/9)<br>Richard Ford (from Jan 2020) (2/3) |
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8. Members of Staffordshire's District/Borough Councils are co-opted onto the Panel as champions for looked after children particularly in areas of housing and leisure facilities.

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| Ann Edgeller (7/9)<br>Alan Pearson (4/9)<br>Wendy Sutton (7/9)<br>Janice Silvester-Hall (from December 2019) (2/3) | Barbara Hughes (3/9)<br>Jill Waring (0/9)<br>Jeremy Oates (3/9) |
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9. The Panel is supported by the Strategic Lead for Looked after Children and Disability Services and the Assistant Director for Commissioning (Families and Communities). A facilitator from the Children in Care Council attends every meeting to ensure the voice of the child feeds into the Panels work programme.
10. The Panel calls on professional advice and assistance/ holds to account:
- The Head teacher of the Virtual School
  - Designated nurse for Looked After Children
  - County Managers for Leaving Care and Adoption
  - Regional Permanency Partnership
  - Independent Reviewing Officers
  - Youth Offending Team
  - Senior practitioner colleagues
11. The Panel calls for witness accounts as appropriate, from:
- Looked after children and Care Leavers
  - Care Leaver Ambassadors
  - Foster carers
12. The Panel's Terms of reference were approved by the Panel in 2017 and are attached as Appendix.
13. The Panel met 9 times during the period. It has met formally and in informal workshops to debate key aspects of the service. Due to the Covid19 pandemic the panel was unable to complete its work programme for 2019/20. Items not considered will carry over into the next municipal year.
14. All panel members are required to complete Level 1 Child Protection Training as a minimum.
15. In February, we were reminded of the importance of our role in accompanying the 'independent visitor' on Regulation 44 visits to our in-house children's homes. These management visits are carried out under the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and provide an opportunity for independent scrutiny of a home. We continue to undertake Regulation 44 visits on a rota basis.

## Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-19

16. The challenge and scrutiny role of the Panel is focussed on driving the overarching Looked After Children Strategy 2016-19. The Strategy has 6 key objectives:

- Keeping You Safe
- Where I live
- Your Education and learning
- Your wishes, views and feelings
- Becoming a Care Leaver
- Your Health and Wellbeing

## Key Issues

17. At a workshop **in May**, we identified performance indicators around outcomes for looked after children (LAC) and care leavers and the emerging themes informed our work programme for 2019/20. Priorities were identified as:

- Understanding the reasons behind children coming into care (neglect, abuse etc)
- Looked after children going missing from education and exclusions and how this increases vulnerabilities
- Outcomes for care leavers (suitable accommodation and apprenticeships)
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Virtual School – raising aspirations and supporting mental health needs.

18. Throughout the year we have monitored the steady continued rise in the numbers coming into care in line with the national trend. The unprecedented rise put a real strain across Children's services and inevitably on performance. In **June** the LAC population peaked at 1225 some of whom were coming into care presenting with really complex problems.

19. We are aware that admitting a child into care is a last resort initiated only when potential and inherent risk to an individual can be demonstrated and when family and friends' options have been exhausted.

20. The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by Ofsted **in February** had judged the quality of Staffordshire Children's Service to be 'good' overall and identified a number of areas that required further improvement. We explored the resulting Improvement Plan at our meeting in **September**. This comprehensive plan formed the basis of the Children's Services Business Plan for 2019-20. By this time, all areas that had been identified by Ofsted for improvement were on track with policies, procedures and processes reviewed and improved underpinned by training for all staff.

