

# CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE



**Wednesday, 20 November 2019**

**Democratic and Members' Services**

Fiona McMillan  
Monitoring Officer

**16:00**

Shire Hall  
Castle Hill  
Cambridge  
CB3 0AP

**Room 128**

**Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge, CB3 0AP**

## **AGENDA**

**Open to Public and Press**

**Meeting Theme: Stability and Permanence**

- 1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**  
*Guidance on declaring interests is available at <http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code>*
- 2. Minutes of the meeting on 18 September 2019** **5 - 12**
- 3. Action Log** **13 - 18**
- 4. Young People's Participation** **19 - 36**
- 5. Performance Report** **37 - 50**
- 6. Education Transport for Children in Care and Care Leavers** **51 - 56**

<b>7.</b>	<b>Cambridgeshire County Council - A guide to Corporate Parenting for Elected Members</b>	<b>57 - 70</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 2018-19</b>	<b>71 - 106</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Siblings Forever Annual Report 2019</b>	<b>107 - 112</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Fostering Service Update</b>	<b>113 - 124</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Local Offer for Care Leavers</b>	<b>125 - 132</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Workforce Development - Recruitment, Retention and Training</b>	<b>133 - 136</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Agenda Plan</b>	<b>137 - 140</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Workshop and Training Plan</b>	<b>141 - 144</b>

The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee comprises the following members:

Councillor Lis Every (Chairman) Councillor Anne Hay (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Anna Bradnam Councillor Adela Costello and Councillor Elisa Meschini

*For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact*

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<https://tinyurl.com/CommitteeProcedure>

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**CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Wednesday 18 September 2019

**Time:** 4:00pm – 5:30pm

**Venue:** Room 128, Shire Hall, Cambridge

**Present:** Councillors L Every (Chairman), A Bradnam and E Meschini. (to 5:30pm)

**Apologies:** Councillors A Costello and A Hay (Vice-Chairman).

**114. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were noted as recorded as above. There were no declarations of interest.

**115. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 17 JULY 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17 July 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**116. ACTION LOG**

The action log was reviewed and the following verbal updates were noted:

- Minute 55: This had now been completed as the report was on the agenda for this meeting.
- Minute 93: Officers informed the Sub-Committee that Mr Sergeant could no longer attend the training session on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019. The Chairman stated that they would keep this date in the diary. Officers suggested that this date could be used for a training session on early permanency planning instead.
- Minute 110: The Assistant Director, Children's Services stated that officers were currently working to try and identify a young person to be the new co-opted member on the Sub-Committee. The Chairman commented that they had been expecting another young person to attend the meeting. Officers confirmed that the young person was still interested in joining, but had not been available to attend on this occasion.
- Minute 111: The Assistant Director, Children's Services and the Chairman confirmed that they had a discussion regarding processing health assessments for Cambridgeshire children placed in care. They stated that a report would be brought to the Sub-Committee meeting in November.
- Minute 112: There had been a letter sent to the Chairman regarding access to Education Transport for Children in Care and Care Leavers. The Assistant Director, Children's Services asked officers to make sure that all actions in that letter had been completed. (**Action:** Targeted NEET Manager/Consultant Social Worker)

- Minutes 113 b: Establish process to receive the feedback on the work of these groups of which the Sub-Committee Members are appointed which relate to children in care and care leavers. Action ongoing, The Chairman stated she would speak to Democratic Services.

The Assistant Director, Children's Services informed the Sub-Committee that the Head of Service, Corporate Parenting had created a flowchart that outlined the reporting groups that sat underneath the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee. This would be circulated to the Sub-Committee. (**Action:** Head of Service, Corporate Parenting)

## **117. YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

The Sub-Committee reviewed the events for children in care and care leavers which had taken place over the school holidays.

Arising from the report, Members:

- Queried whether some children were not attending these events as they did not want to be identified as care leavers. The Participation Worker stated that they had received good feedback on the events. However, she did comment that this feedback had been received from children who had a good fostering experience. She stated that to overcome this labelling issue, they were going to rename the events for older young people to 16+ groups.
- Asked why children who were still in care would be reluctant to take advantage of these events. The Member suggested that officers could work with Foster Carers to help engage them. The Participation Worker stated there were over 700 children in care and not all of them would want to attend. She suggested that a number of factors affected attendance such as transport to the events and availability. She confirmed that they were working closely with other teams to help raise awareness of these events.

The Chairman invited John Priest, the Chair of the Foster Carer's Association, to speak and asked him to provide information regarding the work of the organisation. The Chair of the Foster Carer's Association informed the Sub-Committee that they were the voice for foster carers. They worked with officers in the fostering service to try to improve the service provided to the children they looked after. He welcomed the invitation to attend all future Sub-Committee meetings to act as a conduit between the Sub-Committee and foster carers. He indicated that they had a Facebook group which was used to communicate with foster carers in Cambridgeshire.

In discussion:

- A Member asked the Chair of the Foster Carer's Association why some children were not taking advantage of participation events. He suggested that children had personal reasons why they did not want to attend, such as not liking large congregations of people. It was suggested that Facebook groups could help promote these events in order to raise participation.
- The Chairman sought more information regarding this conduit function. The Chair of the Foster Carer's Association stated that a number of Committees and Boards were being established that would allow for closer working relations between Members,

officers and foster carers. The Assistant Director, Children's Services suggested that foster carers could let officers know of issues they would like to see considered by the Sub-Committee. The Chairman agreed and commented that the Sub-Committee needed to make sure that everyone's voice was heard. This would allow them to provide an effective service to ensure the welfare of the children in the Council's care.

- The Chairman requested more information regarding the feedback received from children who had attended participation events. The Partnership & Quality Assurance Audit Manager explained that the feedback was fed into Corporate Parenting services and various regional/ local projects, such as 'Ten Top Tips'. The Chairman asked whether the Sub-Committee's co-opted members would have access to this feedback as they were the conduit between the Sub-Committee and young people. Officers stated that the Service Development and Commissioning Manager was in discussion with the co-opted member regarding how they linked into 'Voices Matter'. This was still work in progress.
- The Chairman expressed the wish to progress to a position where the co-opted members could present issues raised by young people in care to the Sub-Committee. This would give the Committee a clear indication of the up to date issues of concern for young people in care. (**Action:** Development and Participation Manager)
- A Member queried whether mental health or social worker issues had arisen in the feedback collected. The Partnership & Quality Assurance Audit Manager, representing the Participation Team confirmed that this had come up as a theme in the past and that any issues identified were followed up by a social worker.
- A member of the public suggested that an Instagram account could be created in order to receive questions and comments from young people. The Chairman supported any such initiatives that helped facilitate questions from young people. The Participation Worker suggested they could collect feedback through the 'Voices Matter' group. She highlighted that there would still be young people who did not want to attend the events, but would be willing to provide their thoughts through Instagram and Facebook.
- The Assistant Director, Children's Services stated that an Instagram Story could be produced which would outline the topics that had been discussed at the Sub-Committee meeting. The Chairman supported this as an approach for future meetings. (**Action:** The Assistant Director, Children's Services)

Having commented and provided feedback,

It was resolved:

- a) To note the range of consultation events and activities the Participation Service provide for children in care and care leavers.

## 118. VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Sub-Committee reviewed the Virtual School development plan and the key priorities for the coming academic year.

Arising from the report,

- A Member raised concerns regarding the 'care-experienced children' phrase found in appendix 1 of the report. The Virtual School Head Teacher clarified that the remit of the Virtual School had extended to children who had previously been in care.
- The Chairman commented that the Sub-Committee wanted to work closely with the Virtual School in order to make sure they were kept up to date on the progress made. She sought more information regarding the Virtual School's link to the Local Offer. The Virtual School Head Teacher stated that these links were continuing to strengthen. She noted that there were ongoing training sessions for social workers on the role of the social worker in education.
- The Chairman sought more information regarding how schools were adapting to the new way the Virtual School was working with them. The Virtual School Head Teacher stated that the model was live from the beginning of this academic year. There was a positive response from schools at the designated teacher's conference in July 2019.
- There was a discussion regarding the effective Personal Education Plans (PEPS). It was suggested that PEPs drew attention to the children by taking them out of lessons. It was commented that the child should have a voice in how they contribute to the PEP meeting. Both the Virtual School Head Teacher and the Assistant Director, Children's Services stated that the child's Social Worker should be in attendance at PEP meetings.

It was resolved:

- a) To note and comment on the report, offering support and challenge as necessary.

## **119. PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report outlining the performances of services for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

In discussion:

- A Member sought information regarding how long it took officers to produce the report as she would be concerned if officers were taking a long time to research and produce the statistics included as opposed to carrying out their main child related duties. Officers stated that the report had been produced by the Business Intelligence Team and was therefore not resource intensive from her point of view. Her main role had been to identify themes from the data. The Member was reassured. The Assistant Director, Children's Services stated that the data was reported back to the Department of Education (DfE), it was also used by officers on a daily basis to assist with management oversight.
- The Member commented that officers would be able to learn a significant amount from the data. Officers stated that it was used as a tool to identify and analyse themes throughout the year.

- A Member requested an update regarding Initial Health Assessment data. Officers stated they were doing as much as they could to improve the collection of this data. Once database software changed to Liquid Logic the process of collating data would change.
- There was a detailed discussion regarding the 20 working day deadline for Initial Health Assessments (IHA). The Assistant Director, Children's Services stated that they had problems getting the consent forms to the Looked After Children Health Team in a timely manner. She highlighted that processing consent forms from out of county children was a significant challenge. The Head of Service, Corporate Parenting suggested that they could review their current process and also look at other Local Authorities to see how they overcame this problem. (**Action:** Head of Service, Corporate Parenting)
- The Chairman stated that the Sub-Committee needed to have a clear understanding of the situation. Once this had been achieved, they could take up the issue with the Children and Young People's Committee.

Having reviewed and commented on the performance for Children in Care

It was resolved:

- a) To note the themes and trends identified in the report.

## **120. ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 2018 – MARCH 2019**

With the agreement of the Sub-Committee, the Chairman brought the report forward from the published order on the agenda as Councillor Elisa Meschini needed to leave the meeting which would result in it becoming inquorate with no decisions able to be made.

The Sub-Committee reviewed a report providing an update of adoption activity 2018-19.

Arising from the report:

- The Chairman commented that the process of moving children out of care into foster care had improved.
- A Member raised concerns regarding the number of adopter recruitment enquiries received compared to the number who were finally approved. The Adoption Support Team Manager stated that individuals when applying often did not realise the difficulty of looking after a child and this only became apparent when they received more detail further into the process.

It was resolved:

- a) To sign off the report for the purposes of Local Authority Adoption Service Regulation and Adoption Minimum Standard 2011

Councillor Elisa Meschini left the meeting at 5:30pm. The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee meeting was now inquorate.

A summary of the informal discussions of the remainder of the agenda is included as an appendix to these minutes.

Chairman  
(date)

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE – EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

- Members discussed this item informally. It was highlighted that positive work was being undertaken in this area and it needed to be brought to the attention of the Children and Young People Committee.
- The Chairman suggested that once the report was completed, it comes back to a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee in the New Year.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE WORKSHOP AND TRAINING PLAN**

The Sub-Committee workshop and training plan was reviewed informally.

- Officers stated that the Corporate Parenting sub-committee Annual Report would not be ready to be reported to the Children and Young People Committee (CYP) meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019. This was due to the comparative data not being available until the beginning of December.
- Members suggested that the report could be taken to the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> January and the CYP meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020. However, due to the statutory publication deadlines, the agenda for the CYP meeting would have to be published on the 13<sup>th</sup> January. Therefore, it was agreed that at the CYP meeting would receive a verbal updates on comments made by the Sub-Committee.
- An Officer stated that the validated exam results would not be ready to be brought to the Sub-Committee till May/June 2019.
- Members discussed organising the training plan/forward agenda plan thematically so it synergises with the Sub-committee agenda and the 5 key priorities.
- Members suggested that the theme for the November Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee meeting could be stability and permanence.
- Members suggested that the theme for the January 2020 Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee meeting could be Health.
- Members suggested it would be appropriate to move the 'Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers Task and Finish Group report and recommendations' to the January 2020 meeting.





**CORPORATE  
PARENTING  
SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Minutes-Action Log**



**Summary**

The Action Log is a list of all of the things that people have been asked to do at earlier meetings. It is included at each meeting so that members can check that everything is being done. It was last updated on **07 November 2019**.

### Minutes of the meeting on 20 March 2019

92.	<b>Children in Care: Emotional Health and Wellbeing</b>	<b>Pam Parker</b>	The Chairman suggested that this topic should be included as part of a future Corporate Parenting item at a Members' Seminar.		
93.	<b>Actions taken by the Council in response to Child Sexual Exploitation and County Lines Gang Exploitation</b>	<b>Jenny Goodes/ Fiona van den Hout</b>	To invite Dave Sargeant, an ex-police officer working with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, to help co-ordinate thinking on this issue and to deliver a training session. This might also be opened to members of the Children and Young People Committee.	<b>23.10.19:</b> Mr Sargeant has confirmed his availability for February 2020 to delivery Members training on this topic to tie into Sub-Committee theme of being and feeling safe in March 2020. Members are requested to bring available dates to the Sub-Committee in November.	<b>Date TBC at November Sub-Committee</b>

### Minutes of the meeting on 22 May 2019

103.	<b>Fostering Service Annual Report 2018/19</b>	<b>Sarah-Jane Smedmor</b>	The Sub-Committee would want officers to look at ways of supporting foster care recruitment beyond the three year period covered by Transformation funding.	<b>03.07.19:</b> The Assistant Director for Children's Services to work with the fostering team and transformation team to consider sustainability. This will be fed back as part of the next fostering service report in November 2019.	<b>For report in November 2019</b>
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**Minutes of the meeting on 17 July 2019**

<b>110.</b>	<b>Young People's Participation</b>	<b>Claire Betteridge</b>	To make the recruitment of a second co-opted member (if required) and co-opted member substitutes a priority to ensure that the voice of children in care and care leavers remained at the heart of the Sub-Committee's work.	11.10.19: The Participation Team hopes that one young person who is interested in becoming a co-opted member will be able to attend the Sub-Committee meeting on 20 November 2019.	<b>A young person attending the November meeting</b>
<b>111.</b>	<b>Performance Report</b>	<b>Sarah-Jane Smedmor/ John Peberdy, CCS</b>	CCS to let officers know which local authorities were consistently slow to process health assessments for Cambridgeshire children in care placed within their areas so that the Council could take this up with them.	<p>06.09.19: Establishing those local authorities which are consistently slow to process health assessments for Cambridgeshire children in care placed within their areas has proved complicated. The Sub-Committee will be kept updated.</p> <p>18.09.19: The Chairman and the Assistant Director for Children's Services stated that this would be brought to the Sub-Committee in November as part of the Performance Report.</p> <p>23.10.19: A report providing an overview of impact of delayed health assessments for children living outside of Cambridgeshire will be brought to the Sub-Committee in January 2020, to tie into the theme for January's Sub-Committee 'Being healthy and leading a healthy lifestyle'. This has been added to the Sub-Committee agenda plan.</p>	<b>A report will be submitted to the Sub-Committee in January 2020</b>
<b>113.</b>	<b>Sub-Committee Workshop and Training Plan</b>	<b>Fiona van den Hout</b>	<p>To send out meeting invitations confirming the dates and venues of the workshop and training sessions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Case studies for wraparound care</li> <li>ii. Annual Corporate Parenting Report (two sessions)</li> </ul>	<p>23.10.19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Reunification and Placement Stability Service will deliver Members' training on the work they do to reunify children with their birth family where it is safe to do so. This training will include an overview of research that has been commissioned by the</li> </ul>	<b>Training date to be set at November Sub-Committee</b>

				<p>Corporate Parenting Service on this topic and will also include case studies, with specific focus on Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). This training will take place in December 2019 to tie into the tie into the theme for January's Sub-Committee 'Being healthy and leading a healthy lifestyle'. Members are requested to bring available dates to the Sub-Committee in November.</p> <p>ii. One session to agree the format and content for the Annual Corporate parenting Sub-Committee Report has taken place. No further sessions have been planned, the draft report will instead be circulated for agreement by Members via email.</p>	<b>Completed</b>
		<b>Richenda Greenhill</b>	Establish a process to receive feedback on the work of those groups to which Sub-Committee members are appointed which relate to children in care and care leavers and to open lines of communication.	15.08.19: A list of all relevant groups which Sub-Committee members sit on has been compiled. A process to receive feedback on the work of these groups and to open lines of communication with them is under discussion.	<b>On-going</b>

**Minutes of the meeting on 18 September 2019**

<b>116.</b>	<b>Action Log</b>	<b>Fiona van den Hout</b>	The Head of Service, Corporate Parenting had created a flowchart outlining the reporting groups that sit beneath the Sub-Committee. This would be circulated to the Sub-Committee.	23.10.19: Circulated for information only via email to Members week commencing 28.10.19.	<b>Completed</b>
<b>117.</b>	<b>Young People's Participation</b>	<b>Alison Bennett/ Claire Betteridge</b>	The Chairman expressed the wish to progress to a position where the co-opted members could present issues raised by young people in care to the Sub-Committee. This would give the Committee a clear indication of the up to date issues of concern for young people in care.	01.11.19: Officers will ensure that all young people who undertake this role are clear that there will be an expectation that they attend other forums to share information with other young people about the Sub-Committee's work and also to provide feedback to the Sub-Committee from other forums that young people attend about issues that are important to them.	<b>Completed</b>
		<b>Sarah-Jane Smedmor</b>	The Assistant Director, Children's Services stated that an Instagram Story could be produced which would outline the topics that had been discussed at the Sub-Committee meeting. The Chairman supported this as an approach.	07.11.19: The Assistant Director is taking a request to the next Voices Matter panel for them to help officers think through how we can make an Instagram story of the Committee purposeful for them. Tony Darnell from CCC communications team is involved with this work. A further update will be provided after the discussions with Voices Matter.	<b>On-going</b>



**YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **Claire Betteridge - Service Development Manager**

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

*Purpose:* **To provide an update on participation events and initiatives.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is recommended to:**

**Comment and provide feedback on the range of consultation events and activities the Participation Service provide for children in care and care leavers.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>	<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>
Name: Claire Betteridge Post: Service Development Manager Email: <a href="mailto:csc.participation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">csc.participation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01480 372493	Name: Councillor Lis Every Role: Chairman, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Email: <a href="mailto:Lis.Every@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Lis.Every@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: (office) 01223 706398

## **Summary:**

- There is a plan for participation activities throughout 2019/20.
- We had four Just Us Groups planned for October half term 2019.
- The regional participation teams met as planned at the end of September 2019 for the media project.
- We are hosting meetings for young people aged between 16-18 and care leavers 18 plus to meet and get involved with the participation programme
- The Mind of My Own Apprentice continues to promote the use of the APP offering individual and group training.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee requested an update on the work of the Participation Service at each of its meetings.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

### **2.1 Update on Involvement of Young People**

#### **Consultation**

- 2.1.1 The participation team has continued to make efforts to identify other young people who might be interested in being substitutes for the co-opted members of the corporate parenting sub-committee, so we can ensure we have young people in attendance at each meeting.
- 2.1.2 We are mindful that the links between the corporate parenting sub-committee and the Voices Matter (children in care council) need to be strengthened. Over the coming months we are going to be focusing on this by encouraging and supporting the young people who attend the Sub-Committee as co-opted members to attend the Voices Matter meetings to feedback to other young people about the issues that are discussed at the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee. They will also be supported to share any issues or feedback they might want to highlight on behalf of other young people with elected Members.

#### **Voices Matter**

- 2.1.3 We haven't hosted a Voices Matter meeting since the event in August at Grafham Water. The next meeting is planned for the 17 February 2020. However, we have had contact with some members of Voices Matter during the October half term and in 20/21 we plan to move to a schedule of meetings at least six times per year.



## **Just Us Groups**

### **2.1.4 Wisbech Session – September 2019**

On the 2 September 2019 a Just Us Group took place at the Wisbech Adventure playground for children and young people aged between 5 and 14 years of age. We had 5 young people came along on the day and engaged with working with us.

A summary of the session is outlined below:-

<b>Ideas for the Awesome Awards</b>
<b>Food</b> Meatballs Chocolate Fountain Sweets Chilli Peppers Doughnuts
<b>Award Categories – What are you proud of?</b>
PE New home New school Singing Reading Helping around the home Listening Maths Writing Minecraft/ Lego City Doing things for yourself Being Tall! Baking



2.1.5 We also asked them for ideas about what they would like to do at future groups, they suggested the following:

Ideas for Future Groups
Swimming Shows Singing Beach Video Games Cinema Bowling Park Skating ‘Play Today’ nr. March/ Wisbech – soft play/ bowling Morrow Village Hall

We will be using the feedback and ideas to shape participation activities going forward. The ideas we obtained about the Awards Ceremony will be used to plan the event.

