

**WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

*To:* **Children and Young People Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **12 July 2016**

*From:* **Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **For key decisions**    *Key decision:*    **No**

*Purpose:* **To brief members on the progress of the Corporate Parenting Strategy action plan and the subsequent outcomes for Looked After Children and care leavers.**

*Recommendation:* **Members are asked to note the report and continue their engagement in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>	
Name:	Tracy Collins
Post:	Head of Corporate Parenting
Email:	<a href="mailto:Tracy.Collins@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Tracy.Collins@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>
Tel:	01223 729151

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board meets on a quarterly basis and is attended by Members, representatives of partner organisations, officers and representatives from the Children In Care Council Voices Matter. At each meeting the Board receives a quarterly performance report detailing information regarding the Looked After Children population and activity updates from the outcome areas. This is in addition to specific items of interest such as new service developments.
- 1.2 The Corporate Parenting Strategy was launched in June 2015. It is a three year strategy, aspiring for better outcomes for our Looked After Children (LAC) and setting out actions to achieve this. The five main outcome areas within the strategy are:
- 1) Looked After Children ( LAC) to achieve their educational potential
  - 2) Carer leavers gaining successful employment
  - 3) Good health and well being
  - 4) Care leavers equipped to be parents
  - 5) Children placed out of county are not disadvantaged
- 1.3 A different workstream exists for each of the outcome areas. Four of the five workstreams are well established and are working to their individual action plans. The 'Care Leavers as Parents' workstream has experienced challenge with the writing and alignment of the Teenage Parent Strategy, although this is now in hand.
- 1.4 Each of the workstreams have gathered momentum at different rates but all are showing progress within their individual action plans. This report provides an update of progress.

## **2.0 PROGRESS UPDATE**

### **2.1 Summary**

- 2.1.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy has been effective in drilling down to some of the detail and scrutiny needed to progress and improve services and the experiences of Looked After Children. Some areas of work have moved forward relatively quickly and seamlessly particularly where the emphasis has been about renewing focus and efforts.
- 2.1.2 Other areas of work have involved detailed audits to examine current practice and produce targeted and specific action plans. There has been very good examples of multi-agency working and there is a shared understanding and ownership of responsibilities.
- 2.1.3 The direction of each of the workstreams is detailed in their individual action plans for the next 12 months. The Corporate Parenting Board will continue to be responsible for the monitoring of the progress of Corporate Parenting action plans.

## **2.2 Outcome 1: LAC to achieve their educational potential**

- 2.2.1 This outcome is closely aligned to the Council's Accelerating Achievement Strategy 2014-2016 which is aimed at groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to underachievement. Two targets are linked to this outcome as set out below. However, some caution needs to be applied when considering these figures as the small and changing cohort of children can make comparison difficult.

### **Increase the proportion of LAC reaching level 4 at KS2 by 3% by 2015**

- 2.2.2 Performance for KS2, combined level 4

2014	32%
2015	32%

- 2.2.3 Performance has remained at 32%, below the national average of 53% and we have not made the 3% increase in KS2 results that was set. In 2014 KS 2 level 4, 44% made more than 2 levels of progress. This fell to 42% in 2015. The increase in numbers of children with SEND may account for this.

### **The proportion of LAC making expected levels of progress between KS2 and KS4 is 3 percentage points above the national average**

- 2.2.4 Performance based on Department of Education requirement of on roll for a year at a specified date at KS4, 5 GCSEs at C or above including English and Maths.

2014	21%
2015	26%

- 2.2.5 For 2014 national level for 5+GCSE figure was 15% and 14% in Eastern Region. The 2015 national figure has not been confirmed.
- 2.2.6 Figures available show different children from KS2 to KS4 as the cohort is not stable and the same children do not appear on the data from KS2-KS4. Of those children in care in year 11, their results have increased from 21%-26% and is substantially above the national average.
- 2.2.7 The outcome area is led by the Head of the Virtual School and the work activity is overseen through the Virtual School Board. The following details some of the areas this group has progressed on in the last year.
- 2.2.8 To support the improvement in post 16 educational outcomes, the Post 16 LAC Support worker is currently working with 61 young people in Year 12. This has involved regular meetings with social care staff, Youth Offending and others working on Post 16 development. Paperwork linking to the Pathway Plan is being developed to ensure appropriate education strategies are included for young people.