21. Our focus was on the areas which related to Looked after children: Contextualised safeguarding; Children who go missing; and, Contact with care leavers.
22. The increasing looked after children population and the pressure that brought to bear on Children's Services seemed relentless and in **January**, we welcomed the introduction of the New Practice Model in response and which is now embedded consistently across the whole service. Families are supported to enable children to remain at home wherever it is possible and safe.
23. Phase 1 of Children's Services Transformation brought early help and safeguarding together into one team under two heads of service. We endorse the significant investment made by Cabinet in November 2019 of £8.1m to redress the balance in Children's Services.
24. Phase 2 is a whole system reform which will embed a restorative practice approach. All staff are now trained in this approach which is community based and utilises voluntary, community and family resources. We endorse the approach which will be child centred and focussed on a District footprint. Needs will be addressed early on before they escalate and the root causes of children coming into care will be analysed.
25. Systems and processes will be scrutinised and improved to free up social worker time by reducing bureaucracy. Recruitment of social workers and family support workers will step up. Whilst we welcome an early intervention approach, we have warned against a focus on solely reducing the numbers in care and where it can be demonstrated that children need the auspices of local authority care, they must be able to access it. We have been assured that where there are clear safeguarding concerns children will be brought into care, but the service will work proactively with families to try and support children staying at home wherever possible. Ofsted have recognised good practice in Staffordshire's Court and Care Planning teams over many years and the Courts have also acknowledged the appropriateness of the cases brought to them. We are clear that Children's Transformation must be child lead and not finance driven and are assured that the fundamental principle is to improve outcomes for children and families.
26. Increasingly the number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) will help to take children out of the care system. We learned in **January** that SGOs formalise arrangements under Section 31(1)(a) of the Children's Act whereby one or more individuals are appointed to be a child's 'special guardian'. This is intended for children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement. These kinship arrangements remove for the child the stigma associated with living in care and continue to offer support proportionate to need with no financial disincentive.

### Key achievements

27. The Corporate Parenting Panel plays a key role in promoting, monitoring and challenging service improvement and achievements.
28. The Staffordshire Pledge reflects what matters to young people in care and all Corporate Parenting Panel Members have signed up to commit to uphold the Pledge and support young people to improve their life chances. We are ambitious about looked after children's futures and enjoy opportunities to celebrate their success and achievements with them.
29. The Take Over meeting (in **January** this year) when young people representing the Children in Care Council take over the meeting has become a highly anticipated and always enjoyable meeting in our work programme. This time, young people presented on Older Life Story Work; Supporting Communication with Children Training and Interviews; National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum; Care Leaver Update; and, the CiCC Regional Conference. We are eager to support young people and for them to challenge us on our commitments to them and we welcome closer integration with the CiCC. As County Councillors, we feel we offer a wealth of local knowledge and experience.
30. In **March**, we celebrated with Mrs Jean Foster MBE her recently being awarded, together with her husband, an MBE in recognition of over 30 years service as foster carers. Mr and Mrs Foster had cared for 186 children over a 35 year period as well as having 7 children of their own.
31. Our Foster Carers took over the March agenda and delivered a presentation which showed the diversity of opportunities to foster children; the many categories of care and the range of backgrounds and circumstances of carers. They acknowledged the support which they receive from the County Councils Fostering Service. This exchange helped us to understand the issues which matter to carers and we were impressed by their dedication and enthusiasm. Unanimously we agreed that closer engagement between the panel and foster carers would be of benefit and should be facilitated.

### Your wishes, views and feelings

32. In addition to Take Over meeting, the Children in Care Council continue to feed their thoughts through their facilitator to all our meetings.
33. The Children in Care Council have worked on a leaflet to widen their engagement and have developed a participation plan hoping to generate interest from a greater cross section of Staffordshire LAC. The Children's' Voice Project who consult via the 'Big Vote' have also been working with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) through a monthly support meeting.

34. We recognise that Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) can often be the one constant professional on a child's journey through care and are significant as the 'eyes and ears' of the Local Authority. IROs chair reviews for every looked after child, even those placed outside of the county. As with other aspects of the service, they have struggled to cope with the increasing numbers especially those placed outside of the county (some of whom were more than 20 miles away). We agree that IROs need to facilitate and encourage better engagement from looked after children in their reviews and we welcomed their work plan priorities shared with us **in July**.
35. In **October**, the Corporate Complaints Manager summarised the Statutory Children's Service Complaints and Representation Service Annual Report for 2018/19. We raised concern over timescales for responding to complaints. Since then, the Strategic Lead for Specialist Safeguarding has been working with the complaints team to improve performance. We accept that lapsed timescales in the court and care planning process do not necessarily mean progress is not being made and working through issues with parents can take time.

