

**CORPORATE PARENTING SUB COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019**

**To: Children and Young People Committee**

**Meeting Date: 10 March 2020**

**From: Executive Director: People and Communities**

**Electoral division(s): All**

**Forward Plan ref: n/a** **Key decision: No**

**Purpose: The Corporate Parenting Sub Committee Annual Report sets out the Sub Committee's activity over the year 2018-2019 and scrutinises performance and progress in the Council's work with Children in Care and young people leaving care against the five key priorities:**

- **Being and feeling safe**
- **Being healthy and leading a healthy lifestyle**
- **Achieving stability and permanence**
- **Preparing for adulthood**
- **Hearing the voices of children and young people**

**Recommendation:**

- a) **Note the information within the Annual Report 2018-2019 that relates to the activity of the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee of the Children and Young People Committee.**
- b) **Note the information within the report relating to the performance of children's services and impact on children in care and care leavers.**
- c) **Note the continuing actions to secure improvements to service delivery and ensure that our response to meeting the needs of children and young people is proportionate and consistent.**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The purpose of Sub Committee is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in its care and provides a key role in ensuring children's services are held to account for the quality of service. The Sub Committee became active in April 2017 and has delegated authority to exercise the Council's Corporate Parenting functions, with the exception of policy decisions which remain with the Children and Young People Committee.

The Corporate Parenting Sub Committee Annual Report 2018/19 is attached at Appendix 1. It sets out the Sub Committee's activity over the year 2018-2019 and focuses on a number of key areas of performance that relate to children in care and children leaving care. The report provides an overview of the Sub Committee's challenge and scrutiny in relation to service delivery and the support offered to this cohort of children.

## 2. MAIN ISSUES

The Corporate Parenting Sub Committee follows a thematic agenda under the five key priorities and these are reflected within the Annual Report:

- Being and feeling safe
- Being healthy and leading a healthy lifestyle
- Achieving stability and permanence
- Preparing for adulthood
- Hearing the voices of children and young people

- 2.1 As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, Cambridgeshire County Council was responsible for supporting and looking after 775 Children in Care (including children in respite care). In June, July and August 2019 there was a significant increase in the numbers of children in the care cohort which continued throughout the year. Using the latest published data (for 2018/19) the average rate (per 10,000 0-17yr olds) for similar areas was 49.2 and for England it was 65, compared with a rate of 57.6 for Cambridgeshire.
- 2.2 As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, the leaving care population consisted of 360 young people, compared to 349 at the end of 2018. Cambridgeshire recognises that this cohort will continue to rise in the coming years as a result of legislation extending the support of Personal Advisors to all Care Leavers up to the age of 25 years (Children and Social Work Act 2017). To support this activity, capacity in the specialist Leaving Care Teams was increased through additional Personal Advisor posts and new Personal Advisor posts within the Children in Care Teams who have a focus on transition planning for children moving into adulthood.
- 2.3 ***Being and Feeling safe:***  
A key indicator for this priority is the percentage of children in care receiving regular visits

from their allocated social worker. Performance fluctuated marginally between April and September 2018 and dipped significantly in November 2018 which coincided with the structural changes in the system. Whilst performance gradually improved again (86% of visits were completed in timescale in March 2019) performance remains below our target of 95% of children receiving a visit from their social worker in line with their care plan. Performance in relation to care leavers receiving a timely visit from their allocated worker showed an improvement towards the end of the reporting year and in March 2019, 75% of care leavers were visited in line with their pathway plan. Some young people over the age of 18 years old refuse to engage with their allocated worker which does effect overall performance.

The number and timeliness of Return Home interviews (RHI's) conducted in response to children in care being reported missing is another key indicator relating to this priority. In Cambridgeshire the RHI's are conducted by specialist staff within the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked HUB (MET HUB). The MET HUB sits within the Integrated Front Door which enables timely access to key information about children and families from across partner agencies. The target timeframe to conduct return interviews is 72 hours from the point the child is found. For Children in Care, 441 RHI's were required during the year, 418 were completed, 345 were completed within timescale and 73 were completed outside of the 72 hours. Some RHI's will not be completed as the young person refuses to engage with the interview.

#### **2.4 *Being healthy and leading a healthy lifestyle:***

Improvement is needed to ensure the health needs of children in care are responded to in a timely manner. Health Assessments can be delayed for a number of reasons such as obtaining consent which allows referrals to be made to health, delayed clinic appointments and non-attendance at clinic appointments. There are also different arrangements that apply to children who live in Cambridgeshire and those who live outside of Cambridgeshire that affect how other health authorities prioritise Cambridgeshire children.

For Care Leavers, health agencies have a key contribution to make in the development of the care leaver's offer and a number of initiatives are planned to support the improvement of the health offer in 2019/20.

Through the course of the year the Sub Committee identified the need to improve how the Council and partner agencies respond to and support the emotional health and well-being of children and care and those leaving care. An Emotional Health and Wellbeing task and finish group was established bringing key partners together aiming to improve services.

#### **2.5 *Achieving stability and permanence:***

The Cambridgeshire Foster Carer' Association (CFCA) was founded in November 2018 and became a functional group in early 2019. The CFCA is a voluntary organisation set up and run by foster carers to provide support for all our carers and the children in care they look after. The CFCA raises the profile of Cambridgeshire's foster carers and works hard to ensure they are viewed as professionals working closely with the fostering service to improve the experiences of children in care. In the reporting year the Council provided 429 individual children with an in house foster care arrangement which is an increase of 41 children over the previous year.

Performance in relation to adoption activity has demonstrated an improvement in the average time between a child entering care and moving to live with their adoptive family and in the time between formal decisions being made in Court and the Local Authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family.

Performance in relation to placement stability for Cambridgeshire's children in care remains better than our statistical neighbours and the national picture with less children experiencing three or more changes in their care arrangement during the year and more children being cared for by the same carers for at least two years.

## **2.6 *Preparing for adulthood:***

Investment was made in additional Personal Advisor (PA) posts to enable PA's to work directly with care leavers and respond to, support and manage the growing number of care leavers opting to ask for our support up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. Specialist care leaving teams were also in place following the system wide children's services restructure in November 2018.

The Council's Care Leaver Offer, also known as the Local Offer for Care Leavers, was published: PATHWAYS4US.

81.8% of Care leavers were in suitable accommodation in March 2019, the Council was in touch with 84.4% of care leavers and 65.8% of care leavers were in employment, education or training.

## **2.7 *Hearing the voices of children and young people:***

Two former children in care acted as co-opted members of the Sub Committee, sharing their knowledge and understanding to help develop and inform priorities and discussions. In the reporting year, Cambridgeshire's Children in Care Council (Voices Matter) was re-scoped and redeveloped to increase attendance and participation of children and young people in care.

# **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

## **3.1 A good quality of life for everyone**

Supporting vulnerable children and young people in care to achieve the best possible outcomes has longer term benefits for them as well as to the wider population.

## **3.2 Thriving places for people to live**

Promoting the best outcomes for children and young people in care means that they are most likely to make a positive economic and social contribution into adulthood.

## **3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children**

As corporate parents, we share responsibility for ensuring that our children and young people in care and young people leaving care are able to access the best possible support in order to achieve good long term outcomes.

### 3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

There is no significant implications within this Priority

## 4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Resource Implications

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### 4.7 Public Health Implications

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes or No Name of Financial Officer:
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes or No Name of Officer:
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes or No Name of Legal Officer:

<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes or No Name of Officer:
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes or No Name of Officer:
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes or No Name of Officer:
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes or No Name of Officer:

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
<i>n/a</i>	