#### 2.1.6 October 2019 half term sessions

We had 4 Just Us Sessions planned for the October half term, the sessions were offered at two different venues (March and Waterbeach). The two sessions planned for March and one in Waterbeach were cancelled due to no one signing up.

The one session in Waterbeach that took place as planned had four young people signing up but one had to cancel on the day. All of the young people who booked to come along had been to a number of participation events previously.

The team sent out the newsletter and information about the Just Us Groups that were planned for the October half term to 116 foster carers as well as colleagues three weeks prior to the event to promote. The Participation Team spoke to or left messages with 86 foster carers within 10 days of the groups taking place.

The three young people who attended were consulted about their awareness of The Promise to our children in care and care leavers and none of them had heard of it. The participation team will be promoting The Promise with operational teams as part of the team visits we are currently undertaking. We also plan to include a copy of The Promise in the correspondence we are sending to all new children in care along with our newsletter. We will ensure that we have discussions in the groups we are running over the coming months with young people to ensure that they know about The Promise and how they being supported with this in mind.

This is the feedback we received about The Promise and how they were being supported in keeping with it.

Have you heard about The Promise to children and young people in care and care leavers	All three young people said that they hadn't heard of it
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Now that you have looked at and discussed The Promise – what do you understand about it?	You have to adhere to it to help young people Basically the rules that keep us safe and the rules that social workers have to follow. How people can support young people and what they can do to help.
Do you feel happy and safe in the home you live in?	Yes I am happy Yes Yes I am very happy and safe where I live
Do you think you are healthy? Do you think you are getting the right support?	Yes and I know where to go if I need to access help Yes I am a very healthy person and I would know where to go if I wasn't. Yes I am happy about the support that I am getting I am receiving help from Brookfields soon. But I feel very much supported by everyone
Are you seeing the people who are important to you enough?	Yes Yes I am seeing some enough and others not enough
Are you kept informed about your care plan?	Yes Maybe Sometimes
Do you feel listened to?	Yes
Are you receiving feedback about the participation events you have been to?	Yes Yes I was given enough feedback
How would you like to get feedback and communication from the participation team?	Instagram Letters via foster carers Letters sent to me in my name I wouldn't mind Instagram or snapchat

The session also had guests from the National Children's Bureau who are undertaking a national consultation with children and young people about their understanding of Children's Rights.

#### 2.1.7 **Impact**

- The foster carers who supported children and young people to attend the Just Us sessions were positive about the opportunities being made available to the children in their care.
- The Just Us Group provided valuable feedback about the Awards Evening and what activities they would be interested in coming along to in the future.
- The young people we are attracting to come along to the Just Us Meetings are relatively small in number. The young people who came along to the Waterbeach session have engaged in a number of participation events previously.

- The feedback about The Promise is based on three young people's comments, but is indicating that we need to do some more work on promoting with children and young people and practitioners
- We supported three young people to engage in a national consultation being undertaken by the National Children's Bureau on Children's Rights.
- The participation team now plan to promote The Promise with operational teams as part of the team visits we are currently undertaking. We also plan to include a copy of The Promise in the correspondence we are sending to all new children in care along with our newsletter, to inform them about the participation team and how they can get involved. We will also ensure that we have discussions in the groups we are running over the coming months with young people to ensure that they know about The Promise and how they being supported with this in mind.

### **2.1.8 Care Leavers Forum**

Up until February 2019 the service ran a small but regular group of care leavers who met on a monthly basis in Cambridge city, which ended at that time due to the team's capacity to facilitate the meeting along with young people's availability.

Through discussion with older young people and some foster carers we have identified that they would like a forum, but we need to offer meetings across the county to assist in their participation and attendance. As a result we have consulted colleagues in the leaving care team about how we can reinstate a forum. The proposal is to offer meetings on a regular basis across the county to offer the young people the opportunity to meet up for the social aspect, but also to have guest speakers on subjects that are important and of interest to young people. These meetings will be used to consult with young people about their experiences and give young people the opportunity to engage in wider participation and co-production activities. However we plan to shape the meeting alongside the young people themselves to establish what they would like from the forum.

We have prepared promotional material and the group will be launched on 6 November 2019 to coincide with Care Leavers Week. We will also be launching a group for young people aged between 16-18 years.

We have a further date to offer these two forums in the Wisbech area on the 8 November 2019.

## **3.1 Events from other organisations we have supported**

### **3.1.1 Regional Participation**

The regional participation teams are collaborating on another media based project and held its first meeting on the 28 September 2019 at The Junction in Cambridge. We supported five young people to come along from Cambridgeshire and as part of the session the whole group were given a tour back stage.

The plan is to make a film with children and young people across the region to share their experiences about their journey into and leaving care. There were four groups who considered the following aspects: coming into care, meetings that are held when in care, my first placement feeling stable/safe and leaving care.

The regional workers will be meeting in mid November 2019 to collate the feedback gathered on the day and plan next steps.

The aim is to show the finished product at the Cambridge film festival in June 2020 with the young people attending the after film party.



After the visit to the Junction and exploring ideas for the project the group of young people went out for lunch at 'Nines all you can eat Buffet'.

### **Impact**

3.1.2 Although we are in the early stages of this work the ideas that the young people shared on the day about the messages they wanted to convey were insightful and powerful. Once complete it is anticipated that the film will be a valuable tool for training practitioners across the services.

### **4.1 Activities and Work Planned**

- A schedule of events-based participation activities are planned for 2019 and into 2020. All children including those residing out of County are invited to attend.
- We are attending a corporate parenting management away day at the end of October 2019 to share feedback from the children and young people who have engaged in the different activities and events we have hosted.

- We are launching two forums for young people aged 16-18 years and those aged 18 plus in Cambridge city on the 6 November 2019 and in the Wisbech area on the 8 November 2019. The proposal is to offer meetings on a regular basis across the county to offer the young people the opportunity to meet up for the social aspect but also to have guest speakers on subjects that are important and of interest to young people. These meetings will be used to consult with young people about their experiences and give young people the opportunity to engage in wider participation and co-production activities. However we plan to shape the meeting alongside the young people themselves to establish what they would like from the forum.
- We are meeting with colleagues in the commissioning team to explore how we can support children and young people get involved in the commissioning and contract monitoring process.
- We are going to develop a protocol and toolkit for how we involve children and young people in work such as meetings with inspectors; staff recruitment; commissioning and contract management; and being involved in the delivery of training to staff and foster carers through the development of a young ambassadors program.
- The team are hosting a Make and Create Christmas Event on the 20 December 2019. Further information regarding the participation focus will be developed in preparation for the day.
- We are planning to take an invited group of young people to Wind in the Willows at the Junction in Cambridge in January 2020, as a way of showing our appreciation for the participation activities that they have been involved in and contributed to over the course of the year.
- We continue to meet with social care teams, foster carer support and other stakeholders to promote support and encouragement for children and young people getting involved in our participation activities and promote the use of the APP Mind of My Own.
- We are exploring means of working with key managers from across children's social care to support the communication strategy; to increase the number of children and young people engaging in and contributing to the participation strategy. We met for the first time on the 14 October 2019 to begin these discussions and have a further meeting planned on the 27 November 2019.
- The participation team now plan to promote The Promise with operational teams as part of the team visits we are currently undertaking. We also plan to include a copy of The Promise in the correspondence we are sending to all new children in care along with our newsletter, to inform them about the participation team and how they can get involved. We will also ensure that we have discussions in the groups we are running over the coming months with young people to ensure that they know about The Promise and how they being supported with this in mind.

## 5.1 Participation Service

### Staffing

The Participation Team currently has a manager, two participation workers, a business support assistant and an apprentice leading on Mind of My Own. Our second participation worker took up post on the 10 October 2019.

## 6.1 Mind of My Own

The Mind of My Own Apprentice continues to target practitioners across the service who have registered for a Mind of My Own account but have not used it, offering training and support as a team or on a one to one basis to enhance practitioners understanding in how to use the application to capture the voice of the child.

The information in Appendix 1 summarises Mind of My Own activity for July, August and September 2019.

## 7.1 Conclusion

7.1.1 The participation team had a busy summer hosting and supporting various events. The events planned over half term didn't attract as many young people as we hoped. However, we continue to see a core group of young people come along to our meetings and events and we are beginning to build positive relationships with them as well as observe how they are enjoying meeting up with one another and forming friendships. We are beginning to see a growing group of children and young people are showing an interest in getting involved in shaping as well as participating in our participation events and making their voices heard.

As a team we are committed to promote and encourage our children in care and care leavers access and attend the various opportunities that are being made available to them which not only include the events and meetings we host, where their voices can be heard but also those enrichment opportunities that are being offered by other organisations which we can use for consultations and feedback.

We are mindful that the links between the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee and the Voices Matter (children in care council) need to be strengthened and over the coming months we are going to be focusing this by encouraging and supporting the young people who attend as co-opted members to attend the Voices Matter meetings to feedback to other young people about the issues that are discussed at the corporate parenting sub-committee but also share any issues or feedback they might want to highlight on behalf of other young people with elected members.

We are exploring means of working with key managers from across children's social care to support the communication strategy; to increase the number of children and young people engaging in and contributing to the participation strategy. We met for the first time on the 14 October 2019 to begin these discussions and have a further meeting planned on the 27 November 2019.

## 8.1 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

None identified

Source Documents	Location
None	





**Overview of Mind of My Own**

Mind of My Own is a web based application which can be accessed via a smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer. The program helps children and young people express themselves and communicate with professionals in their lives making sure they are heard. Both One App and Express are effective direct work tools which can be used by a range of professionals from social workers and teachers to support workers.

The **MOMO One App** is a great way for young people to share their thoughts and send them to those who need to hear from them. The app has a number of options called statements which the young person can choose to use, for example preparing for a meeting, share good news or sort a problem. This version of the app provides prompts in terms of what the young person might want to share, for example: preparing for a meeting there are a number of questions, like who do you want to be there, sit next to or talk about, but there is also room for the young person to expand and provide more of a narrative of their views. The app is available to young people to have their own account or they can access it via their workers account when they have a one to one session. The app is able to assist in guiding or structuring a conversation with a young person. The young person can choose who they want to send their statement to.

The **MOMO Express App** is aimed at younger children or those with additional needs and uses expressive pictures, minimal text and affirming sounds. It has some accessibility features that can be tailored to the needs of the child and it can be used to support education, health or social care planning or review process, including EHC plans. The Express App is designed to be used with a worker.

<b>Number of YP accounts – 117</b>			
<b>Number of worker accounts – 384</b>			
	<b>July 2019</b>	<b>August 2019</b>	<b>Sept 2019</b>
<b>Number of statements per month from YP</b>	7	2	7
<b>Number of statements per month via worker</b>	5	13	24
<b>MOMO Express Statements per month</b>	49	13	14
<b>Top 3 subject matters each month MOMO ONE (older children)</b>	Foster Carer Review - 33% Worker Visit – 25% Preparation/Problem - 17%	Foster Carer Review – 50% Preparation – 27% Worker Visit – 9% Child Protection Conference – 9%	My Wellbeing – 32% Foster Carer Review – 29% Worker Visit and Preparation– 16%
<b>Top 3 subject matters each month MOMO EXPRESS</b>	About Me – 27% My Life – 25% My Education – 19%	About Me – 27% My Education – 20% My Health – 20%	My Life – 32% My Education and About Me – 21%

### Mind of My Own Summary

The apprentice for the APP continues to offer team training and one to one support. As a team we have targeted safeguarding teams to promote the use of the APP as part of the preparation in capturing the voice of the child/young person for a review child protection conference.

Below is a summary of feedback received from children and young people through the one APP.

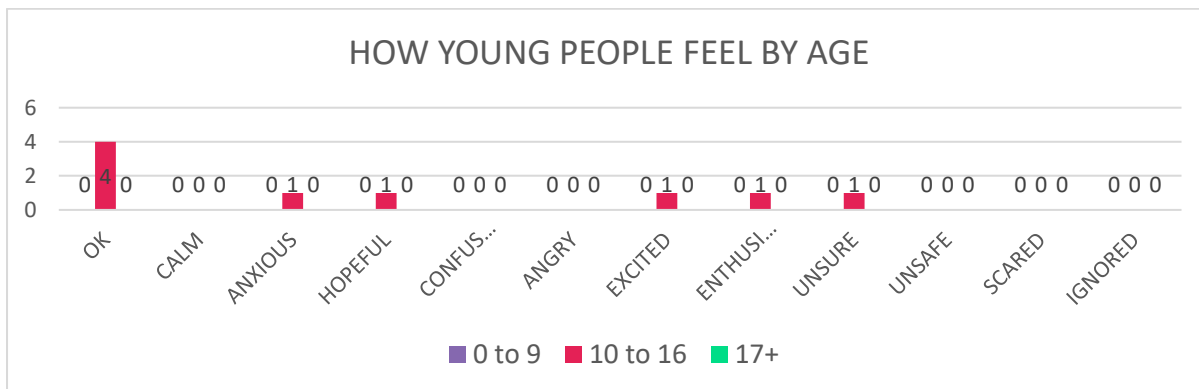
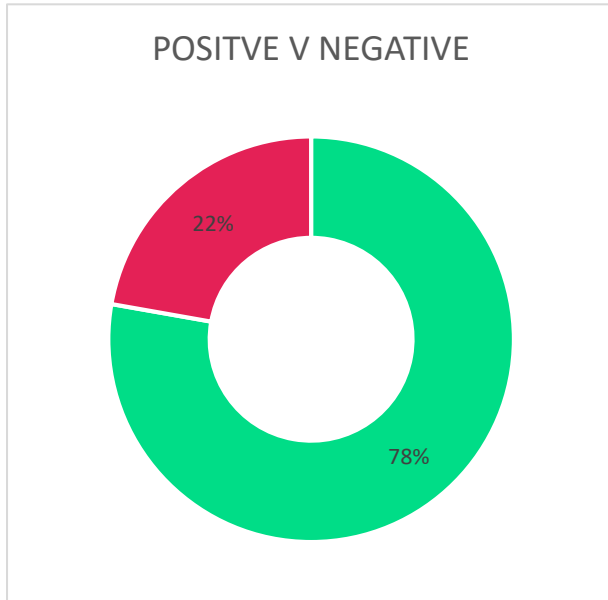
### Mind of My Own Statistics

The developers have updated the dashboard which means we can extract information from the statements we receive from children and young people and the following charts are an example of the information we have gathered for the months of July, August and September 2019.

Any feedback we have received from young people which is negative has been followed up and addressed appropriately.

**July 2019**

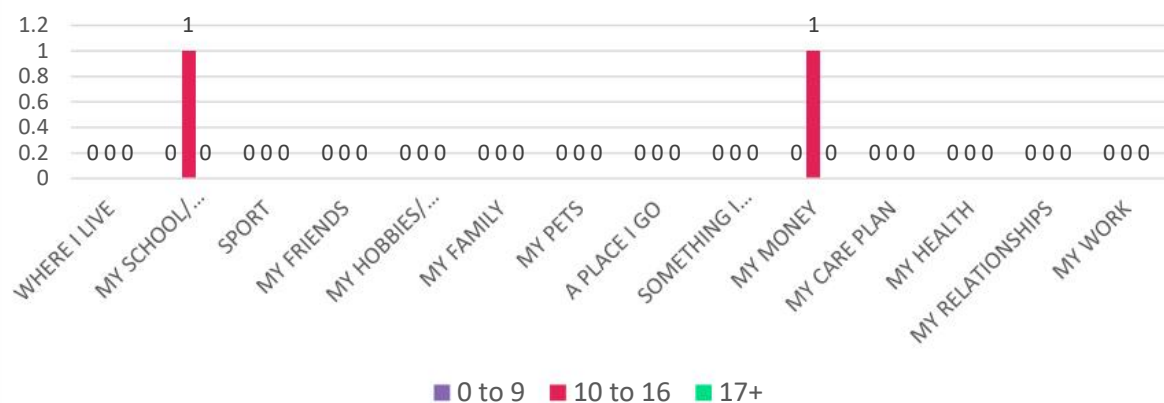
How young people are feeling in general



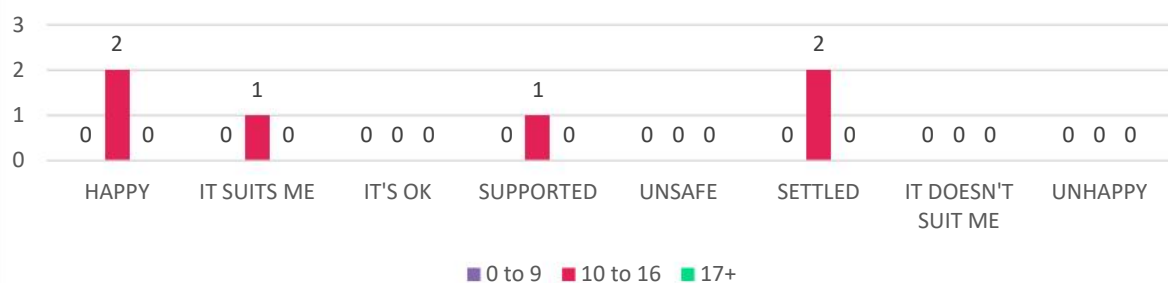
### WHATS GOOD IN LIFE BY AGE



### WHATS NOT GOOD IN LIFE BY AGE

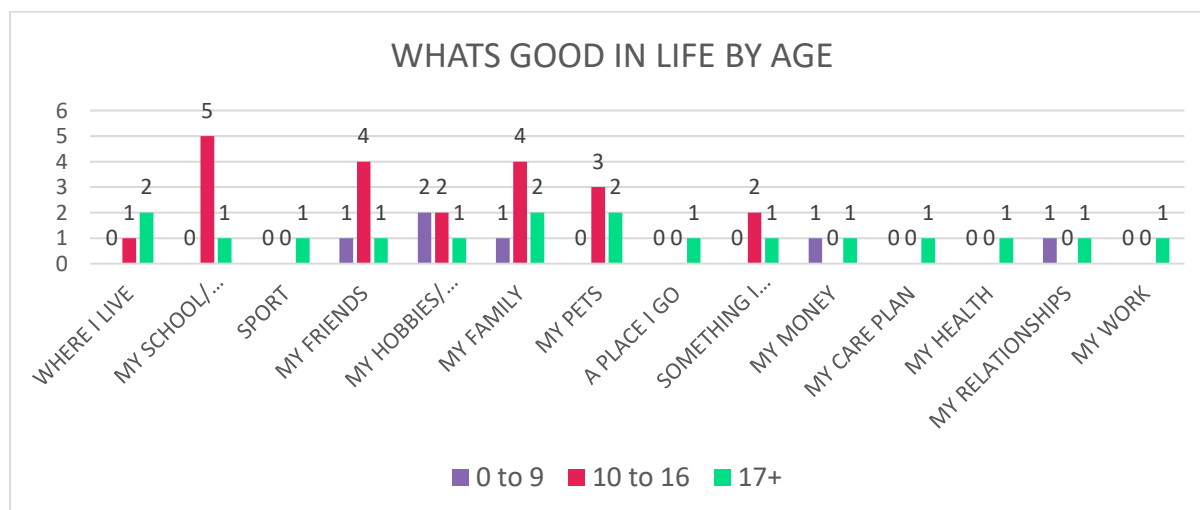
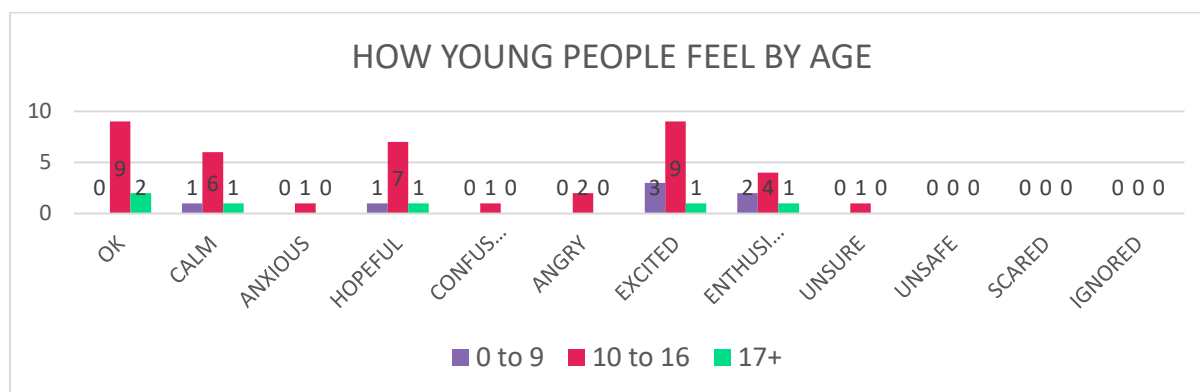
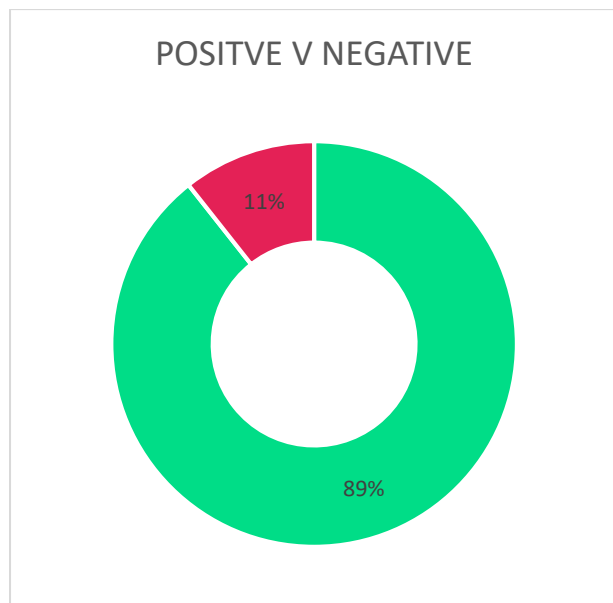