#### Your Health and Wellbeing

36. The looked after children's designated nurse attended meetings twice during this year. **In May**, she presented disappointing performance around the timeliness of health assessments. Previously poor performance had been attributed to turbulence caused by commissioning changes but the backlog of assessments had still not been cleared. Improvement appeared to be happening but slowly and we were assured that better results would follow in the next quarter.
37. Staffordshire had been successful in becoming one of nine pilot authorities approved to run a looked after children mental health pilot and in **June** we endorsed the vision, set out in the document: Starting Well, Living Well, and Supporting Well – a Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Approach to Children and Young Peoples Mental health and Emotional Wellbeing 2018-23. The new system will accommodate the increasing demand, have a better understanding of local need and a focus on prevention and early intervention.
38. The pilot, funded by the DfE, trials a new mental health assessment tool for children who enter care over a 12 month period (July 2019-July 2020) and we look forward to the analysis. The new emotional wellbeing service effective from April 2020 is focussed on prevention and improving pathways: making it easier for individuals to step up and step down through the services.
39. **By February**, the timeliness of health assessments and review assessments for the north of the county was excellent but variable for RHAs, and sometimes poor for southern parts of the county (Cannock, Burton and Stafford). Additional dedicated support has since been allocated and progress is being made. We expressed concern over the pace of progress towards completing all RHAs. We accept that there have been capacity issues and are reassured that the team are now adequately resourced. We continue to receive regular feedback on progress.

## Keeping you safe

40. Looked after children are proportionately far more likely to go missing than their peers. In **September**, we learned that the prevalence of young people going missing in Staffordshire was far higher in the north of the county. The majority of young people only go missing once and just over three quarters repeat three times or more.
41. Repeat missing episodes can lead to placement disruption. Catch 22, a commissioned service, now undertake independent return interviews and the learning from these is shared to help understand motives and mitigate future risk. We are concerned that while Catch 22 undertake return interviews for other local authority children placed in Staffordshire, our children placed outside of the county do not receive the same courtesy and our social workers have to travel to them. Understanding the reasons behind missing episodes should help shape a Care Plan. There is clearly a need to get better at exchanging information with other authorities and we feel that reciprocal return interview arrangements should be a requirement.
42. The Missing Protocol aims to prevent young people from going missing and had been received positively by Ofsted. We accept that it is difficult to prevent someone from going missing if their mind is set to do so, no matter how much support they receive.

## Where I live

43. In **September**, we shared increasing concern for young people placed in provision with an absence of an inspection regime (unregulated) with ineffective safeguarding arrangements and an increased risk of exploitation. The use of unregulated placements for looked after children had recently attracted national attention in the press, the Howard League and by Ofsted. There is provision for young people 16 plus years which offers accommodation and varying levels of support but no 'care'. This 'supported accommodation' is used for young people who choose to live independently: a steppingstone to independence. In most cases the service has a good working relationship with these providers.
44. We were satisfied that the service reviewed all such arrangements for Staffordshire's young people following the negative publicity and ensured there are key decisions on all files reflecting this management oversight. A working group has been established to closely monitor the most vulnerable young people who have been identified as at-risk from criminal and sexual exploitation. We are satisfied that appropriate safeguards are in place in Staffordshire.
45. We asked for more information on why Staffordshire children are placed outside of the county and in **October**, we learned that it happens when there is a complexity of need which cannot be met locally - significant mental health needs, eating disorders or a disability, for example.