- 2.2.9 Advice and guidance is given and reflected in Personal Education Plans (PEP's). Additional support is identified for children who are struggling. The Virtual School Head quality assures all school admissions to ensure appropriateness. The Virtual School advises on the provision of activities and life skills for children and these are included in PEP's.
- 2.2.10 The Corporate Parenting Board is attended by the Virtual School Head who provides regular updates on the educational attainment of looked after children and care leavers and the latest service developments.

### **2.3 Outcome 2: Carer leavers gaining successful employment**

- 2.3.1 Care leavers are more likely to have experienced a combination of factors which can affect career options and success after the age of 16 years, including: limited educational qualifications and training, mental ill health, substance misuse and family breakdown. As result they are over-represented in the category of young people classed as "Not in Education, Training or Employment" (NEET). Within the strategy the following target was set:

#### **2.3.2 Increase in % of care leavers aged 17-21 years engaged in education, training or employment**

	%in education , training and employment (EET)	% not in education training and employment(NEET)	England rate care leavers 19-21 who are EET	Statistical Neighbours EET
<u>Total 2014-15</u> *cohort measured was 19- 21yrs.	49%	51%	48%	47.2%
Total 2015-16 * cohort measured 17- 21yrs so not comparable with previous year.	43.8%	56.2%	Awaiting for figure to be released	

- 2.3.3 Cambridgeshire's EET figures were marginally higher than the national average in 2014/15. A significant number of the group are NEET for health reasons and this includes mental health concerns. Some of the young people within this group are parents or pregnant. Improving EET outcomes remains a priority with action being led by the Targeted Participation group.
- 2.3.4 The Targeted Participation group meets quarterly although areas of activity are discussed and monitored within other Team Meetings monthly. Over the past year the key areas of progress has included the following:
- 2.3.5 Links are being developed with pastoral support teams in Further Education Colleges to ensure young people have the right support. Additionally, Progress Coaches can be accessed if there is a need for extra support. This means that young people are being offered improved and better quality support in their educational setting. The outcome is that these young people are assisted to develop their professional support network and are more likely to seek help in their education setting at an earlier stage, before problems grow. This also links directly to supporting a reduction in the 'drop-out' rate of young people. The plan going forward is to develop links are needed with

Higher Education Colleges to support Care Leavers to better achieve in their education.

- 2.3.6 Young people who are LAC/Leaving Care are now identified on the Job Centre Plus System and this works well. The Employer Services Team ensures suitable employers/vacancy information is forwarded to staff supporting young people LAC to enable matching with suitable employers.
- 2.3.7 The Leaving Care Team seek apprenticeship opportunities for young people wherever they can with local businesses and providers of services. The County Council is yet to establish employment pathways within its own organisation for care leavers.
- 2.3.8 There is support via the Virtual School for any young person of school age placed out of county.
- 2.3.9 It is recognised that more needs to be done to support looked after children and care leavers on the transition to post 16 education and training. The experience is that support works well when built on existing good relationships but a more systematic approach to providing proportionate support is needed and this is a priority for the Virtual School Head in the coming year. In addition, there can be issues of getting prompt notification of care leavers who leave education early. This is being reviewed as prompt support is essential to ensuring a successful move to another form of education or training.

## **2.4 Outcome 3: Good health and well being**

- 2.4.1 The level of physical and psychological ill-health tends to be higher in looked After children and young people compared to peers because of their often difficult start in life. This outcome has one target.