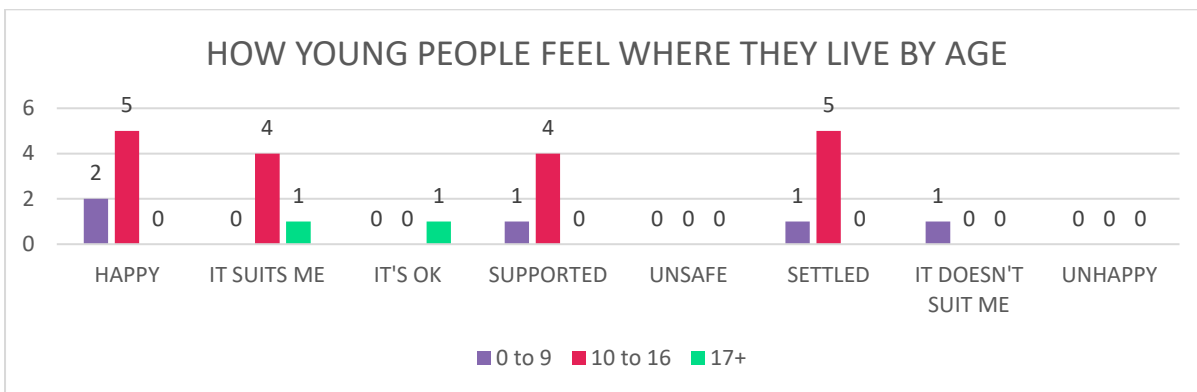
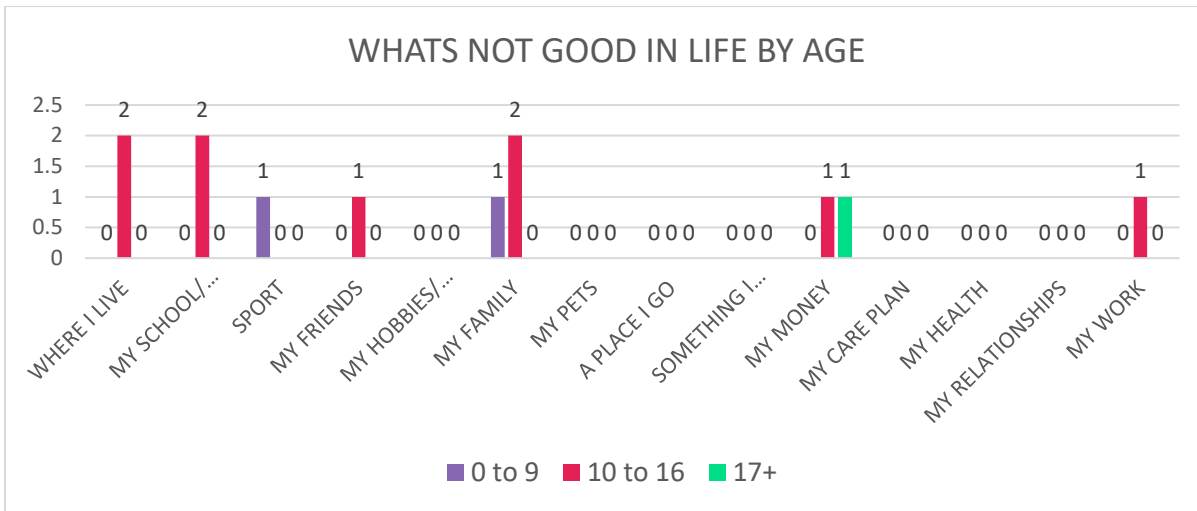
### HOW YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL WHERE THEY LIVE BY AGE



## August 2019

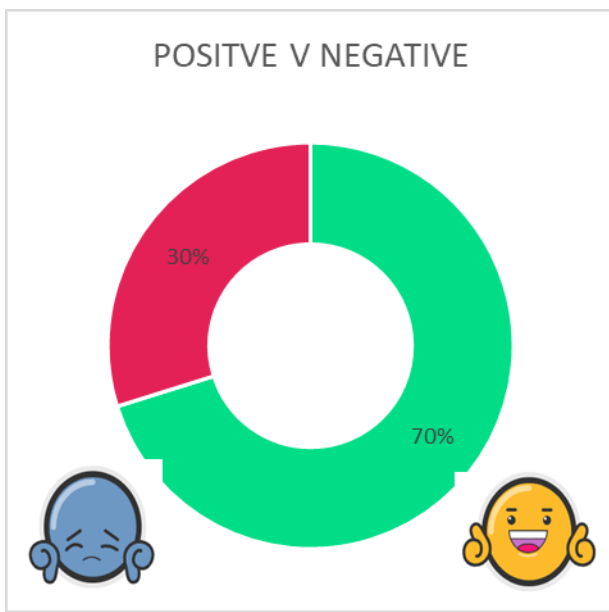
How young people are feeling in general

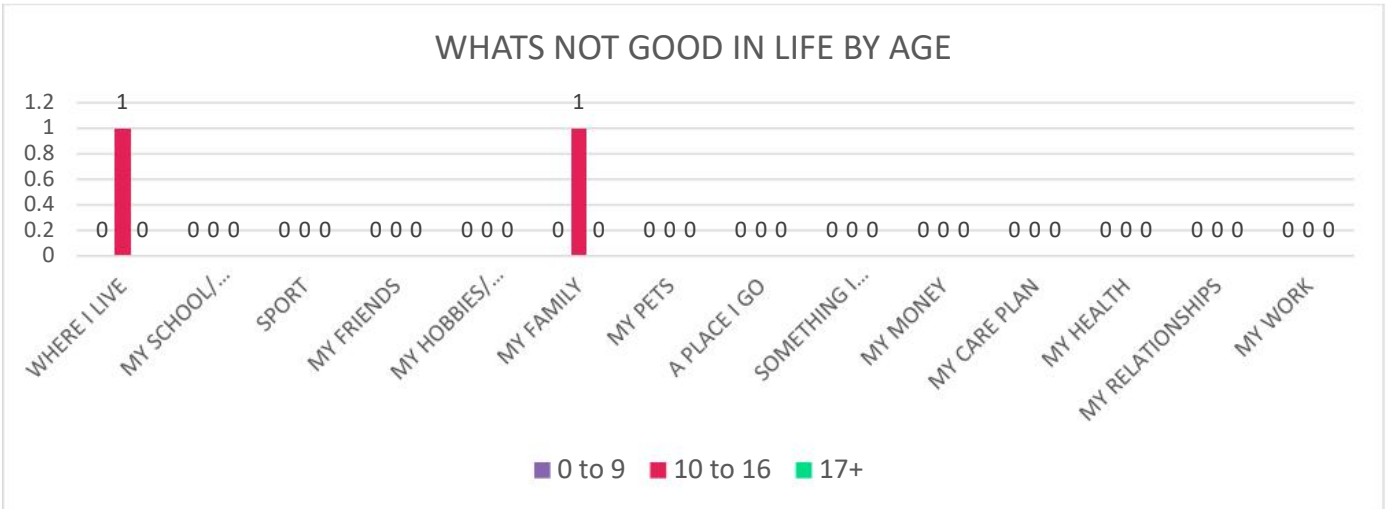
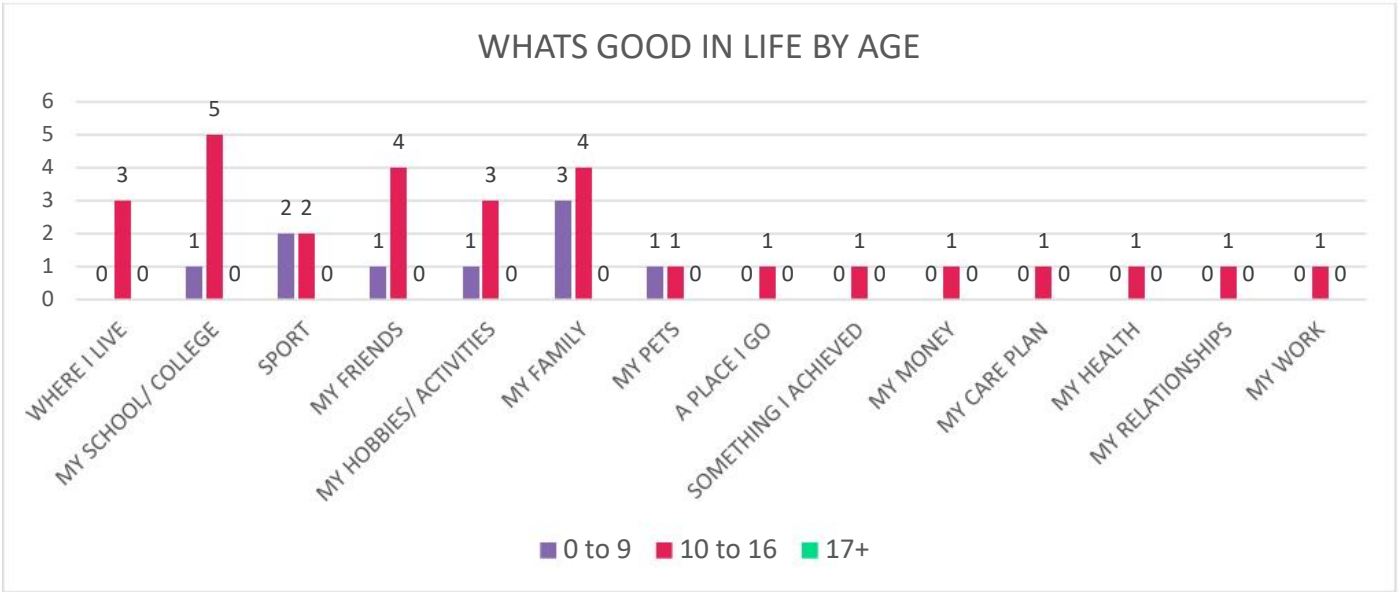
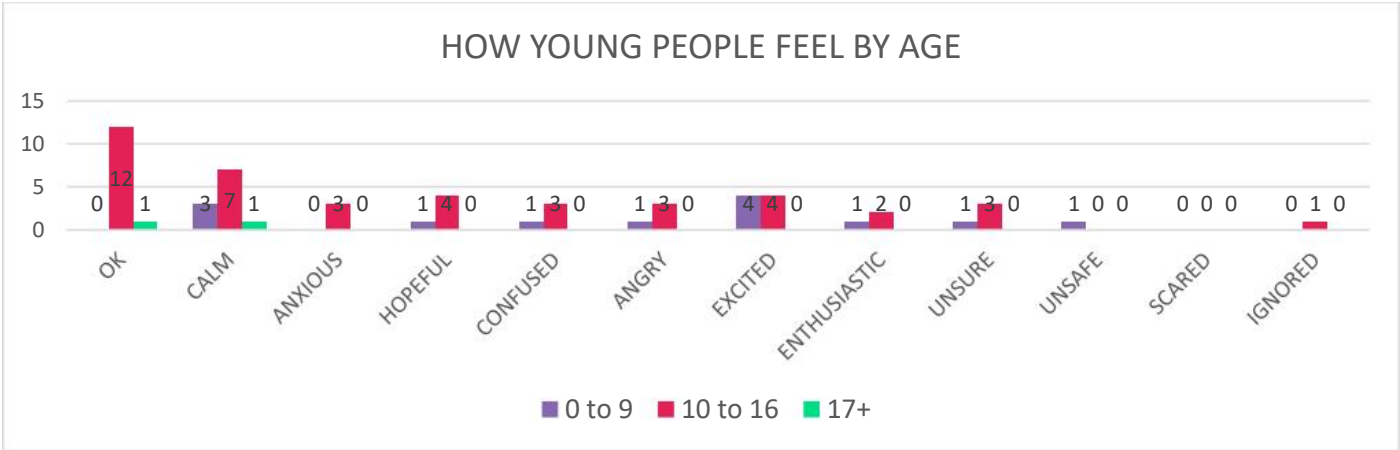




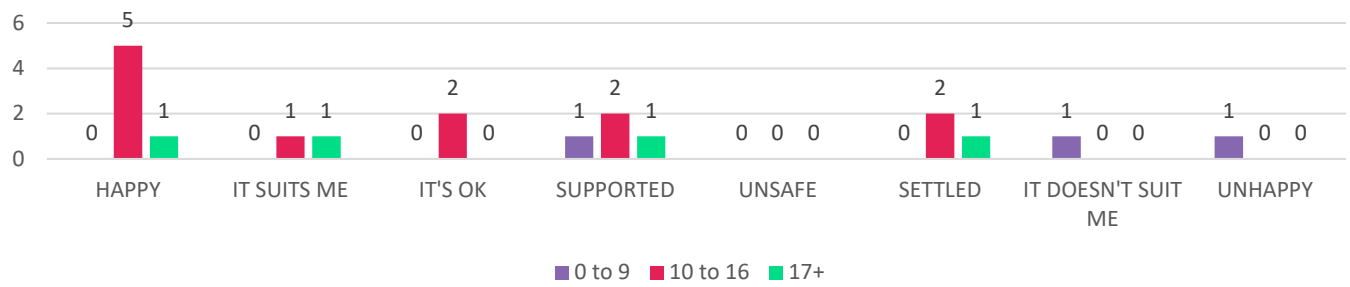
## September 2019

How young people are feeling in general





## HOW YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL WHERE THEY LIVE BY AGE





**PERFORMANCE REPORT**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **21 November 2019**

*From:* **Kate Knight  
Lead Manager, Corporate Parenting**

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

*Purpose:* **To report on the performance of services for Children in Care and Care Leavers - as required in legislation and fulfilling the purpose of monitoring and offering advice.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is asked to review performance for Children in Care and comment on the themes and trends identified in this report.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>			<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>
Name:	Kate Knight	Name: Role:	Councillor Lis Every Chairman, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
Post:	Lead Manager Corporate Parenting	Email:	Lis.Every@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Email:	<a href="mailto:Kate.Knight@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Kate.Knight@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>	Tel:	(office) 01223 706398
Tel:	01223 728362		

## **Summary:**

**The data referred to within this report reflects the situation on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.**

- At the end of September 2019, 768 Children in Care are supported by the Council.
- 57% of Children in Care are male, 43% are female.
- 9% of Children in Care have a diagnosed disability.
- 51% of children (excluding unaccompanied children) are living out of County and of those 34.9% are living more than 20 miles over Cambridgeshire borders.
- 86.2% of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people are living out of county.
- The proportion of Children in Care being visited within the statutory timescales was 76.7% in September 2019.
- The number of Children in Care reported as going missing has been as follows; 30 in August 2019 and 25 in September 2019
- At the end of September 2019, 2 children had been made subject of Adoption Orders; 26 children had been placed for adoption; 6 children had been matched and awaiting introductions and 17 children had been linked and booked into matching panel.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report provides the Sub-Committee with an overview of performance of services for Children in Care and Care Leavers for August and September 2019. The full performance report is attached at Appendix A.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 As noted in previous reports, there continues to be difficulties in the capturing and analysis of data around initial health assessments (IHA's) for Children in Care. A multi-agency working group continues to review this process and a further joint meeting is booked for the 27 November 2019. A dip in performance for IHA's was seen in August 2019, but the expectation is this will improve again in September. Progress has already been made in relation to children who have been in care longer to receive their annual review health assessments and dentist appointments.
- 2.2 Cambridgeshire adoption services are again reporting good outcomes and it is anticipated that a further 43 children will be matched with prospective adopters by the end of December 2019.
- 2.3 The percentage of children who have been visited within statutory timescales is below target and is currently reported at 76.7%. Additional management oversight has been introduced across the Corporate Parenting Teams to

improve the numbers of children visited by their social worker on time and in accordance with their care plan.

- 2.4 There continues to be a steady decrease in the Children in Care cohort over August and September 2019. This is due to the activity being undertaken to support children to remain living with their families and not become looked after as well as the successful reunification of children who have been looked after for a period of time to live back with their birth families.

### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

Evaluation of proposals being made

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

n/a – no proposals being made

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

n/a – no proposals being made

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

n/a – no proposals being made

### **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 None**

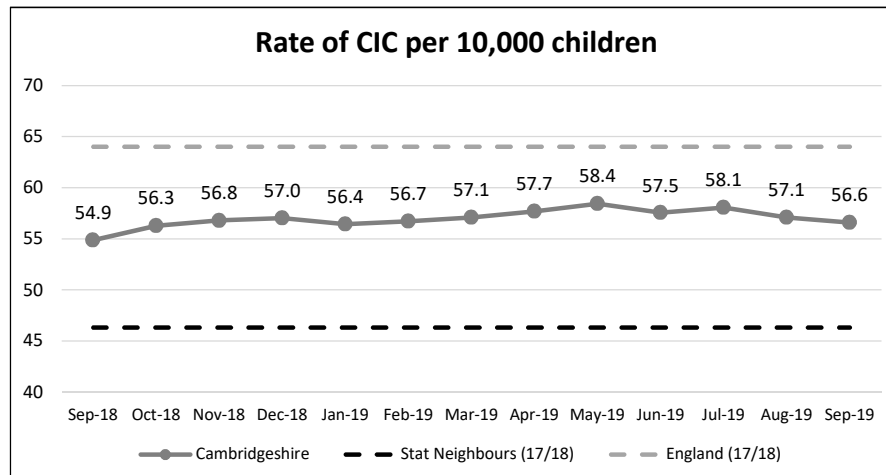
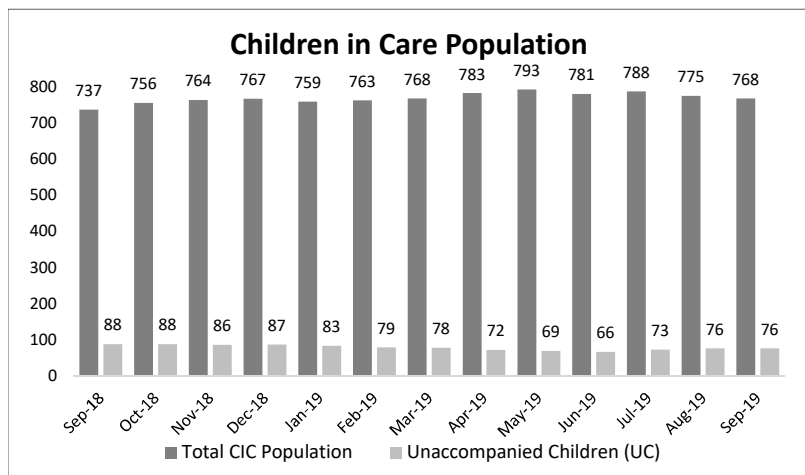
n/a

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	



## Children in Care - Population

Children in Care	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Average
Total CIC Population	737	756	764	767	759	763	768	783	793	781	788	775	768	<b>769</b>
Non-Unaccompanied Children	649	668	678	680	676	684	690	711	724	715	715	699	692	<b>691</b>
Unaccompanied Children (UC)	88	88	86	87	83	79	78	72	69	66	73	76	76	<b>79</b>
Unaccompanied Children %	11.1%	11.6%	11.3%	11.3%	10.9%	10.4%	10.2%	9.2%	8.7%	8.5%	9.3%	9.8%	9.9%	<b>10.2%</b>
Rate per 10,000	54.9	56.3	56.8	57.0	56.4	56.7	57.1	57.7	58.4	57.5	58.1	57.1	56.6	<b>57.0</b>



### Commentary:

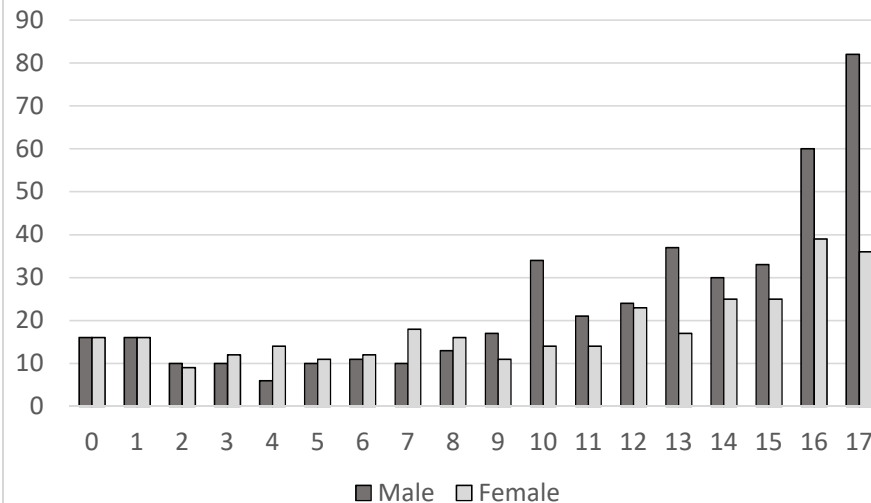
There continues to be a small decrease in the number of Children in Care since the last report to the Corporate Parenting Sub Committee. The last four months show that a peak was reached in May, the Children in Care population decreased in June, increased again in July and has then been steadily decreasing in August and September. Our unaccompanied children cohort has remained stable during August and September 2019.