46. It can be to break a cycle of Child Sexual Exploitation (C.S.E) or Gang Association; to maintain contact with family members who have moved away or simply because of a lack of places closer to home. The service retains close oversight of out of county placements. At the time of our meeting, 58% of residential placement and 36% of foster placements were outside of the county. We gained an appreciation of the cross border challenges and issues: Police, Youth Offending; Health; Education; young people going missing and safeguarding concerns. We are satisfied that every opportunity to bring young people back within the county is taken.
47. Timeliness is a key focus in the Adoption service as children who experience least delay in being placed with their adoptive families tend to have better outcomes overall. In **December** we learned that the Adoption Scorecard placed Staffordshire above average for England. We are pleased the service is ambitious in terms of placing children. Staffordshire has a strong record of achieving adoption for children with their long-term fostering families.
48. There remains a significant shortage of adopters however and we welcome the collaboration of four local authorities to form the North Midlands Adoptions and Permanency Partnership to deliver adoption services on a regional basis. Permanency encompasses special guardianship, adoption or fostering and the partnership brings together practices and processes in order to deliver Phase 1 by April 2020.
49. Jointly funded and aligning governance arrangements, the potential benefits are significant in terms of commissioning, resources and services and it is anticipated that 85-90% of children will be placed within the regional footprint.
50. The Fostering Service annual report for the period 2018/19, reflected a challenging year as increasing numbers of children became looked after. During that period, 706 children had been placed with Foster carers. In Staffordshire we are fortunate enough to have many experienced foster carers. The service has added an out of hours support service in response to need. The campaign presence is ongoing throughout the year challenging myths and public misconceptions about fostering as we recognise the Fostering Service operates in a very competitive market.

#### Your Education and Learning

51. The Virtual School advocates as a corporate parent for looked after children supporting pupils with SEND ensuring good quality Pupil Education Plans are in place aligned to annual reviews wherever possible and they are good at identifying need and intervening as early as possible.
52. In **June**, the Head teacher of the Virtual School, accounted for their progress towards priorities identified for 2018-19. Vulnerable groups had been rigorously tracked and supported and the aspiration mentoring scheme extended to a

second cohort of pupils. High quality PEPs with smart targets which are regularly reviewed are the key to success. The focus on trauma and attachment training as a whole school approach had remained a focus all year and opportunities explored for looked after children to engage in activities which support their emotional resilience.

53. Moving forward, a priority will be the high number of care leavers NEET who have SEND. Challenges around supporting children with SEND have been well documented and in **October**, we learned that 13.3% of pupils had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC) or were receiving EHC support. The number of EHCs being maintained by the authority had risen significantly from 3400 in 2015 to 4914 by January 2019.
54. 50% of Staffordshire's looked after children received additional school support or a SEND intervention which is in line with the national trend. Often young people coming into care have received a fragmented education. Most young people respond positively to a graduated support package however some young people's needs on entry to care can be very complex and some can escalate very quickly.
55. We agree that early intervention is key to supporting children with SEND either in the family setting or a school and we endorse the range of alternative services provided for children who cannot access mainstream education.
56. In **January** we received the annual report from the Virtual School who continue to work to increase stability of school placements; challenge schools on their behalf, raise aspirations and avoid disruption, barriers to learning and exclusions. We applaud the VS on achieving no exclusions during this period.
57. The VS has been challenged by the volume of children in the system especially supporting children who enter care at Key Stage 4, the post 16 cohort and mentoring children in school placements which are out of county.
58. We encourage the VS to promote apprenticeships and we have asked for more information about the post 16 cohort. Funding has been approved for a mentor for this cohort which should help monitor their outcomes.

#### Becoming a Care Leaver

59. The Children's Voice Project have created a programme of modules focussing on different aspects of independence skills aimed at Care Leavers. The programme incorporated modules on Good self-esteem; healthy relationships; DIY; tenancy readiness and budgeting. We welcome the independence programme that supports our young people to take two years to work through all the modules.
60. We considered issues of homelessness. We understand that when a young person presents as homeless and is under 18 years, the local authority is notified

and has a duty to assess them and if going home is not an option, the service has to offer them accommodation. At 18 years, responsibility rests with the housing department. The ideal would be a standardised offer from all housing providers.