### **2.4.2 90% of children have a health assessment within 20 days of entering care.**

2015/16	37%
---------	-----

- 2.4.3 The relatively low figure reflects multiple challenges and explains its importance within the strategy. Children placed out of area are much harder to access with sometimes limited networks between Cambridgeshire health clinicians and those areas. Unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC's) often take time to arrange their medical assessments in a culturally sensitive way. There have also been capacity issues to be addressed. All of which have been prioritised through the workstream.
- 2.4.4 Notwithstanding the challenge in ensuring that the initial health assessment is completed within 20 days the evidence is significantly more positive for health support thereafter. For 2015/16, 94.6% of Looked After Children has received health and dental checks overall.
- 2.4.5 This workstream is led by the Designated Nurse for LAC, and good progress on key actions has been made over the year including:
- 2.4.6 The LAC Audit in Cambridgeshire confirmed that a Health Action Plan is in place for every child that reflects their physical and emotional health needs

(including Family History, past medical history, physical health, growth, school and developmental progress, emotional and psychological wellbeing, lifestyle/health promotion, immunisations, dental health, vision and hearing).

2.4.7 The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is focused on ensuring compliance with its statutory duties to deliver timely assessments for LAC (20 days for initial health assessments). Within county, Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) has redesigned its service to ensure all Initial Assessments are now carried out by a Paediatrician. The health team also actively chase up Health Assessments for children placed out of county.

2.4.8 A 'Health Passport' which includes all historical as well as current information about children's health has been developed following consultation with care leavers. This document is awaiting sign off. Each care leaver will receive a copy of their Health Passport, which could be passed to their GP if that is their choice.

2.4.9 LAC and Care Leavers have access to Clinicians within Children's Social Care, to support their mental health. Local Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) services should be prioritising this group, especially where there are significant concerns. However, the local offer to LAC and Care Leavers is currently no different to the general population. This means that there are gaps in what is being provided to this group and support is not always being provided in a timely way. This is an area of priority and work is underway to review the current pathway and to develop processes which priorities LAC and Care Leavers.

## 2.5 **Outcome 4: Care leavers equipped to be parents**

2.5.1 Looked After Children can be ill-equipped to be parents due to their own experience of being parented and being in the care system. The result can be that they themselves have a higher chance of their children becoming looked after. There is growing evidence that women can become trapped in a cycle of becoming pregnant; not engaging effectively with services to cope with underlying issues and the trauma of their children being taken into care and so quickly becoming pregnant again and having further children removed.

2.5.2 The outcome target is:

### **Reduce the % of care leavers becoming parents before their 21st birthday, to 15% by July 2018**

2.5.3 Currently there are 36 care leavers who are parents with a further 6 who are expecting (17.8%). Through the workstream and the launch of the Teenage Parenting strategy it anticipated that this number should reduce over time.

2.5.4 The workstream is led by the Head of Service for Family Work. The challenge in progressing the work has been the absence of a Teenage Parent Strategy which is aligned with the priorities under this outcome. The Teenage Parent Strategy is now in its second draft and out for further and final consultation. However, progress has been made:

- 2.5.5 A pathway to improve the access to long acting contraception for vulnerable young women has been agreed. This went live in April 2016 and is initially being used by clients of the SPACE project for a 3 month period. The SPACE project work with mothers and their partners, to help them understand the range of issues they face that contribute to the risk of their children being taken into care, and help them take control of their lives.
- 2.5.6 Parents and expectant parents are supported by the Leaving Care Team and access the same rights and entitlements as all other care leavers. This group are offered the services of the Family Nurse Partnership where eligible and if they are not able to access, they receive an alternative support package which will be equivalent to such support.
- 2.5.7 Going forward the Teenage Parent Strategy will be signed off, and a workstream to be set up to develop the good practice and systems that are required to be in place to support care leavers as parents and to identify where further work is needed in accordance with the priorities in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

## 2.6 **Outcome 5: Children Out of County**

- 2.6.1 The reasons for children being placed out of county are varied but are usually because of a lack of appropriate provision in the county. Sometimes children may be placed out of county to be nearer relatives and friends or for their own safety. Cambridgeshire's figures for children placed out of county have been high for 18 months, but there is a slow and steady drop in the numbers in 2015. Children and young people placed outside of Cambridgeshire do not always experience the same quality of services as their peers that remain living within Cambridgeshire.