### Notes on data and definitions:

- The 'CIC population figure' measures the number of children who are in the care of the local authority at the end of each month.
- A 'UC' is an Unaccompanied Child. A contribution of accommodating Unaccompanied Children is met by the Government.

## Children in Care - Demographics as at Month End (September 2019)

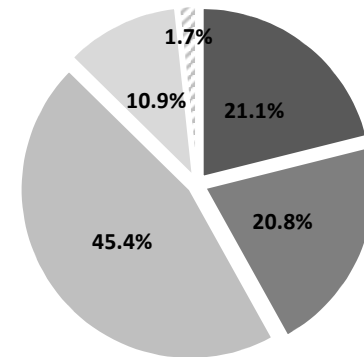
### CIC - Age and Gender



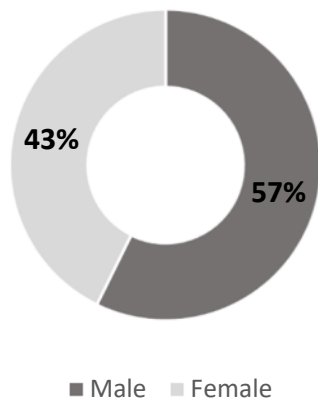
### Legal Status

21.1% of children (162) subject to S20 (voluntary accommodation)  
 20.8% of children (160) subject to an Interim Care Order  
 45.4% of children (349) subject to a Care Order  
 10.9% of children (84) subject to a Placement order

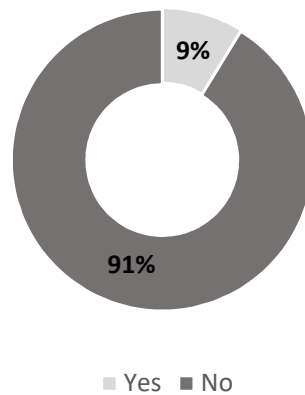
■ Section 20  
 ■ Interim Care Order  
 ■ Care Order  
 ■ Placement Order  
 ■ Other



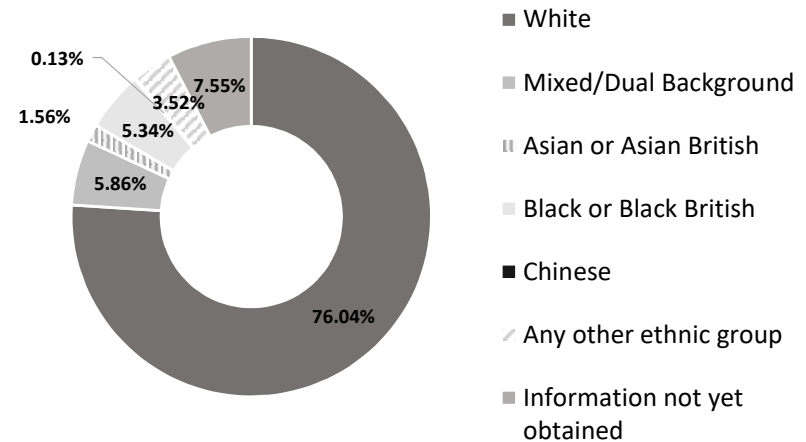
### Gender



### Disability



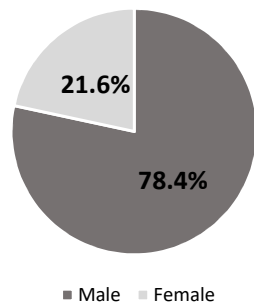
### Ethnicity



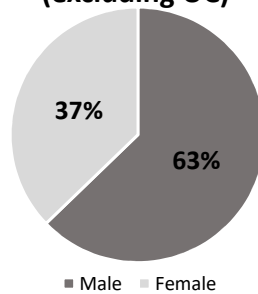
## Children in Care - Voluntary Accommodation (for Month end September 2019)

In September 2019 162 children (21.1% of the CIC cohort) were accommodated under section 20 (S20; voluntary accommodation).

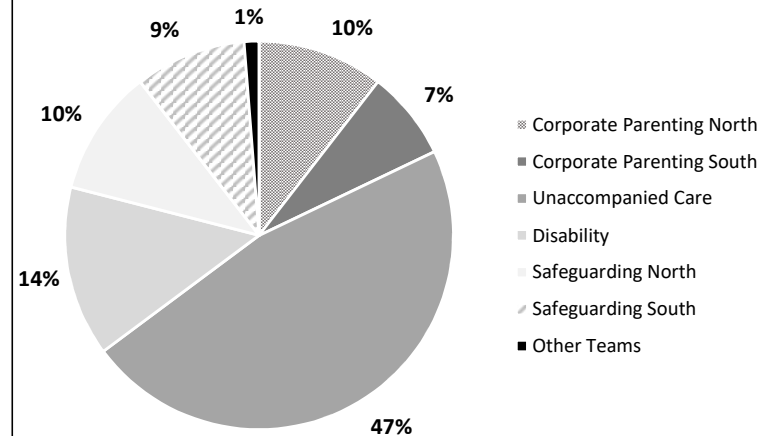
**CIC accommodated under S20 by gender**



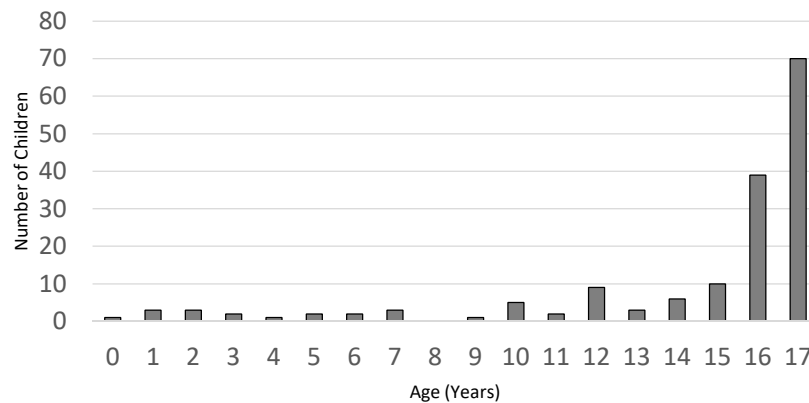
**CIC accommodated under S20 by gender (excluding UC)**



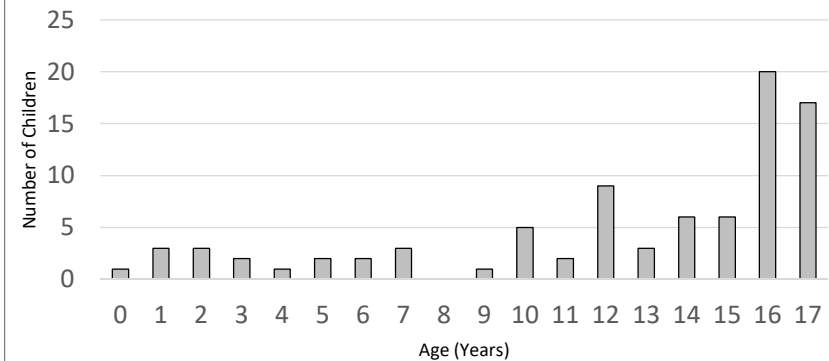
**CIC accommodated under S20 by team**



**CIC accommodated under S20 by age**



**CIC accommodated under S20 (excluding UC) by age**



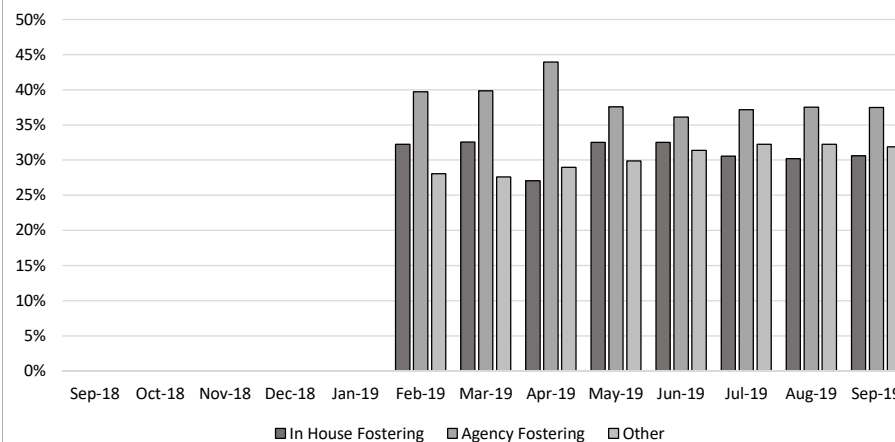
## Children in Care - Placements

At the end of September there were the following number of placements of these types:

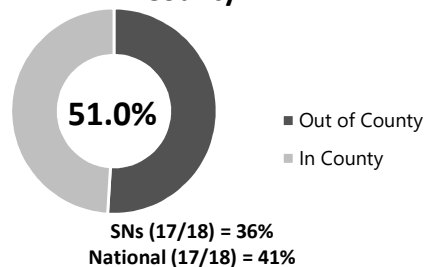
In House Fostering	30.6% of CIC cohort (235 children)
Agency Fostering	37.5% of CIC cohort (288 children)
Other (including Adoptive placements & secure accommodation)	31.9% of CIC cohort (245 children)

**Commentary:** These figures have remained relatively similar over this reporting period

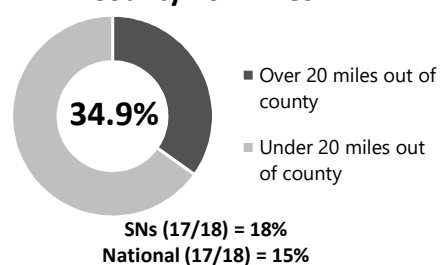
**Placement Types by % of total CIC cohort at month end**



**CIC (exc. UC) Placed out of County**



**CIC (ex. UC) Placed out of County 20+ miles**



**Commentary:**

**The Team Cambridgeshire Fostering Campaign was relaunched in the month of September and is predicted to have a positive impact on the numbers of enquiries to foster in October.**

**Notes on data and definitions:**

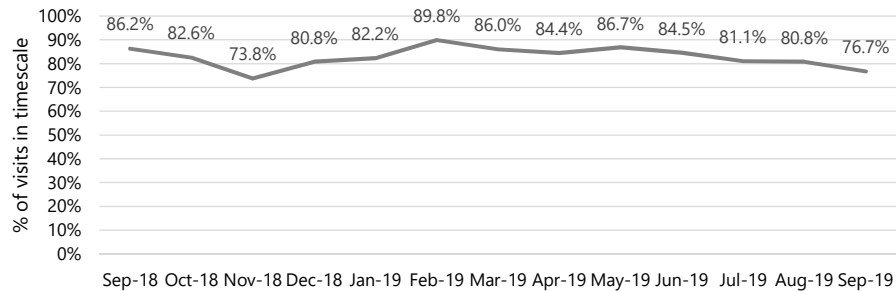
- 'Children in Care placed in county' - Children who have been placed into care within the Cambridgeshire area.
- 'Children in Care placed out of county' measures the number of children we are responsible for, who are placed into care outside of the Cambridgeshire area.
- We also measure those who have been placed into care outside Cambridgeshire, who are 20 miles or more from the home they lived in before they entered care.
- We count separately the number of unaccompanied Children who are placed into care outside Cambridgeshire.



## Children in Care -Visits and Health

### Children in Care Visits

In September there were 533 visits made. 409 of these were completed in timescale (76.7%).



#### Commentary:

In September, 76.7% visits were completed in timescale, out of a total of 533 visits across the service. There are a variety of reasons for this which include staff vacancies and sickness, particularly in the south of the County. However, recruitment is in progress and the service is working hard to improve performance.

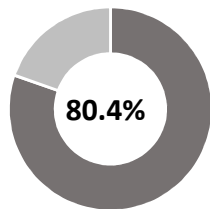
#### Notes on data and definitions:

- **CIC Visits:** The number of children not seen in timescale are those who were due a visit in the reporting month, but were not seen in timescale.

### Children in Care Health

For CIC who had been in care 12 months at the end of September:

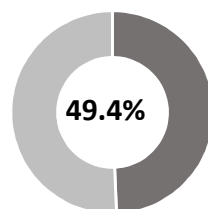
**Annual Health Assessment**  
completed in last 12 months



■ In timescale ■ Not in timescale

**SNs (17/18) = 83%**  
**National (17/18) = 88%**

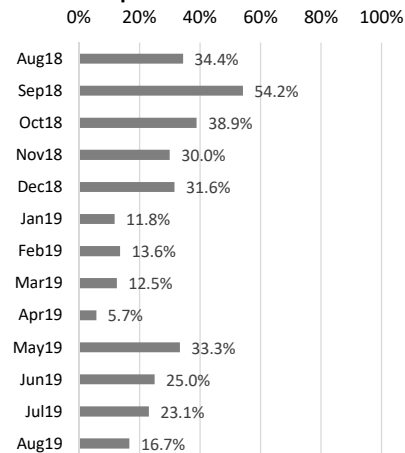
**Dental Checks**  
completed in last 12 months



■ In timescale ■ Not in timescale

**SNs (17/18) = 81%**  
**National (17/18) = 84%**

### Initial Health Assessments completed in timescale



#### Commentary:

Performance around Children in Care undergoing an initial health assessment within 20 days of becoming looked after has decreased in August, despite increased oversight and closer working arrangements with health colleagues. This is likely due to the number of children living out of county (51%) which does have an impact on performance. Annual Health Assessments and Dental Check performance continues to improve on a month

#### Notes on data and definitions:

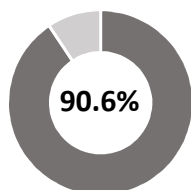
- An **Initial Health Assessments (IHA)** for all children must take place within 20 working days of them becoming looked after. The NHS provide data regarding the date of each child's IHA, and the timescale of this assessment is calculated.

## Children in Care - Education and Care Leavers

### Care Leavers

In September there were 352 care leavers aged 17-21. Out of these:

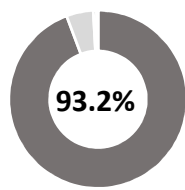
#### In suitable accommodation



■ In suitable accommodation  
■ Not in suitable accommodation

National (17/18) = 85%

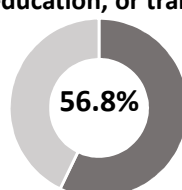
#### In Touch



■ In touch  
■ Not in touch  
■ RHOM  
■ NREQ

National (17/18) = 89%

#### In Employment, education, or training



■ EET  
■ NEET

National (17/18) = 55%

#### Commentary:

The number of young people eligible for leaving care support who Cambridgeshire are in touch with has improved. Whilst work continues with the housing ministry on reducing the number of young people in unsuitable accommodation, performance has decreased slightly but is expected to improve now that the specialist homelessness reduction PA is in post. A decrease in the number of young people in education, employment and training has also decreased but we anticipate a slight reduction due to the summer holidays and college terms.

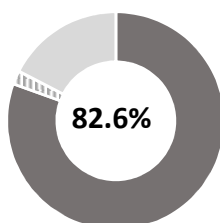
#### Notes on data and definitions:

- **Suitable Accommodation:** Whether accommodation is deemed 'suitable' is judged on an individual case. The Department for Education judge the following accommodation types as suitable ('Parents or relatives', 'Community home or other form of residential care', 'Semi-independent', 'transitional accommodation', 'Supported lodgings', 'Ordinary lodgings' without formal support, 'Foyers and similar supported accommodation', and 'Independent living').

- **In Touch:** There should be "contact" between the authority and the young person around 3 months before and one month after the Care Leaver's birthday. This is designed to monitor the situation of young people when they have left care, rather than their situation immediately before they left care.

### Children in Care (post-16)

#### In Employment, education, or training



■ In Learning  
■ In Employment  
■ NEET

#### Commentary:

Performance has slightly improved from 78.6% in July to 80.6% in October. It is expected that we will continue to see improvement in performance for this age range.

#### Notes on data and definitions:

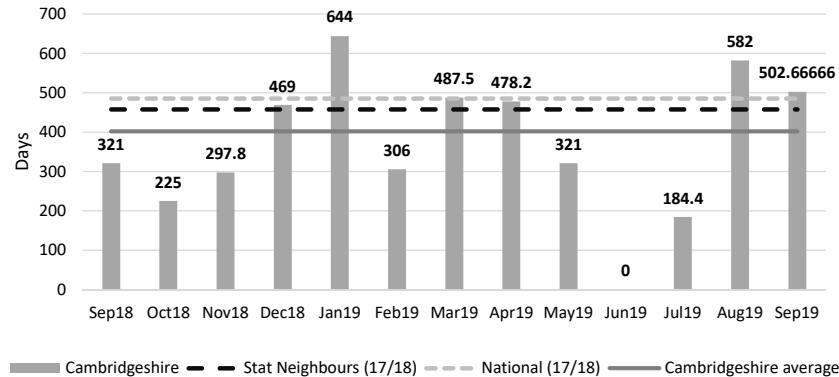
- Measures of the percentage of children Post 16 who are in Learning, In Employment or NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)

## Children in Care - Adoption

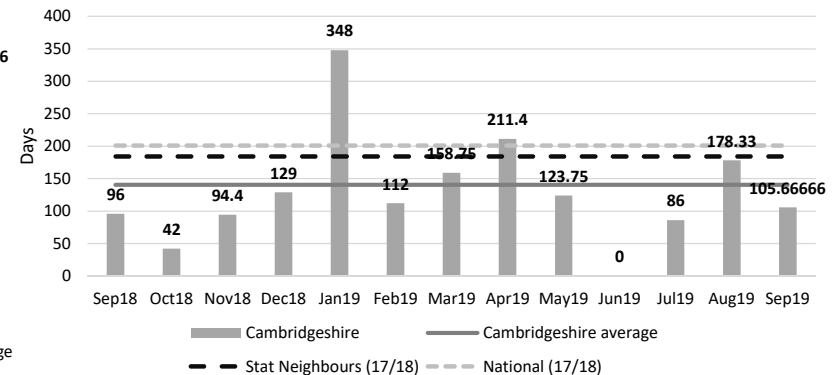
### Adoption Timescales

In September 33.3% of the children adopted waited less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family.