61. Local Authorities are mandated through the Social Work Act 2017 with creating and publishing a Care Leaver Offer and to monitor its implementation and effectiveness. Ofsted had highlighted that the service needed to make more effort to keep in contact with some care leavers, regardless that they are often a transient group sometimes reluctant to engage.

62. The service has set up a Strategic Board to focus on:

- Monitoring delivery of the Care leaver Offer
- Housing
- NEET

63. The following Care Leaver champions had been appointed in 2019:

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| Bryan Jones (Chairman)<br>Keith Flunder (Moorlands)<br>Janet Eagland (Lichfield)<br>Jeremy Oates (Tamworth)<br>Gill Burnett (Newcastle) | Alan Pearson (Cannock)<br>Wendy Sutton (South Staffs)<br>Ann Edgeller (Stafford)<br>Bernard Peters (East Staffs)<br>Phil Hewitt (UASC) |
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64. Care Leavers had themselves identified finance and accommodation as their greatest challenges. These member champions had been instrumental in developing a county wide housing protocol and continue to meet with Leaving Care Team Managers on a six monthly basis.

#### COVID19 pandemic

65. Due to pandemic the panel has not met in April or May but during lockdown, we have continued to receive updates on how the service is managing in these challenging circumstances.

66. Care Planning & Court Teams are continuing to match children with carers and virtual visits are being done with children in care. Children continue to be matched for fostering and adoption whilst maximising their safety (COVID-19). All parts of the service are working collaboratively and sharing statutory responsibilities, showing resilience and creativity in supporting each other.

67. The current crisis has had a big impact on care leavers and the level of contact with them has been increased, especially the most vulnerable. Intensive support is offered to children and families at risk of breakdown via daily phone calls and visiting in circumstances that require it. All of our children's homes have remained operational to support some of our most vulnerable children and their families.

68. Children's Disability Teams continue to support families where children have challenging behaviour, learning disability and/or physical disabilities. The Virtual School continues to offer advice, guidance and support. The Artslink programme launched by West Midlands Virtual Schools and co-funded by Arts Connect aims to ensure that all children & young people in care are able to digitally access high-quality arts.

#### Priorities for 2020/21

69. In 2020/21 we will continue to implement the Corporate Parenting Strategy, ensuring we align activity with the actions identified and link in with other council services and wider partner agencies. We will refresh the Strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflects current issues. We have aimed to ensure that the participation of children, young people and their carers is central to all that we do and we have committed to further exploring how they can be better involved. We will address the key issues identified by them and monitor outcomes for care leavers and try to improve these.

70. The annual thematic work programme for 2020/21 will include:

- Impact of covid19 pandemic - our response and lessons learned.
- Decriminalisation of looked after children - workshop
- Contextual Safeguarding for looked after children (addressing CSE, Missing, County Lines, Criminal Exploitation)
- Looked After Children's Health including Mental health – emotional wellbeing and Health Assessments.
- Monitoring delivery of the local offer to care leavers in Staffordshire
- Progress on Adoption Regionalisation
- Progress on Children's Services Transformation.

**County Councillor Mark Sutton**  
**Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**  
**Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel**

## **Implications**

1. Resources and Value for Money - There are no direct financial implications arising from this annual report. Financial performance, namely resources, budget and spend in relation to discharging the Panel's responsibilities is regularly reported through the Council's budgetary procedures.
2. Equalities and Legalities – it will be an ongoing responsibility for the panel to promote, support and respect the identity of looked after children and care leavers. There are no specific legal implications to the report.
3. Risk - The key issue facing the Panel in its oversight and challenge function is the capacity and financial pressures posed by the increase in looked after children population on all service areas supporting looked after children, and ensuring that as effective corporate parents, this does not hinder the care, support, aspirations or continued improvement in outcomes for our children in care.
4. Climate Change - There are no implications for the local environment.