- 2.6.2 The outcome target is :

**Decrease the proportion of children looked after placed more than 20 miles from their homes, outside the Local Authority boundary to 32%**

- 2.6.3 Since this target was agreed there has been a change in the performance measure with UASC's being recorded separately and the performance measure is now 20 miles away from their home postcode and outside of the Local Authority boundary. Whilst a significant number of our out of county children are placed just over our geographical borders, many are within 20 miles of Cambridgeshire.

- 2.6.4 **Children placed outside of county & 20 miles from home postcode**

	Actual figure	Target figure	Stat neighbours	England
31/3/15	30%(	Not set	15.4%	14%
31/3/16	27% (148 out of cohort 549)	20%	Not yet available	Not yet available

- 2.6.5 The figure for UASC's is significantly higher as historically there has not been provision for these young people within our boundaries. On the 31 March 2015, 46 out of 61 (79%) UASC were placed out of county the majority just over the border in Peterborough. The challenge is addressed through the identification of increased placement availability within the county.
- 2.6.6 This workstream is led by the Head of Commissioning Enhanced Services. Some of the progress areas for this group are as follows:
- 2.6.7 Safeguarding arrangements for children placed out of County have been audited. There are a variety of systems in place to ensure children placed out of area are safe and further work is needed to ensure that data is captured quantitatively around this issue. The Access to Resources Team (ART) undertake pre-placement checks with providers which look at a range of issues including whether or not there are Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) issues local to the placement. The ART Team also monitor placements every six months to keep informed of any changes in the nature and quality of placements.
- 2.6.8 A specific paper around children out of County was produced for the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This was helpful to look at how well this group of LAC are supported. It identified that children placed out of County receive the same number of visits and meetings at the same frequency as children placed within Cambridgeshire.. The report also helped to draw out some of the challenges in how our data systems help us to collect specific information about this group of children. A small task group has been set up and is working on developing processes that improve recording. Activity will be monitored by the Local Safeguarding Children Board in September 2016.

### **3.0 FURTHER CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ACTIVITY**

- 3.1 As well as monitoring progress against the priorities of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Board has:
- Received regular updates from the Participation Service on its work with looked after children
  - Considered arrangements for unaccompanied asylum seeking children
  - Received an update on work to protect looked after children from child sexual exploitation
  - Received details of the Siblings Together project (a project to provide looked after siblings with the opportunity to undertake activities together)
  - Considered findings from a review of the Fostering Service
  - Received a presentation on the Alternative to Care service

### **4.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

- 4.1.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy and its associated action plan includes actions to ensure that looked after children and care leavers have full access to employment and training opportunities.



## **4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

- 4.2.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy seeks to improve health and other wellbeing outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

## **4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

- 4.3.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy and its associated action plan is fully focussed on addressing this priority.

## **5.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Resource Implications**

- 5.1.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy is being implemented within available and planned resources.

### **5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

- 5.2.1 There are no significant implications within this category. The Corporate Parenting Strategy and its associated action plan is consistent with addressing this issue.

### **5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.3.1 There are no significant implications within this category The Corporate Parenting Strategy and its associated action plan is consistent with addressing this issue.

### **5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

- 5.4.1 There are well developed arrangements for the authority to support participation and feedback from looked after children and young people through their engagement in the Children in Care Council –Voices Matter and Care Leavers Forum. There is an independent contract with the National Youth Advocacy Service that supports individual looked after young people as well as visiting advocacy to our children's home

### **5.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

- 5.5.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy and its associated action plan supports the role of all members in meeting their duties as corporate parents.

### **5.6 Public Health Implications**

- 5.6.1 There are no significant implications within this category. The Corporate Parenting Strategy and its associated action plan is fully focussed on addressing this priority.

## **SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015-2018	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/517/corporate_parenting_strategy_looked_after_children">http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/517/corporate_parenting_strategy_looked_after_children</a>
6 months of Corporate Parenting LSCB Report	Tracy Collins Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP 01223 729151