**Average time between child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family**



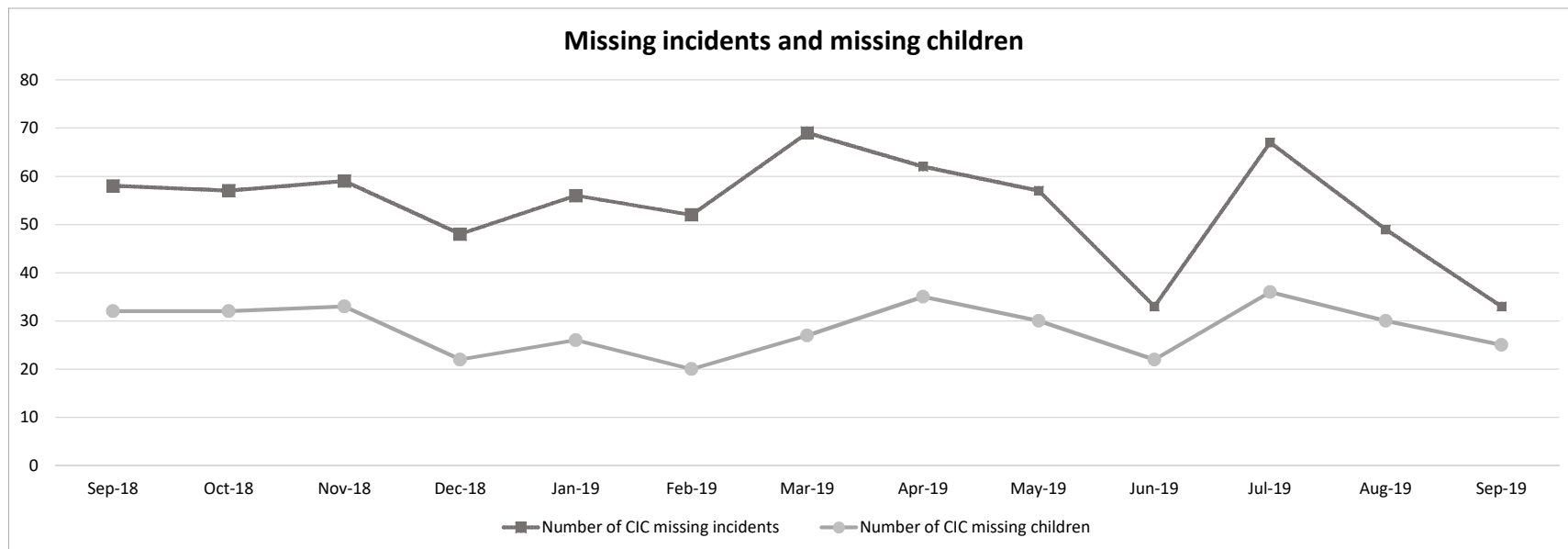
**Average time between LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match**



**Commentary:** Q4 performance data has been released for 18/19 identifying that Cambridgeshire was performing better than the national and eastern regional average. Children in Cambridgeshire had an adoption journey of 376 days on average from care to placement and 147 days from Placement Order to decision for the match. 95.5% of children were placed within 12 months of decision for adoption and 64% were placed within 14 months of the decision. At the end of Q2 2019, 2 children had Adoption Orders made; 26 children had been placed for adoption; a further 6 children had been matched and awaiting introductions ; a further 17 children linked and booked into matching panel. It is projected that 43 children will be matched by the end of Q3. Performance remains steady.

## Children in Care - Missing

CiC - Missing	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Average
Number of CiC missing incidents	58	57	59	48	56	52	69	62	57	33	67	49	33	55.6
Number of CiC missing children	32	32	33	22	26	20	27	35	30	22	36	30	25	28.8



### Commentary:

The total number of missing children in care and missing incidents has decreased in August and September 2019, figures demonstrate that there are a small number of children who are repeatedly reported as missing.

The multi-agency network continues to work together to identify and support this extremely vulnerable cohort.

### Notes on data and definitions:

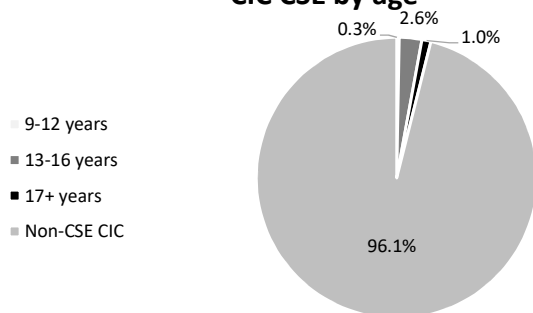
- Each episode of a child going missing is recorded as a missing incident.
- A child who goes missing during the month will be recorded as a missing child only once, but if they go missing multiple times then they generate more than one missing incident during the month.

## Child Sexual Exploitation and Gang Exploitation for CIC

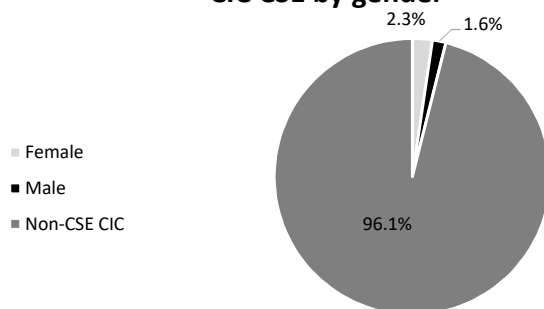
### Child Sexual Exploitation

In July there were 30 CIC who were identified as at mild/emerging, moderate & significant risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

#### CIC CSE by age



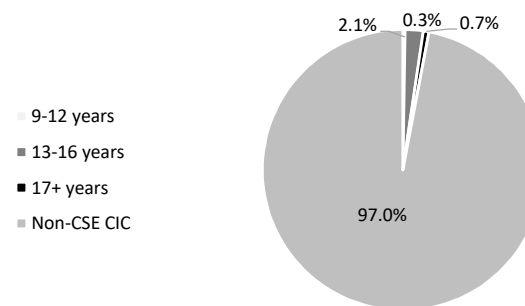
#### CIC CSE by gender



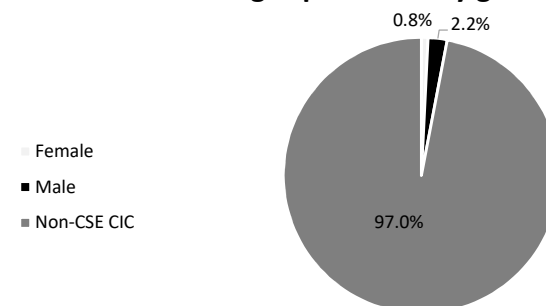
### Gang Exploitation

In July there were 23 CIC who were identified as at mild/emerging, moderate & significant risk of gang exploitation.

#### CIC Gang Exploitation by age



#### CIC Gang Exploitation by gender



#### Commentary:

An update is not yet available for September

#### Notes on data and definitions:

- As part of a child's assessment, practitioners assess a child or young person's level of risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE). CSE is defined as children under 18 in exploitative situations, contexts or relationships where they receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

- As part of a child's assessment, practitioners assess a child or young person's level of risk of gang exploitation. The definition of being at risk of gang-related exploitation is - 'There are tangible indicators/evidence that suggests risks that a young person is being groomed and/or coerced into moving or selling drugs and being involved in other violence related gang activity, e.g. missing episodes with limited information on whereabouts and/or involvement with groups involved in the supply of drugs and carrying of weapons'.



**EDUCATION TRANSPORT FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **Clare Buckingham: Strategic Education Place Planning Manager (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)**

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

*Purpose:* **To advise Members on the arrangements for the provision of transport assistance for children in care and care leavers.**

*Recommendation:* **For Members to note:**

- a) the arrangements for the provision of transport assistance for children in care and care leavers;**
- b) that the Council does not currently collect comprehensive data on children/ students who have previously been in care and, therefore, it is not possible to quantify the indicative cost if the transport assistance currently available to post-16 students who are in care/ care leavers, was to be extended to those who have previously been children in care.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>	
Name:	Clare Buckingham	Names:	Councillor Lis Every
Post:	Strategic Education Place Planning Manager (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)	Role:	Chairman, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
Email:	Clare.buckingham@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Lis.Every@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 699779	Tel:	(office) 01223 706398

**Summary:**

The Council's policy regarding transport arrangements for children and young people in care is the same as for children who are not in care during their pre-16 education and free of charge for those in post-16 education.

The Sub-Committee asked whether it would be possible to support post-16 students who have previously been in care with the cost of transport to attend their post-16 courses.

**1. Background**

At the Sub-Committee's meeting on 17 July 2019 Members asked for a report on the current position regarding education transport issues for children in care and care leavers and the implications of this on their access to further education, apprenticeships and employment opportunities. Members had also expressed interest in understanding the potential for students, previously in care, being offered the same status in the Council's transport policy as those currently in care.

**2. Transport policy**

- 2.1 The Council's transport assistance policy for children in care dates from March 2016 and is the same as for those for whom the Council is not the corporate parent. That is, children are entitled to free home to school transport to their catchment or nearest school where that is more than 2 miles away for primary aged children and more than 3 miles away for secondary aged pupils. If there is not an available walking route, in line with the legal definition<sup>1</sup>, within those maximum walking distances the Council has a duty to provide transport assistance.
- 2.2 If a child/ young person has a special educational need or disability (SEND), as detailed in their Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan, which ordinarily prevents them from walking the statutory walking distance to and from school, they will be eligible for free transport.
- 2.3 In circumstances where a child/ young person's foster placement is changed, the Council is sympathetic to the disruption this can cause and mindful of the fact that school placement may be the one point of continuity for them. Decisions regarding requests for free transport in such cases are based on the individual circumstances of the child in care, and take into account their year group, the journey length and time as well as the cost.
- 2.4 If a post-16 student is in care they will be eligible for free transport to their

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers V Essex County Council 1986 "A route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety. A route does not fail to qualify as "available" because of dangers that would arise if the child remained unaccompanied".



nearest appropriate sixth form centre. Proof of their care status is required at the point of application to determine eligibility. There is no provision within the existing policy to provide assistance with transport costs for students who were previously in care.

- 2.5 Care leaver students continue to receive the same transport entitlement whilst they are on a continuing course. Their young person in care status will only cease, for transport policy purposes, if they start a new course of study after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **3. Transport Data**

#### **3.1 Numbers of children receiving transport**

Currently, based on information accurate as of September 2019, the Social Education Transport Team (SETT) records show that there are 320 children/ young people in care who are in receipt of free transport.

#### **3.2 Transport costs**

The following chart shows the costs for the past three financial years of home to school and contact journeys for children in care.

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Spend	£1,159,725	£1,303,072	£1,423,495

#### **3.3 Post-16 Education Transport for Children in Care and Care Leavers**

In preparation for this report officers analysed a sample, namely records of 263 of the 344 students in care who attended post-16 provision for the past three years. Of those 263, 55 had received post-16 travel assistance:

- 16 were entitled to free post-16 travel under the Council's policy
- 9 were not entitled under the Policy, but were able to purchase a spare seat on a vehicle contracted by the Council
- 20 were not entitled under the Council's policy, but assistance was requested and funded by Social Care
- 10 received assistance through the Council's post-16 SEND policy

Of the 208 students who were in care who did not receive any form of assistance through the Council, 65 were living within the Peterborough area and may, therefore, have received assistance through Peterborough City Council. The other 143 students may have received assistance directly from their college via its own travel network, such as Cambridgeshire Regional College and Peterborough Regional College offer. This data is not held by the Council.

- 3.4 Over the past three years nearly half of the children/ young people in care in post-16 education had their transport funded by their Social Care team (either within Cambridgeshire or from another Local Authority (LA) in those cases where they have not met the Council's criteria for free travel assistance.

- 3.5 Post-16 students who are in care are also eligible to receive a 16-19 bursary of £1200 per annum via their post-16 centre. This bursary is designed to support students' access to post-16 education and can be used to cover any costs incurred by the student, including travel.
- 3.6 Officers have also sought the views of local authorities in the region with regard to their policy and practice. Responses were received from Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Milton Keynes. None of these currently have any provision in their post-16 transport policies for care leavers or those who have been previously in care. In Luton, social care services pay for 50% of transport costs for children/students in care.

#### **4. Identifying children who have been previously in care**

- 4.1 During the admissions process families can indicate if their child is in care or was previously. This gives the child/ student priority in the school application process.
- 4.2 Officers have considered the possibility of using this data collected by admissions, as a means of identifying the possible future cost of extending the Council's current post-16 transport policy to this group of students. Unfortunately, at the point of school admissions applications, a single category is recorded whereby children who are currently in care and those who were previously, are not differentiated. The Virtual School has also confirmed that they do not record data relating to children/ young people who were previously in care.

#### **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 It is not possible, on the data sets currently available within the Council, to quantify the impact of extending the Council's current policy to include assistance with post-16 transport costs for those students who have previously been in care.

#### **6. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

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

Access to local and high quality education should enhance the life opportunities for students and enhance the skills of the local workforce.

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

Schools and colleges and the services associated with them are providers of local employment.

- 6.3 **The best start for Cambridgeshire's children**  
N/A

## **7. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 **Resource Implications**  
See section 5.1 above

- 7.2 **Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**  
N/A

- 7.3 **Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**  
N/A

- 7.4 **Equality and Diversity Implications**  
Unlike in legislation relating to school admissions, transport legislation does not require local authorities to prioritise for transport assistance children/students who have been previously in care.

- 7.5 **Engagement and Communications Implications**  
N/A

- 7.6 **Localism and Local Member Involvement**  
N/A

- 7.7 **Public Health Implications**  
N/A

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cambridgeshire County Council's guide to post-16 transport assistance:	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport">http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/post16edtransport</a>
Cambridgeshire County Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy	<a href="https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/Home%20to%20school%20travel%20assistance%20policy.pdf?inline=true">https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/Home%20to%20school%20travel%20assistance%20policy.pdf?inline=true</a>



**CAMBRIDGSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – GUIDE TO CORPORATE PARENTING  
FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **Fiona Van Den Hout  
Head of Service Corporate Parenting**

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

*Purpose:* **The purpose of the guide is to raise awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst elected members and provide guidance on ‘being a good Corporate Parent’.**

*Recommendations:* **The Sub-Committee is recommended to:**

- a) review the content of the guide;**
- b) endorse the content of the guide;**
- c) support distribution of the guide.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>	
Name:	Fiona Van Den Hout	Names:	Councillor Lis Every
Post:	Head of Service Corporate Parenting	Role:	Chairman, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
Email:	Fiona.vandenhout@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Lis.Every@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	(office) 01223 518739	Tel:	(office) 01223 706398

**Summary:** The Cambridgeshire County Council Guide to Corporate Parenting is intended to be a helpful source of information for elected members (and officers) who want to learn more about how they can fulfil their duties as a corporate parent to Cambridgeshire Children in Care and those who have left the care of the Local Authority.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee requested that a guide be designed that describes what corporate parenting is and how elected members can exercise their corporate parenting responsibility.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 The Sub-Committee is asked to review and endorse the guide attached at Appendix 1.

## **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 3.1 **A good quality of life for everyone**  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.2 **Thriving places for people to live**  
There are no significant implications for this priority.
- 3.3 **The best start for Cambridgeshire's children**  
There are no significant implications for this priority.

## **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	

# Cambridgeshire County Council

## **Guide to Corporate Parenting for Elected Members**



## Welcome

Cambridgeshire's elected members have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the County is advocating, supporting and promoting positive outcomes for our most vulnerable children – those who are looked after by Cambridgeshire County Council and those who have left our care. We know that some of these children can be at risk of poorer outcomes than their peers and the Council, as their Corporate Parent, has a responsibility to ensure that we have the same aspirations and interest in their progress as any parent would have for their own child.

All elected members and council officers are Corporate Parents and this guide is designed to provide an overview of what this responsibility means in practice. It also suggests ways in which we can all make a difference to the lives of Children in Care and young people leaving care, whatever your level of involvement is with children's services.

I hope you find this guide useful whether it serves as a refresher or provides you with information you were not previously aware of. I also hope that you can use some of the suggestions to help us to continue to develop our services for those we look after, we are extremely fortunate in having a dedicated and enthusiastic workforce who are leading on a number of exciting initiatives that you may feel you could contribute to. We really do want to make a difference to children's lives and with your help, we will succeed.



***Sarah-Jane Smedmor Assistant Director  
Corporate Parenting and Specialist Services for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough***



## Introduction

We know from national data and academic research that children and young people who are looked after by a local authority can be at risk of poorer outcomes than their peers who are able to remain living at home with their families. It is not surprising that young people who are care experienced are more likely to leave school with fewer qualifications, may have a higher risk of offending and of not being engaged with education, employment or training.

When a child or young person cannot live with their birth family for whatever reason and they become looked after, Parental Responsibility for that child and young person also transfers to the local authority. This is referred to as corporate parenting.

Corporate parenting was first enshrined in legislation through the Children's Act (1989). Although it does not have a formal legal definition, it is commonly understood to mean that the elected members and officers of the local authority have a responsibility to take the same interest in the progress, attainments and wellbeing of children in care as any reasonable parent could be expected to have for their own children. Corporate parenting also extends to young people who have left the care of the local authority, as the local authority retains a level of responsibility for former children in care (Care Leavers) up to the age of twenty five.

The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) reminds us that: 'corporate parenting should seek to ensure supportive relationships where young people feel cared for, not just looked after'. Being a good Corporate Parent involves championing the rights of Children in Care and Care Leavers, ensuring they have access to good services and support from the local authority and from other partner agencies working with them.



### **Why do Elected Members need to know about being a Corporate Parent?**

When elected to represent their ward, district, or County, every elected member becomes a Corporate Parent as part of their role. Whilst much of the responsibility of the delivery of care to this cohort of children and young people is delegated to the children's workforce and other agencies such as health and education, officers and staff deliver services and support on *behalf of elected members*.

In 1998, Frank Dobson MP, then the responsible Secretary of State summarised the role of elected members in relation to corporate parenting as follows:

"The (looked after) child has a right to expect that members of the authority are looking out for him and will protect him from harm. Therefore, given the central importance of the local authority's role in caring for looked after children and supporting them to reach their potential, all councillors should take an informed interest in how the council supports this vulnerable group".

Whilst every elected member is by definition a Corporate Parent, not all elected members will have the same knowledge and involvement. The National Children's Bureau helpfully breaks the corporate parenting role down into three different levels of responsibility:

1. Universal responsibility – applicable to all councillors
2. Targeted responsibility – for example those councillors who sit on the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee of Fostering or Adoption Panels
3. Specialist responsibility – those councillors with a specific, relevant role for example the Lead Member for Children's Services, Chair of the Children and Young People Committee and Chair of the Corporate Parenting Subcommittee.

In April 2017, Cambridgeshire's Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee of the Children and Young People Committee (CYP) became active following a review of the long established Corporate Parenting Board. The new arrangements reflect the drive to strengthen arrangements for oversight and decision making in respect of corporate parenting activity with clear accountability to the CYP Committee, through adopting a scheme of delegated authority and a framework for decision making.



The purpose of Sub-Committee is to ensure that the Council is effectively discharging its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in its care and provides a key role in ensuring accountability. The transformation of the Sub-Committee has been led by the Chair, reinvigorating it into one which is proactive in challenging service delivery and advocating for Children in Care and Care Leavers, resulting in a more robust constitution with stronger governance principles.

The Sub-Committee has delegated authority to exercise all the Council's functions relating to the delivery, by or on behalf of the Council, of Corporate Parenting functions with the exception of policy decisions which remains with the CYP Committee.

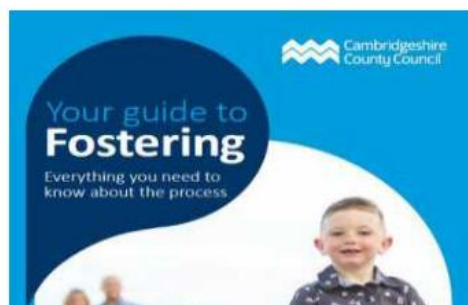
In Cambridgeshire delegated authority includes:

- Working with the Virtual School to raise standards of attainment and developing education, employment and training opportunities for children in care, former children in care and children leaving care.
- Ensuring mechanisms for consultation and participation are positively promoted and that the Council actively listens and responds to the views and experiences of children in care, former children in care and children leaving care.
- Receiving regular reports on the provisions of services for children in care and care leavers as required by legislation and for the purpose of monitoring and offering advice.
- Working with the Clinical Commissioning Group and health providers to ensure delivery of services to meet health needs including health assessments and plans, emotional health, sexual health, substance misuse and teenage pregnancy.

Now that the structure and governance arrangements are embedded, a refresh of Sub-Committee business took place in 2019. Sub-Committee resolved to adopt five key priorities which encapsulate a child's lived experience in order to strengthen the focus on specific outcomes for children, young people and former children in care (Care Leavers).

The Five Priorities are:

- 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



The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee works closely with Voices Matter (Cambridgeshire's Children in Care Council) and the Care Leavers Forum. These groups are made up of children and young people who are currently in care and those who have left the care of the local authority.

They help to advise officers and members in Cambridgeshire about their experiences of being cared for by us and what is important to them in terms of improving the services they receive.

In Cambridgeshire we have been very fortunate to have had the privilege of working with two care experienced young people who, as co-opted members of the Sub-Committee, have shared their knowledge and understanding to help develop and inform our priorities and discussions.

Councillor Bywater and Councillor Every, in their role as chair of the CYP Committee and Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee respectively, also meet regularly with Voices Matter to hear directly from children and young people. For further information about Voices Matter and the Care Leavers Forum please contact [csc.participation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:csc.participation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk).





The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee is an appropriate forum for elected members and relevant officers from the local authority and partner agencies to come together and offer challenge and support around services for Children in Care and Care Leavers. However, this is not the only way in which elected members can discharge their duties as Corporate Parents. Some suggestions as to how you could be involved are detailed below as well as answers to frequently asked questions.