## **Contact Officer**

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## **List of Appendices/Background Papers**

Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference (Appendix)

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-19

Minutes from meetings of Corporate Parenting Panel May 2019 - April 2020



## **Corporate Parenting Panel - Terms of Reference**

### **Context**

Corporate parenting is the collective responsibility of the Council to prioritise the needs of children in care and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children. The Corporate Parenting Panel is designed to provide the necessary leadership that drives an ambitious and multi agency approach to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers by raising aspirations, building stronger relationships and taking time to listen to the voice of the child.

The Panel is a non-political advisory body to the Children's Executive and is chaired by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Families. The Panel does not take executive decisions but provides leadership and a governance structure for corporate parenting in order to drive forward the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

### **Objectives of the Panel**

To provide strategic leadership and hold partners to account for performance against strategies to improve all outcomes for looked after children and young people.

To act as advocates for looked after children and young people and to ensure that the Councils Pledge to looked after children and young people is delivered.

To ensure that looked after children are protected and supported to develop as healthy citizens, able to participate in their community.

To monitor the effectiveness of the Virtual School in improving the educational attainment of looked after children and young people, to narrow the gap of achievement between them and their peers and to maximise opportunities for training and career placements.

To act as champions to increase all County Councillors' awareness and understanding of looked after children and young people and their needs and experiences and consider how they can contribute to improving outcomes.

### **These objectives will be delivered by the Panel in the following ways:-**

Make sure the whole Council and partner agencies commit to the principles of excellent corporate parenting.

Lead on the development, review and promotion of the Corporate Parenting Strategy across the Council and involve partners in order to improve services and respond to changing need.

Be well informed on Government legislation, guidance and policy concerning children and young people in care and their implications for the County Council.

Ensure a dialogue with the Children in Care Council to enable participation of looked after children and care leavers in the corporate parenting agenda and in influencing service re-design.

Receive regular reports, as appropriate, on the level and quality of services and scrutinising performance management information to ensure that any shortfalls are properly addressed.

In accordance with regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001, accompanying officers of the County Council on their visits to children's homes; and accompanying officers on Quality Assurance visits to independent residential providers each month to facilitate communication between looked after children, front line staff and councillors.

Meet children placed in foster homes and hear from their carers and to monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations to foster carers to achieve excellent and high quality care.

Celebrate the successes of looked after children and care leavers.

Link as appropriate with the Safe and Strong Select Committee and develop a relationship with the Safeguarding Children's Board.

Hold partners to account for their role in the delivery of services to looked after children and care leavers

Encourage all partners whether health, education or social care services or the voluntary sector to work in an integrated way in the best interests of looked after children and care leavers

To appoint elected members as champions for children in care in respect of the following themes:

- Housing
- Employment and training opportunities within council departments and with partner agencies
- Health (including mental health)
- Educational attainment and access to higher education
- Foster carer recruitment and retention

## **Membership**

The Panel shall comprise no more than 20 Members (15 County Councillors plus co-optees) and may include any member of the County Council representing a county-

wide spread and be appointed at the annual meeting of the Council. Representatives from partner organisations may be co-opted onto the Panel as appropriate. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children is chairman of the Panel.

Co-opted membership is invited from the eight District Councils; a foster carer and representatives of the Children in Care Council.

All members will receive appropriate training.

**Arrangements for Meetings:**

The Panel shall meet every month, agree a work programme annually and review it at each meeting. The meetings of the Panel are held in private session.

Meetings of the Panel shall be conducted in accordance with the Procedural Standing Orders in Section 11, of the Councils Constitution although meetings may comprise a range of different formats, visits to different locations and informal meetings with children and young people and those who support them.

The Corporate Parenting Panel will report to the appropriate Select Committee, the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.