### **What contact should I have with Children in Care and Care Leavers?**

You can be an effective Corporate Parent without having to know individual Children in Care or Care Leavers personally. In fact, personal contact on an individual basis is not generally appropriate, unless Children in Care or Care Leavers choose to contact their local councillor as is their right as a Cambridgeshire resident.

However, some communication and contact is valuable in helping councillors to understand the importance of the corporate parenting role and in giving young people an opportunity to express their views and concerns directly to those with the authority to make decisions and shape policy.

Cambridgeshire's Promises to our Children in Care and the Care Leavers Charter (detailed at the end of this guide), outline what the service is committed to achieving for this population of children and young people. We ask that all members familiarise themselves with these commitments and if given the opportunity to meet with young people (for example at the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee or Voices Matter), that you show your commitment to their care by prioritising attendance.

You could also become involved by attending visits and events to further understand the issues that care experienced children and young people face and also to celebrate their achievements. In addition, you could attend recruitment and celebration events for Cambridgeshire's Foster Carers and join us by showing our appreciation for all that our carers do for the most vulnerable children in the County. If you are able to commit to any of these suggestions, it does really provide encouragement to our children, young people and foster families and demonstrates that we as a Council take our corporate parenting responsibilities seriously.



### **Is there any training available?**

Member training seminars are held on a bi monthly basis and align with the key priority theme of the next Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee. You are very welcome to attend these seminars which are delivered by children's services staff and partner agencies. For further information about what's on, please contact:

[CPSC.memberseminars@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:CPSC.memberseminars@cambridgeshire.gov.uk).

### **What can all elected members do?**

To be an effective Corporate Parent members can make sure that they:

- Be aware of the role and its implications for discharging the local authority's legal responsibilities for Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Develop knowledge and awareness of the services available for the children we look after, both across the council and from relevant partner agencies
- Act and advocate for Children in Care and Care leavers, ensuring their voices are heard, their needs are met and their achievements celebrated
- Prioritise the needs of Children in Care and Care Leavers in council decision making and budget setting
- Consider the potential impact of all council decisions on Children in Care, Foster Families and Care Leavers
- Ask questions of officers across the council, not just in Children's Services, about the quality of services provided to Children in Care and young people.

### **What can I do as a ward or district councillor?**

- Be aware that there are probably Children in Care and Care Leavers living in your area of responsibility
- Be curious about and understand the issues that Children in Care and Care Leavers may face and the support that they need from their local authority
- Support and/or attend foster carer recruitment activity and celebration events that are taking place in your area
- Take an active interest in facilities for children and young people in your area and speak to staff about how they support the inclusion of Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Promote community understanding of Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Monitor and challenge council policy for its impact on Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Offer to help secure employment or training opportunities, work experience or placements for Children in Care and Care Leavers.



## Our Promises to Cambridgeshire Children in Care

Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to supporting our Children in Care and Care Leavers and will always have high expectations of what they can do and achieve to reach their full potential.

Our Children in Care Council 'Voices Matter' and Care Leavers Forum have identified the following 10 Promises that Cambridgeshire County Council will strive to achieve.



## The Care Leavers Charter

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter published on the Gov.Uk website, sets out promises that Care Leavers want central and local government to make. They help in decision making and do not replace laws but give guidance to show how laws are designed to be interpreted. The Charter was co-designed by care experienced young people and the DFE and has now been fully embedded in the Care Leavers Covenant.

The key principles in this Charter will remain constant through any changes in Legislation, Regulation and Guidance and it raises expectations, aspirations and understanding of what Care Leavers need and what government and local authorities should do to be Good Corporate Parents.

### We Promise:

#### To respect and honour your identity

We will support you to:

- Discover and be who you are and honour your unique identity
- Develop your own personal beliefs and values
- Accept your culture and heritage

We will:

- Celebrate your identity as an individual, a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community
- Value and support important relationships
- Help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events
- Support you to express your identity positively to others

#### To believe in you

We will:

- Value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations
- Hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future
- Help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals
- Believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you

#### To listen to you

We will:

- Take time to listen to you, respect and strive to understand your view
- Place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you, negotiate with you and show how we have taken these into account
- Fully explain if we don't agree with you
- Provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and promote and encourage access to independent advocacy whenever you need it



### To support you

**We will:**

- Provide any support set out in current Regulations and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service
- Provide emotional advice as well as practical and financial help
- Make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down
- Not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do
- Continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you
- Make it our responsibly to understand your needs or help you find a service that can
- Help you learn from your mistakes; we will not judge you and will be here for you no matter how many times you come back for support

### To find you a home

**We will:**

- Work alongside you to prepare you for your move to independent living only when you are ready
- Help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation that is right for you
- Do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living
- Recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again
- Do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not judge you for your mistakes or refuse to advise you because you did not listen to us before
- Work proactively with other agencies to help you sustain your home

### To inform you

**We will:**

- Give you information that you need at every point of your journey, from care to adulthood
- Present this information in a way that you want
- Keep information up to date and accurate
- Ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular contact with leaving care services
- Make clear what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see
- Support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information and to put on record any disagreement with factual content

### **To be a lifelong Champion**

#### **We will:**

- Do our best to help you break down barriers encountered when dealing with other agencies
- Work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges and universities, employment providers and health services to help you establish yourself as an independent individual
- Treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever you age when you return to us for advice or support
- Help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger
- Point you in a positive direction and journey alongside you at your pace
- Trust and respect you
- Not forget about you
- Remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationships with you has ended



**INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **Olly Grant  
Independent Reviewing Service Manager**

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

*Purpose:* **The Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in Cambridgeshire as required by statutory guidance. This report covers the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is recommended to note the report.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>	
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## **Summary:**

Key highlights of this report are:

- The number of children in care rose by 83 during the period covered by the report (from 697 at the end of March 2018 to 780 at the end of March 2019).
- A total of 2022 Child in Care Reviews were held in this period.
- Timeliness of Reviews continues to be very good.
- Children's participation in their Reviews continues to be good, but there is room for improvement with this.
- The IROs Escalation Protocol was revised in November 2018 and is gradually becoming embedded.

The full report is attached at Appendix 1 and ends with an evaluation of the IRO Service Action Plan of 2017-18 and outlines the new IRO Service Action Plan for 2018-19.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

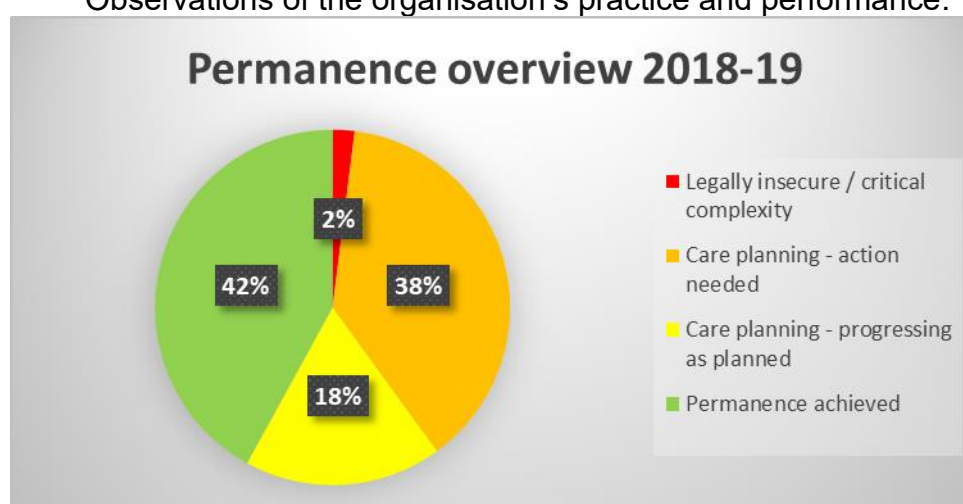
- 1.1 The appointment of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is a legal requirement under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act (2002). Amendments to statutory guidance in 2010 embedded the IRO role further within 'Care Planning Placement and Case Review' and 'The IRO Handbook'.
- 1.2 The IRO Handbook states: 'The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting panel. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed.' (IRO Handbook 2010, page 48, paragraph 7.11.)

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 Purpose of the IRO Service: It is a key responsibility of the IRO to ensure that the local authority gives due consideration to the views expressed by the child within care planning. The core mechanism for reviewing the child's care plan and ascertaining the child's wishes and feelings is the child's 'Child in Care' (CIC) Review, which are held at statutory intervals. The IRO has a responsibility to monitor the local authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case. If the IRO has concerns with respect to drift or delay within the child's care planning they will escalate the issue through the Case Alert and Dispute Resolution Protocol.



- 2.2 Profile of the population of children in care: There were 780 children in care at the end of March 2019.
- 2.3 Professional profile of the IRO Service: The IRO team is comprised of a Service Manager, 10.4 full-time equivalent staff, an Agency IRO and a dedicated Business Support team.
- 2.4 Performance of the IRO Service: 93% of CiC Reviews were held within statutory timescales.
- 2.5 Voice of the child in care planning: This year in Cambridgeshire 54% of children over the age of 4 attended their CiC Reviews in person. Not all children and young people wish to attend their Reviews. 41% conveyed their views via another person, through Mind of My Own or through a consultation document.
- 2.6 Observations of the organisation's practice and performance:



Over the 12 months between April 2018 and March 2019 the IROs raised 305 escalations to social care managers to prompt them to address the specific issues of drift or delay raised. This is more than double the number of escalations raised the previous year. The types of issues raised by IROs fell loosely into five categories:

- Planning for permanence
- Child's legal status
- Child's holistic needs or rights
- Safeguarding
- Professional network

- 2.7 Feedback on the IRO Service: It has not been easy to achieve feedback other than on an ad-hoc basis this year and work is being done to ensure that service-users and colleagues have clear methods by which to feedback their experiences of the IRO Service. Those who have shared their views this year have mostly been positive, particularly referencing the continuity of the allocated IRO through change within the social work force as being of

significant benefit to children in care.

2.8 Impact of the IRO Service: There is evidence that decisions made by IROs Reviews, and where necessary subsequent escalations, have positively impacted children. The IROs independence allows them to have an objective oversight of the care plan, which can sometimes highlight questions about how the plan meets the child's short and long term needs, or how it aligns with the wishes of the child, which social workers may have overlooked. Therefore the independent scrutiny also supports the social work teams to reflect on their planning and keep the child's experience at the centre of what they do.

2.9 Review of the IRO Service Action Plan 2018-19: Please see full report at Appendix 1 for details.

2.10 IRO Service Action Plan 2019-20:

IRO Service to:

Objective 1 – Support children in care to have greater opportunities to influence standards of professional practice and decision making.

Objective 2 – Improve opportunities for feedback from birth parents, carers and other professionals with respect to the CIC Reviews and IRO practice.

Objective 3 – Improve recording of information about the social workers compliance with respect to completion of required documentation and arrangements of Reviews.

Objective 4 – Support the local authority to develop pro-active models of working to enhance placement stability for children and reduce instances of placement breakdown and multiple moves for children.

Objective 5 – Introduce specialist roles and duties for IROs, to broaden their influence across the service and promote the voice of the child.

Objective 6 – Support the organisation to improve standards and consistency in returning children to the care of their parents where appropriate.

Objective 7 – Ensure the child's voice is strongly heard through the care planning and Review process, so that children can have a leading influence on their care plans.

Objective 8 – Ensure children's needs regarding dental and health assessments are being met, and risk assessments around Child Criminal Exploitation or going missing are undertaken as appropriate by responsible social work teams.

### 3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Report authors should evaluate the proposal(s) in light of their alignment with the following three Corporate Priorities.

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

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.2 Thriving places for people to live

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in **paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2.**

### 4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

#### 4.1 n/a

Source Documents	Location
None	





# **Safeguarding and Quality Assurance**

## **IRO ANNUAL REPORT April 2018 to March 2019**

Olly Grant  
Independent Reviewing Service Manager  
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

## **Executive Summary**

This Annual Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Services in Cambridgeshire as required by statutory guidance. This report covers the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Key highlights of this report are:

- The number of children in care rose by 83 this year (from 697 at the end of March 2018 to 780 at the end of March 2019).
- A total of 2022 Child in Care Reviews were held this year.
- Timeliness of Reviews continues to be very good.
- Children's participation in their Reviews continues to be good but there is room for improvement with this.
- The IROs Escalation Protocol was revised in November 2018 and is gradually becoming embedded.

The report concludes with an evaluation of the IRO Service Action Plan of 2017-18 and outlines the new IRO Service Action Plan for 2018-19.

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## **1.0 Purpose of the IRO Service**

- 1.1 The appointment of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is a legal requirement under Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act (2002). Amendments to statutory guidance in 2010 embedded the IRO role further within 'Care Planning Placement and Case Review' and 'The IRO Handbook'.
- 1.2 The IRO Handbook states: 'The manager should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of the members of the corporate parenting panel. This report should identify good practice but should also highlight issues for further development, including where urgent action is needed.' (IRO Handbook 2010, page 48, paragraph 7.11.)
- 1.3 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that every child who is "looked after" (in this report referred to as "in care") must have a Care Plan. The Care Plan must detail the long-term plan for the child's upbringing and the arrangements made to meet the child's day-to-day needs.
- 1.4 It is a core responsibility of the IRO to ensure that the local authority gives due consideration to any views expressed by the child within care planning. The IRO has a responsibility to monitor the local authority's performance of its functions in relation to the child's case. Statutory guidance and regulation clearly defines circumstances when the local authority should consult with the IRO; for example, proposed change of placement, change of education plan, or serious incident. The actions that the IRO must take if it is felt that the local authority is failing to comply with the regulations, statutory guidance and/or is breaching their duty to the child are also clear.
- 1.5 Every local authority is required to have a dispute resolution procedure that reflects the process for effectively resolving areas of disagreement raised by the IRO in respect of care planning. This includes access to independent legal advice for the IRO and referral to the Child and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS).
- 1.6 The core mechanism for reviewing the child's care plan and ascertaining the child's wishes and feelings, is the child's 'Child in Care' (CIC) Review, which are held at statutory intervals; initially within 20 days of the child coming into care, then within three months later, and then at least once every six months.

## **2.0 Profile of the population of children in care**

- 2.1 As at the end of March 2019 there were 780 Cambridgeshire children in care. This compares to 697 at the end of March 2018 and represents an increase of 11% over the past year. Between March 2016 and March 2017 the increase was 3%. Therefore the proportionate increase in the last year has been significant. There has been a steady increase over the last five years of the numbers of children in care. See Appendix I for statistical detail.
- 2.2 There is significant fluctuation through the year of the number of children entering and exiting care. The higher proportion of children entering care over July and August is, in part, a reflection of the increase in numbers of asylum seekers entering the UK during the summer months.
- 2.3 Table 3 in Appendix I illustrates that, relative to the whole number of children looked after, there are fewer children accommodated under Section 20 this year than there were in 2017-18, which is a continuation of the trend since 2016-17.

## **3.0 Professional Profile of the IRO Service**

- 3.1 In Cambridgeshire the IRO Service sits within Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (SQA) and is accountable to the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. SQA broadly exists to act as a 'critical friend' to the organisation. The wider functions of SQA include:
- The Child Protection Service: chairing conferences and quality assuring CP Plans;
  - The LADO Service: managing allegations against staff and volunteers working with children;
  - Customer Care: addressing customer feedback including complaints, from across People and Communities Directorate;
  - The Quality Assurance team who carry out audits and deliver workshops to support practice improvement as outlined in the QA framework;
  - Principal Social Worker to champion best social work practice.

### **Staff Team**

- 3.2 The permanent staffing establishment for the team is 10.4 IROs (full-time equivalent). 1.4 posts are fixed term to March 2020 and the remaining nine

are permanent. Since December 2018 there has also been additional Agency IRO cover in place to cover vacancies and help to manage the growing volume of work for the team.

- 3.3 Once again, membership of the IRO team has been relatively stable this year. There was one permanent IRO who left the team in January 2019, who has since been replaced.
- 3.4 In terms of diversity, there is only one male member of staff and the rest of the IRO Team are female. The majority of the staff team identify as White British. Overall the team do not reflect the gender balance and ethnic mix of the population of children in care that we work with. There are however a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented within the social work teams.
- 3.5 Attached to the IRO Service is a dedicated Business Support Team of one Business Support Officer and 2.5 FTE Business Support Assistants.
- 3.6 There is a permanent Service Manager in post, and since February 2019 a second Service Manager (shared with Peterborough) has begun to share the line management of the IROs.

### **Staff Development and Support**

- 3.7 Each IRO has monthly 1:1 supervision with the Service Manager to reflect on performance, practice, development and support, as well as access to informal supervision when needed.
- 3.8 Monthly IRO Team Meetings take place in Huntingdon. Attendance is mandatory for all IROs. Standard agenda items include staff wellbeing, updates in procedures, and discussion themes in social work practice with children in care. Often visitors from other parts of the organisation are invited, which helps to maintain good working relationships and communication between the IROs and the wider professional network around Cambridgeshire's children in care. Some of the visitors over the past year have included managers and practitioners from the Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers Team, the Virtual School, the Participation Team and Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption.
- 3.9 This year has seen the continuation of systemic peer discussion once every two months. A Clinician joins the team for one hour every other month to facilitate a session about a topic or challenge of the team's choice. This

provides a space for practice reflection, encouraging curiosity into alternative perspectives when understanding the experiences of children.

- 3.10 The Eastern Region IRO Managers group and IRO practitioners groups are established within the region. Cambridgeshire's IRO Service Manager and two IROs are active members of the Eastern Region group. The quarterly regional meetings offer a space for rich discussion about dilemmas and challenges of the role, national trends, significant case law developments and learning from one another.

## **Workload demand**

- 3.11 The IRO Handbook recommends a caseload for each full-time equivalent IRO is between 50 and 70 children. This volume of cases should allow the IRO to fulfil all their statutory functions to the best of their ability. This will include the conduct of CIC Reviews within timeframe, consulting children prior to their review and a continuous overview of the welfare of the child and their permanence plan. In 2018-19 the caseloads for Cambridgeshire have been at the higher end of the recommended range, which has been a continuous challenge as the numbers of children in care has progressively risen over the year. Caseload numbers peaked at an average of 74 per full-time equivalent IRO in December 2018. The introduction of additional Agency staff assisted to ease the pressure, and as at the end of March 2019 the average full-time equivalent caseload was 69.
- 3.12 Effective business support staff use established systems to support the IROs, this does not include the typing of minutes, which the IROs complete themselves. All IROs ensure that they distribute the decisions from CIC Review meetings to the responsible Team Manager within five working days of the review; this is in accordance with the IRO Handbook.
- 3.13 The high caseloads have had a significant impact on the staff capacity to undertake their full responsibilities to the highest standard. The areas of practice that have been particularly effected have been the timeliness of the CIC Review Reports being completed by IROs, and the limitations of the IROs to escalate issues every time a concern regarding the care plan emerges. Gradually these areas of performance have improved throughout the year, correlating with the reduction in caseloads.

## **4.0 Performance of the IRO Service**

- 4.1 This year it was decided to adapt the general terminology used around Reviews, to refer to 'Child in Care' Reviews as opposed to 'Looked After Child' or 'LAC' Reviews. This was refreshed when the new Corporate Parenting Service was launched in November 2018, and also aligns with the language used by Peterborough County Council.
- 4.2 A total of 2022 Reviews were held in the year 2018-19. This is a significant rise from the 1974 Reviews that were held in 2017-18, and the 1718 Reviews 2016-17. The increase is proportion to the increase in numbers of children in care.
- 4.3 In 2018-19 93% of CIC Reviews were held within statutory timescale. This is a decline from last year, which was 97%. The reasons for late Reviews were as follows:
- Late notification of child coming into care
  - Adverse weather conditions preventing travel: Beast from the East
  - Social worker unavailable due to an emergency
  - IRO illness
  - Delayed so that the young person able to attend in person
  - Foster carer unwell so Review venue needed to be found
  - IRO compassionate leave
  - Late notification of child moving to adoptive placement
  - IRO left and new IRO unavailable to adhere pre-arranged date
- 4.4 IROs chair Reviews at the child's preferred venue. This is often at the child's foster home or residential setting. 52% of children are placed out of county, which means that a significant proportion of IROs working time is spent travelling. On average a full-time IRO will travel around 1250 miles per month, and will spend 5-6 full days out of county each month.
- 4.5 It is a statutory responsibility of the IRO Service to distribute the record of the CIC Review within 20 working days. It has been a challenge this year to consistently maintain compliance with these timescales due to the heavy workload of the IROs. There are indicators that the timeliness of records was improving towards the end of the year, as caseloads started to reduce.
- 4.6 It is important that IROs maintain a level of continuous oversight into the progress of the care planning for children that they work with. IROs are therefore required to record evidence of their monitoring through a record of their 'footprint' on the child's case. Twice yearly 'Footprint Audits' illustrated



that there was room for improvement in this area at the beginning of the year. Following reinforcement of the expectations and some guidance around this there is growing evidence of more regular recordings of IRO involvement on the child's case file, and this continues to improve.

- 4.7 Monthly IRO Peer and Manager Audits of CIC Review Reports and annual direct observations of chairs continue this year. Feedback to IROs helps to focus on the strengths of their work and ensures there is a consistent and high standard of written and direct work the whole team.

## **5.0 Voice of the child in care planning**

- 5.1 There is an expectation nationally that children's views are sought in an age appropriate manner for their CIC Reviews. This year in Cambridgeshire 54% of children over the age of 4 attended their CIC Reviews in person. Not all children and young people wish to attend their Reviews; 41% conveyed their views via another person, through Mind of My Own or through a consultation document.
- 5.2 47% of children were visited by their IROs in between Reviews so that IROs could keep in touch and monitor how their wishes and feelings are impacting on ongoing care planning.
- 5.3 When a child first comes into care the newly allocated IRO tries to arrange to visit them within four weeks; i.e. before their first Review. Sometimes this is not possible due to IROs' existing diary commitments. It is still, however, very important that the child has an understanding of who their IRO is and what to expect at a Child in Care Review. This year we began routinely sending out introductory letters and Service Leaflets to children from IROs, which gives a child-friendly explanation of who they are and what they do (see Appendix II).
- 5.4 NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) provides advocates where they are requested by Cambridgeshire looked after children. Advocates are there to support the child to put their views across, or to represent the child's views on their behalf, at any meeting relevant to that child. NYAS do not work with children who are subjects of care proceedings as these children are allocated a CAFCASS Guardian to advocate for them and reflect their views in court. This year, 6% of children were supported by a NYAS advocate at their Reviews, and 20% of Reviews were for children who had allocated CAFCASS Guardians.

## **6.0 Observations of the organisation's practice and performance with children in care**

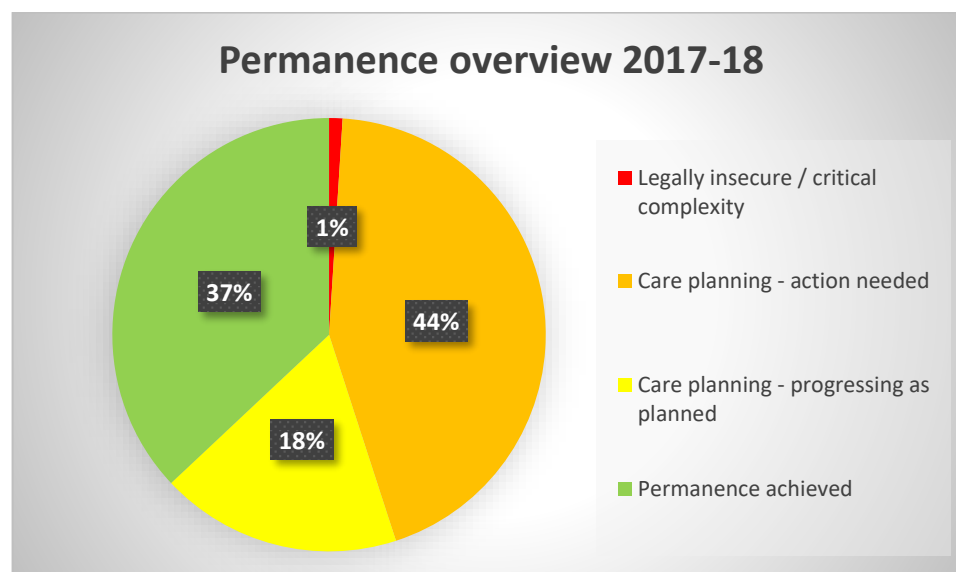
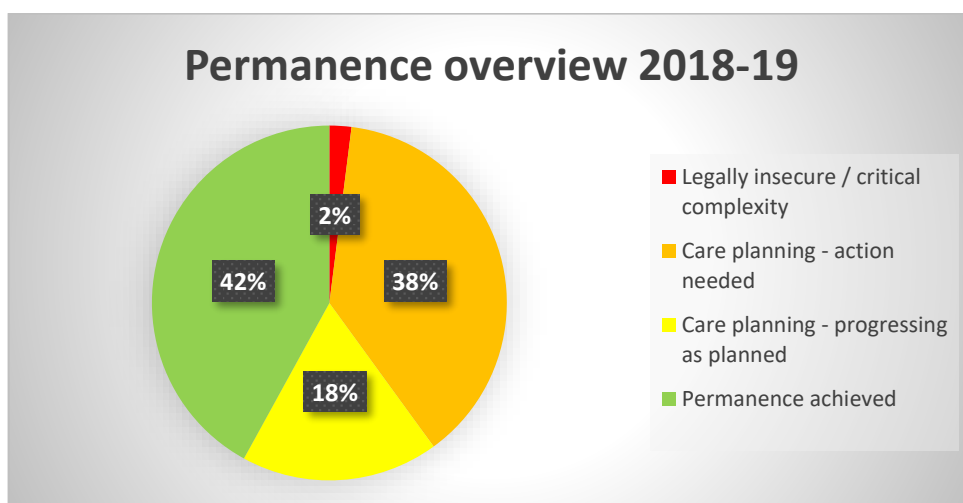
### **Permanence tracking**

- 6.1 The IRO Service is instrumental in the monitoring and tracking of permanence for children in care. The IRO Service manages a Central Permanence Tracker (CPT) which is updated regularly from the outcomes of Reviews and escalations. The CPT can then be used to track any

patterns across the service of obstacles to permanence for children, and areas where there have been improvements.

- 6.2 The children who have critical complications or delays to their care plans, such as children who are in secure accommodation or who are missing from care, feature on a weekly 'Red List' which is circulated across Heads of Service and Service Managers. In addition, these children have CIC Reviews at a minimum of once every three months to ensure that they maintain a sufficiently high level of scrutiny and attention across the organisation.
- 6.3 As well as those children highlighted 'Red' all other children are also colour coded on the Central Permanence Tracker. Monthly feedback on the service's progress in achieving permanence for children is given through visual reports.

6.4



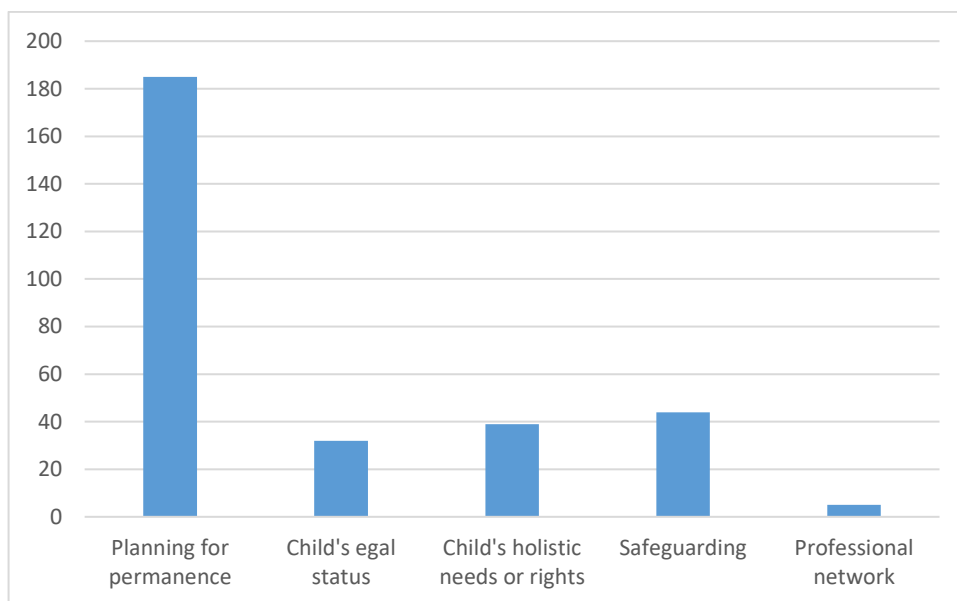
- 6.5 The two tables above illustrate that, as at the end of March 2019, 42% of all Cambridgeshire looked after children had achieved 'permanence'; (that is settled and stable care arrangements where they could remain until independence). This does not include adoption, as adopted children are no longer 'looked after' and therefore are not part of the children in care cohort. 42% is an improvement on the previous year, but there are clearly areas identified where more attention is needed in order to ensure all children in care achieve permanence.
- 6.6 In terms of the progress of plans for adoption, 45 adoption orders were made, and 43 placement orders were made. This is higher than in 2017-18, when 37 adoption orders were made and 43 placement orders were made. This year a total of 30 Special Guardianship Orders were made compared to 67 in 2017-18.

## **IRO Escalations**

- 6.7 A core function of the IRO role is to resolve problems that arise within care planning. It is a statutory responsibility of the IRO Service to have a formal process in place to raise concerns and to ensure that this process is respected and prioritised by managers. In Cambridgeshire this is referred to as the Escalation Protocol.
- 6.8 The Escalation Protocol was revised in November 2018, which had a positive impact in simplifying the process for IROs and achieving a more consistent standard for raising escalations across the whole IRO team.
- 6.9 Over the 12 months between April 2018 and March 2019 the IROs raised 305 escalations to social care managers to prompt them to address the specific issues of drift or delay raised. This is more than double the number of escalations raised the previous year.
- 6.10 The reasons for this increase lie largely in the enhanced understanding and appreciation across both the IRO service and the operational social care service of how effective the Escalation mechanism can be for identifying and progressing issues of drift and delay for children.
- 6.11 The types of issues raised by IROs fell loosely into five categories:
- Planning for permanence
  - Child's legal status
  - Child's holistic needs or rights
  - Safeguarding

- Professional network

The graph below illustrates which issues were raised most often by IROs.



6.12 Within each of these broad categories some issues were identified and escalated more often than others. Over the year, the five specific tasks that were identified as causing most drift or delay were:

1. The child's care plan or pathway plan was incomplete or out of date = 97 escalations.
2. Drift in family finding for a child with a care plan of adoption or long term fostering = 58 escalations.
3. A Risk Assessment and Safety Plan were needed in order to ensure the child was safeguarded = 29 escalations.
4. The child's legal status was unsuitable = 16 escalations.
5. Delay in assessments to progress permanence planning (e.g. sibling assessment, parenting assessment, viability assessment etc) = 11 escalations.

### **Resourcing issues impacting on social work services for children in care**

6.13 November 2018 saw the re-introduction in Cambridgeshire of dedicated social care teams for children in care. IROs strongly welcomed this change to the service structure and it is clear that these teams are able to focus their

attention on the specific needs and issues that affect children who are in care.

- 6.14 The adjustment to the service structure has however come with the drawback of changes in social worker for a large proportion of children. Of a dip sample of 15 children in care 100% had had at least one change of allocated social worker over the year, and one child had had five changes of social worker. This child told her IRO:

"I just want a social worker who sticks around and builds a relationship with me"

## **7.0 Feedback on the IRO Service**

- 7.1 This year feedback has been elicited on an ad-hoc basis. There are plans next year to establish a more efficient mechanism of obtaining feedback for IROs, particularly from young people.

"My IRO talks to me on my own and asks me what are the most important things to talk about in the Review meeting. She listens to me."

"I really like my IRO. He's easy to talk to. I know if things aren't done that are supposed to be he will make sure they get done."

"The IRO chairing the Review was very good. She explained what the meeting was about and asked questions from the parents, the social worker and from me (the baby's foster carer). At the first meeting it was only mum there, who got upset but the IRO although being empathetic kept the meeting on track."

"I would like to say the layout of the Review Report is really child focused, which I know RP will appreciate."

"The IRO engages well with the young people, she has a good relationship with them and in relation to KC this is evidenced by the fact that he accepts challenge and straight talk from the IRO as well as being able to engage in 'banter' with her."

"I am writing to pass on my appreciation of how well the IRO has been chairing the last two of CG's Reviews who we have living with one of our foster carers. The IRO is great at ensuring everyone's point of view is shared and manages to get beyond the administrative task. I welcome her ideas about ensuring progress within the placement, such as helping achieve stability and adjust to the changes given his carer's death. She gives me confidence that the corporate parenting responsibilities of the council will be taken care of - even in a complex and sensitive case such as CG's."

PL has an excellent IRO. The IRO manages meetings really well and the young people really like her. She doesn't do meetings for meetings sake. She comes in, well prepared, and explores the bits that she still needs to know in order to review properly. The meetings are kept to an hour which is best for everyone.

## **8.0 Impact of the IRO Service**

### **Impact for children**

- 8.1 Regular Reviews by IROs ensure that care plans are progressing for children, and that there is always a meaningful purpose for the child to remain 'in care'.
- 8.2 The escalations raised by IROs, where there are issues causing drift or delay, guarantee immediate management oversight. Almost all of the escalations raised this year were addressed within the deadline set by the IRO (based on the child's timeframe) by the relevant social work Team

Manager or the District Safeguarding Manager. This shows that, in the instances where social work practice has fallen below standard the IRO has been instrumental in ensuring plans get back on track quickly.

8.3 Of the 305 escalations raised over the past year, six had to be escalated by the IRO to the Assistant Director using the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP):

- Three of these DRP escalations were for a sibling group where the care plan had changed from one of adoption to one of long-term foster care after a long and unsuccessful search for a suitable adoptive family. However the Placement Orders for these children were still in place and therefore meant that the court had not been updated on the change of plan, and the children had inappropriate legal statuses. On raising this to the Assistant Director the legal paperwork was completed within two weeks and the Placement Orders were subsequently revoked.
- One DRP escalation was on behalf of a three year-old boy with chronic health complications who had been in foster care since birth, and had a plan for adoption. His carer wished to adopt him but there was significant delay in decisions being made around the Adoption Support that the local authority would commit to. His IRO strongly supported the plan for him to be adopted and this delay was an obstacle to this being progressed. Within two weeks of this being escalated by the IRO to the Assistant Director the issue was resolved and the little boy was subsequently adopted by his foster carer.
- The last DRP escalations were for a brother and sister in an adoptive placement. The children had significant emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the local authority had previously agreed to share the commitment to funding therapy for these children, alongside the Adoption Support Fund. The IRO found, however, that there were bills outstanding for the local authority contribution, which was putting a strain on the placement and causing a delay in the adoption plans being concluded for the children. Within one month of the DRP escalation by the IRO the financial issues were resolved and the children were successfully adopted.

## **Impact for the organisation**

8.4 There is an established system for the IRO Service to feedback to the operational social work services the broad findings of their work.



- 8.5 The IRO Service constructs and circulates the Positive Practice and Escalation Report each month which summarises the themes of escalations and raises awareness of ongoing areas of practice concern. The report also includes observations of positive practice that have been appreciated by the IRO Service (and Child Protection Chairs) on behalf of children in care each month; thereby offering the wider organisation regular balanced feedback.
- 8.6 Each month the emerging themes with respect to permanence are discussed in Improving Performance Meetings (formerly 'Permanence Tracking Meetings') across the service. This enables dialogue around the broader context for any challenges, and highlights areas for learning and support.
- 8.7 In early 2019 the Corporate Parenting Service began to review its procedures for formally matching foster placements for children with plans for long term foster care. This was encouraged by the IRO Service's feedback regarding the high number of children still waiting to be matched to long-term carers.
- 8.8 The IRO Service has been able to contribute knowledge and support for care planning across the wider organisation during this period of structural change to endeavour to ensure that the ongoing needs of children in care are not overlooked. This has included:
- Delivering workshops for social workers and team managers with respect to care planning and the purpose of CIC Reviews.
  - Speaking at different team events to broaden awareness of the role of the IRO in care planning, including Foster Carer Support Meetings, Social Work Team Meetings and District Away Days.
  - Responding to requests from the Access to Resources Team about quality of placements

## **9.0 Review of the IRO Service Action Plan 2018-19**

### **9.1 Objective 1**

To further raise awareness and understanding of the IRO Service to children and young people, and to elicit their feedback, the following actions will be undertaken:

- An IRO Service Leaflet will be developed for young people;
- A representative from the IRO Service will meet with a group of young people at least once in the year (potentially through the Just Us groups or Voices Matter) to gain feedback on their views of the service and how CIC Reviews are run;
- IROs will continue to promote the use of Mind of My Own with young people as a method of eliciting their views.

#### **Outcome**

The IRO Service Leaflet for young people has been created and is in use (see Appendix II). The IRO representation with young people's groups has not been established yet. This has been due to a change in the management of the Participation Service, and new groups have been in their own rapport-building stages. IROs have continued to promote Mind of My Own, though the take-up of this by young people has been quite low.

### **9.2 Objective 2**

To enhance learning and discussion on the up-to-date research findings, case law and national debates regarding the IRO role the following actions will be taken:

- The IRO Service Manager and all of the IROs within the team will participate in an IRO Conference for the whole of the Eastern Region;
- IROs will participate in a bespoke training day specifically focussed on the challenges and rewards of the IRO role, to be facilitated by Research in Practice.

#### **Outcome**

All the IROs and the Service Manager attended the first Annual Eastern Region IRO Conference in November 2018, which provided an excellent opportunity for rich discussion and learning from other authorities as well as recent research presented by Keynote speakers. In January 2019 Cambridgeshire hosted a bespoke training day for IROs delivered by Research in Practice which allowed for the IROs to reflect on their own practice and consider solutions to some of the challenges of the role.

### **9.3 Objective 3**

To further improve permanence outcomes for looked after children the following actions will be undertaken:

- Peer supervision will be introduced to help IROs learn from and challenge one another in their practice, particularly focussing on their knowledge and skill in identifying drift and making and tracking decisions accordingly.

**Outcome**

Group supervision has begun to be embedded within the IRO Team.

#### **9.4 Objective 4**

To assist the IROs in exercising their professional authority and quality assurance role, the following actions will be undertaken:

- The existing arrangements for PQAM to quality assure care plans for long term fostering will be adapted so that the IRO will take the lead role in scrutinising the assessments and care plan that the local authority intends to propose to court.

**Outcome**

Group supervision has begun to be embedded within the IRO Team.

#### **9.5 Objective 5**

To enable IROs to fulfil the entirety of their roles to their best ability the following actions will be undertaken:

- Monthly Peer / Manager audits will continue and the feedback and learning discussed in supervision;
- Caseloads will be kept to a maximum of 70 per IRO where at all possible;
- IROs will be assisted to record an overview of the LAC Review in the most concise style, including only relevant details, through the introduction of a standardised template.

**Outcome**

Peer / Manager Audits have continued this year and has helped all IROs to try to maintain a succinct and balanced style of recording. Caseloads have been able to reduce over the year, and are now consistently under 70 per IRO.

## 9.6 Objective 6

To support the local authority to improve the timeliness of children achieving permanence and stability without delay the following actions will be undertaken:

- The Independent Reviewing Service Manager will deliver further training programmes on the topics of 'the Looked After Child' and 'Life Story Work' to social workers and other staff working with looked after children;
- The Independent Reviewing Service Manager will support the Fostering Service to review and refresh their processes for family finding for children with long-term plans of foster care;
- The IRO Service will have membership on strategic workstreams in relation to practice in respect of:
  - o Assessments and plans for reunification;
  - o Special Guardianship as a permanence option;
  - o Staying Put protocol review.

### Outcome

Training programmes on the 'Looked After Child' and 'Life Story Work' continued to the end of 2018 when responsibility for workforce development in these areas returned to the Corporate Parenting Service and the Learning and Development Team. The work alongside Fostering in reviewing the processes for family finding and matching continues. Unfortunately the anticipated workstreams on different care planning options has not progressed as planned this year.

## **10.0 IRO Service Action Plan 2019-20**

### 10.1 Objective 1

IROs to support children in care to have greater opportunities to influence standards of professional practice and decision making by:

- Improving working relationships and partnership work with Voices Matter (Cambridgeshire's Children in Care Council);
- IROs to audit one care plan per month, in conjunction with the young person, with feedback to be shared with the relevant social work team;
- Children and young people to be offered feedback forms with respect to their IRO and their management of the CIC Review.

## **10.2 Objective 2**

IRO Service to improve opportunities for feedback from birth parents, carers and other professionals with respect to the CIC Reviews and IRO practice:

- Introducing standard feedback forms which will be offered to all attendees at CIC Reviews, with a range of methods available to them to return the feedback to the service.

## **10.3 Objective 3**

IROs to record information about compliance with respect to completion of required documentation and arrangements of Reviews. This will provide qualitative feedback to Social Work Team Managers in respect of focussed care planning, to be shared in the supervision with social workers. Themes of strong practice across the organisation and areas where knowledge and practice need to be improved will enhance SQA's existing Positive Practice and Escalation Reports.

## **10.4 Objective 4**

To support the local authority to develop pro-active models of working to enhance placement stability for children and reduce instances of placement breakdown and multiple moves for children, by:

- Conducting a service-wide review of recent Placement Breakdowns;
- IRO Service taking responsibility for holding Placement Breakdown Meetings;
- IRO to support Corporate Parenting to review matching procedures for assessing long-term 'matches'.

## **10.5 Objective 5**

Introduction of specialist roles and duties for IROs, to broaden their influence across the service and promote the voice of the child, e.g.:

- IRO input to Social Work Team Manager meetings every other month;
- Attendance at quarterly liaison meetings with CAFCASS;
- IRO representative to link regularly with Voices Matter;
- IRO Links to be established with the Fostering Team, the Adoption Team, the Participation Team, the Virtual School, the Youth Offending

Service, the LAC Health Team, the Reunification and Placement Stability Service.

## **10.6 Objective 6**

IRO Service to support the organisation to improve standards and consistency in returning children to the care of their parents where appropriate. The IRO Service will do this by:

- The IRO Service Manager, (or a representing IRO) to join senior managers to oversee the consistency in standard and quality of reunification assessments and plans for return home at regular Reunification Monitoring Meetings;
- IROs to support the development of a Return Home Policy;
- IRO Service Manager (or a representing IRO) to contribute to Reunification training across the service, to reinforce expectations with respect to quality of Assessments and Plans.

## **10.7 Objective 7**

To ensure the child's voice is strongly heard through the care planning and Review process, so that children can have a leading influence on their care plans by:

- Increasing the proportion of children who are consulted by the IRO prior to their Review.

## **10.8 Objective 8**

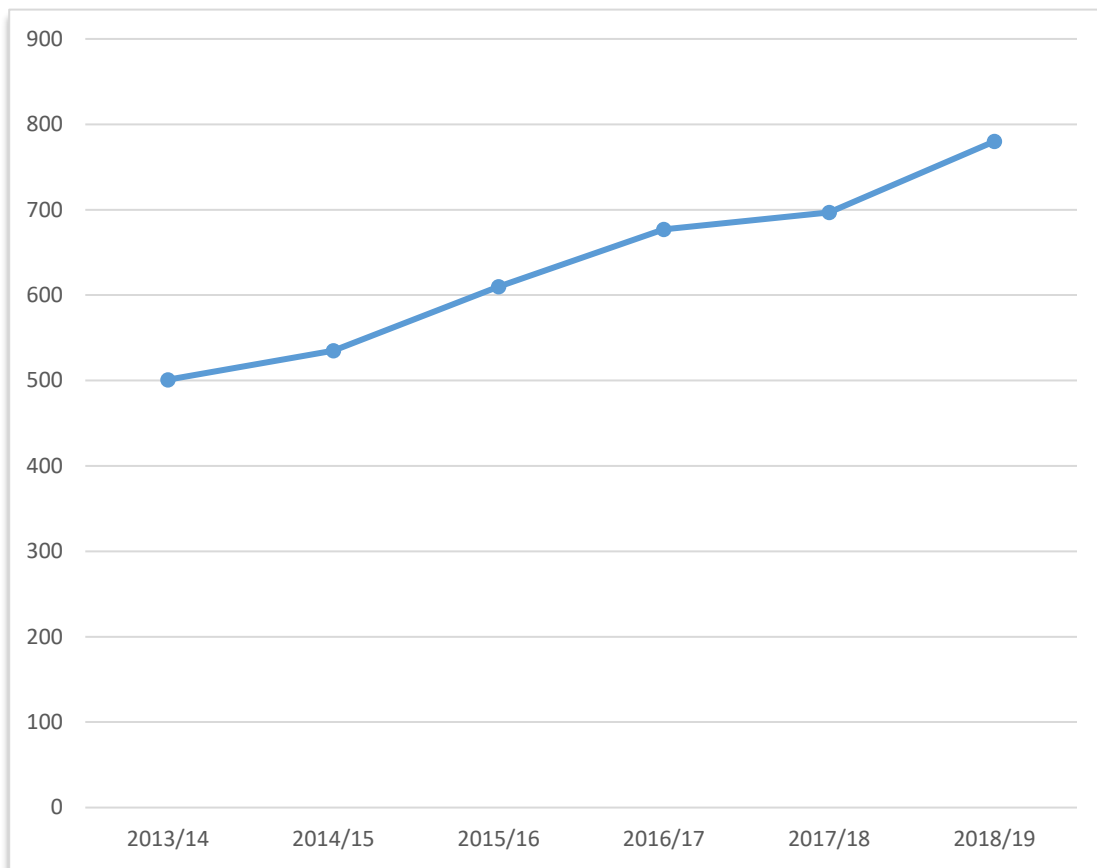
To ensure children's needs regarding dental and health assessments, and risk assessments around Child Criminal Exploitation or going missing are undertaken as appropriate by responsible social work teams. IROs will do this by:

- Increasing oversight of records of assessments, both as part of regular CIC Reviews and interim monitoring.

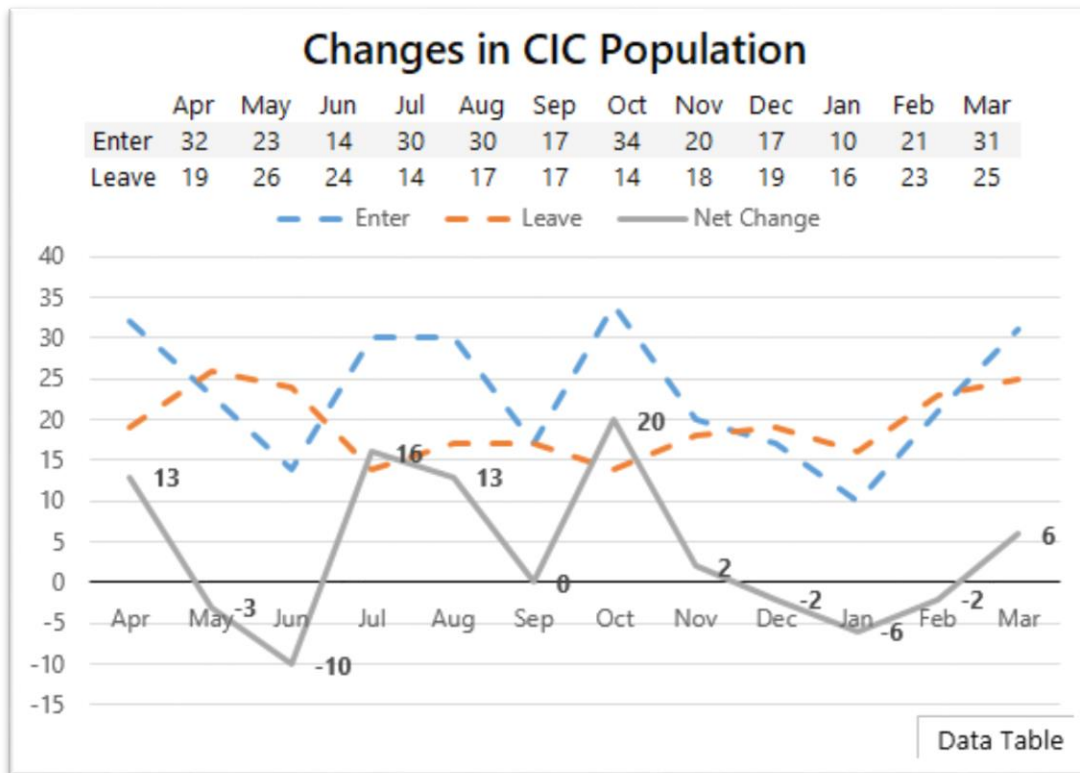
## **11.0 Appendices**

### **Appendix I: Statistical detail of the profile of children in care population**

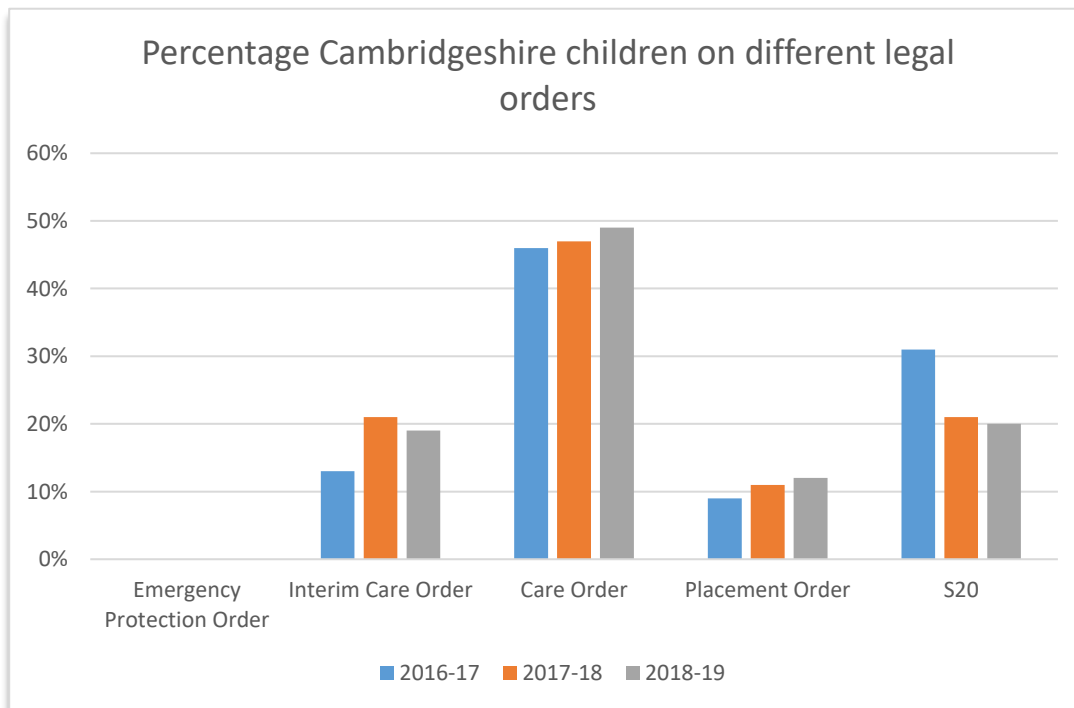
**Table 1: Number of Looked After Children**



**Table 2: Cambridgeshire Children entering and exiting care**



**Table 3: Looked after children – legal status**



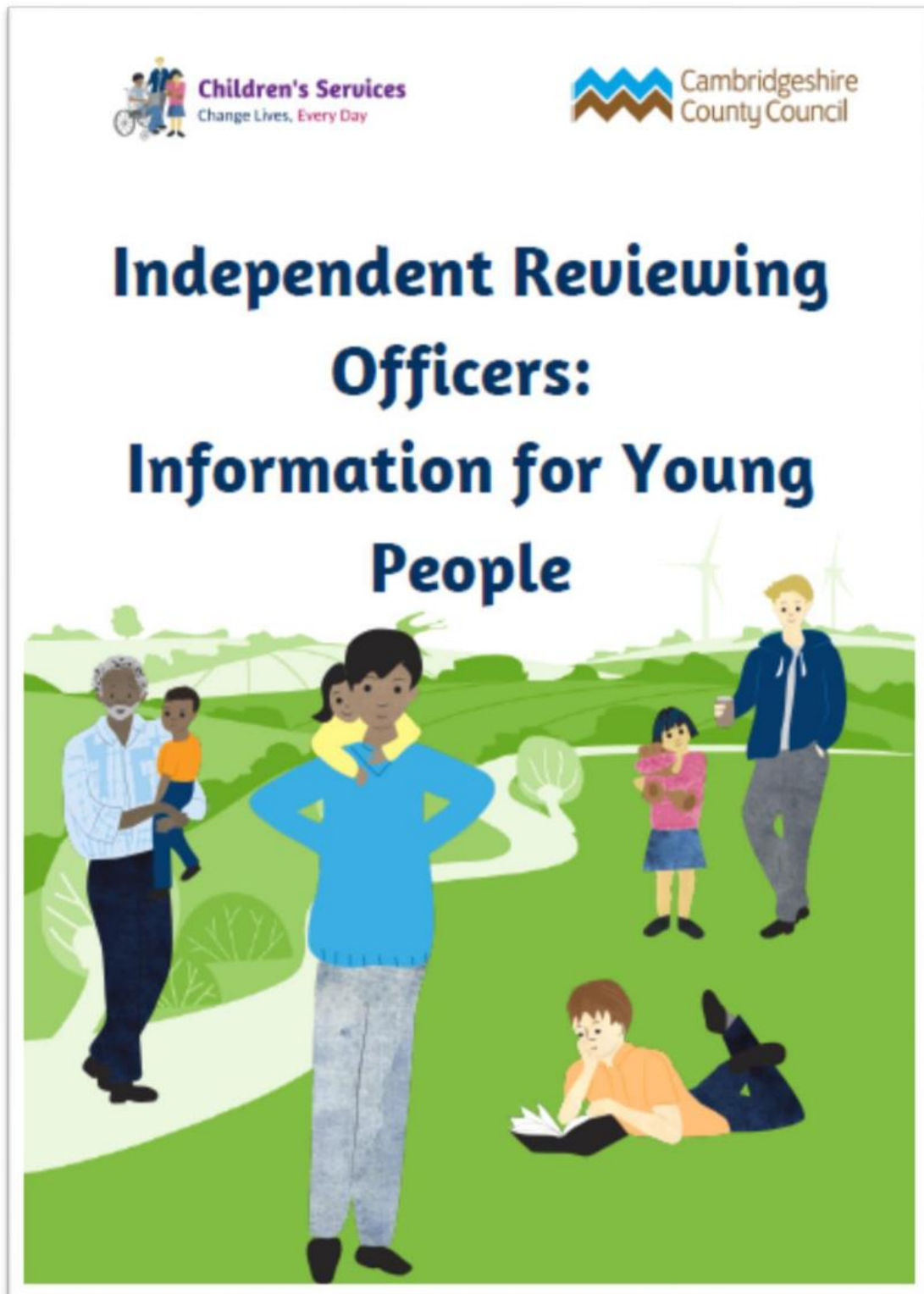


## Appendix II: Introductions to children

### Example of IRO letter



IRO Service Brief for children and young people 2019





**Children's Services**  
Change Lives, Every Day



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**

## All children in care have an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

### What will my IRO do?

Your IRO reviews your care plan by having a meeting, and talking with you and the people who are important to you. These meetings and discussions are called a **review**.

Your IRO will chair or help you chair your review. They are there to make sure your voice is heard, and that the people involved are doing what they are meant to.

Reviews are for you, not about you. It is important to share how you feel and what you would like to accomplish, so that your IRO can help you achieve all that you can be.

Your IRO will always:

- Promote your voice.
- Help you to understand your care plan.
- Check that you are getting the services you need.



### When will I have my reviews?

Your IRO will organise your first review **within 20 days** of becoming Looked After, then **3 months later**, and then at least **every 6 months**.







**Children's Services**  
Change Lives, Every Day



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**

## How is my IRO 'independent'?

Being 'independent' means that your IRO does not work in the same team as your Social Worker or the other people involved in your life.

In fact, the law says that an IRO cannot be a person who is already involved in your care - this means that an IRO will always have a fresh perspective and can make sure your Social Worker is doing the best thing for you.

Your IRO will contact you to introduce themselves before your first review, and they will make sure you know how to contact them if you want to talk.

## What will happen at my review?

Your review is a chance to see:

- The things that are going well,
- The things that could be going better, and
- The things that need to happen in the future.

## How can I get involved?

Your review should take place where you want it to, include the people you want to invite, and talk about the things you want to discuss.

You can share your thoughts and feelings with your IRO online by using Mind of My Own (<http://mindofmyown.org.uk>). Your Social Worker will be happy to help you create an account.



You can also invite a NYAS Advocate to attend your reviews. NYAS are there to help you share your views. You can ask your social worker to help you with this or you can make contact with NYAS yourself on [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)





**Children's Services**  
Change Lives, Every Day



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**

## Our IRO's promises to you

Cambridgeshire County Council's IROs are committed to helping you reach your full potential. We believe that reviewing your care plan is an important part of this, and our IROs promise to always:

- Focus on your future, not your past.
- Help you to see the important people in your life.
- Support you to achieve your goals at school, and in your hobbies and interests.
- Support you to live a healthy lifestyle both physically and mentally.
- Work to keep you living somewhere you are happy.
- Make sure you understand why you're in care and to support you throughout your journey.
- Ask you about, and keep you updated with any changes to your care plan.
- Listen to you, and communicate openly and honestly.





**Siblings Forever Annual Report 2019**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **Olly Grant  
Independent Reviewing Service Manager**

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

*Purpose:* **To give an overview of the activity of the Siblings Forever Project for 2019.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is recommended to note the report.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>	
Name:	Alison Bennett	Names:	Councillor Lis Every
Post:	Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	Role:	Chairman, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
Email:	Alison.Bennett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Lis.Every@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01480 372452	Tel:	(office) 01223 706398

**Summary:**

This report gives a summary of the structure and purpose of the project, and the children's experiences and feedback.

Two trips were held in 2019; one in May half term and one in October half term.

A new source of funding needs to be identified in order for the project to continue.

Outcomes are not formally measured for the project, but an informal evaluation is completed after each trip. The feedback from children and carers is very positive overall.

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Siblings Forever is a project that brings brothers and sisters together who have been separated through at least one sibling coming into care. The children get together for a short residential trip for two nights and three days at Grafham Water.
- 1.2 This project has been running since November 2013. Olly Grant (then Consultant Social Worker with children in care) developed the idea with Victoria Bartle (then Area Inclusion youth Worker for Huntingdonshire), to create a space for children who have been separated through care to have some time together that allows them to be siblings first, and everything else second. Since then there have been 10 trips and a total of 97 Cambridgeshire children have participated so far. Some young people have attended more than once and almost all have asked to come back again.

**2. MAIN ISSUES****2.1 Structure of the project**

Olly Grant continues to manage the project, and since Victoria's departure in 2018 this has been alongside Tracy Grant (Cambridgeshire's Duke of Edinburgh Manager) who manages the trip on-site at Grafham Water.

- 2.2 2019 year has seen the positive establishment of a committed team of volunteers who staff the project on-site. The volunteers are all Cambridgeshire County Council staff who offer their time over the residential weekend as part of their broader commitment to young people in need of support. The staff team is comprised of individuals from across children's social care, including social workers, a team manager, a clinician and a child practitioner.



2.3 The children arrive at Grafham Water on a Friday afternoon and they leave on Sunday afternoon. They sleep in small same-sex dormitories, split into sibling groups. The weekend is packed during the day with challenging activities led by specialist instructors which include High Ropes, Archery, Powerboating, Raft-building and climbing. One evening is spent doing an outdoor group-work activity and during the second evening children are able to do crafts and make photo collages of their trip so far for them to take home.

#### 2.4 **Funding**

Each trip, on average, costs £3,000, though it varies slightly in relation to the number of participants that attend. Costs relate to the Grafham facilities, specialist instructors, craft and photography resources. All staff volunteer their time without cost.

2.5 Since August 2017 the funding has been provided through the Troubled Families budget. However, there is uncertainty whether this will continue into 2020 and therefore, for the project to continue an alternative source of funding will potentially need to be secured.

#### 2.6 **Siblings Forever May and October 2019**

Two trips were held in 2019; one in May half term and one in October half term. In total 24 children benefitted from the trips. This included:

- Sibling groups ranging from two to 5 children
- Children aged between 9 and 17
- Children who now live out-of-county
- Sibling groups where some of the children were still living with birth parents or other relatives
- Children who were very new in care
- Children with additional needs

Outcomes are not formally measured for the project, but an informal evaluation is completed after each trip.

#### 2.7 **Feedback from children**

"I liked it a lot. All of the activities I enjoyed. And being with my brothers and sisters was good. I've brought home my photo collage and it's on my chest of drawers in my bedroom." – 9 year old

"I absolutely loved it. It was so nice to spend some time with my siblings and I loved meeting new people. My favourite part was the Grafham Challenge because I managed to get through a tunnel, and I absolutely hate tunnels. Second, I liked the rock climbing, and then all the art and crafts. One thing you could do to make it better? Give us a week would be better – though it would be tiring. Maybe just a bit longer next time, so we could experience things it all for longer." – 14 year old

“It was brilliant. Just seeing my brother and sisters was the best thing. We never got to sleep because my brother was texting my sister in her dorm. Jeff (staff) had to come in and tell us to whisper! I didn’t like the wall climbing and the high ropes but I liked the crate stacking and I’d done it before in scouts. Driving the speedboat was so fun – it was so fast! Thank you Olly for the trip.”  
– 10 year old

## 2.8 **Feedback from carers**

“L loved it. He said he felt like he "fitted in". He was bursting on the way home, he told me all about the activities. He worries when he’s not with his sisters so it was good for him to be with them. It was absolutely brilliant.”  
Foster carer

“Oh My Gosh he had an amazing time. Such a wonderful time, he had so much to say when he got back. It was really good for him to have more positive relationship with his siblings, which they haven’t been able to have in the past. He talked about falling in the water, all the things that a young man should enjoy. He came home with wet muddy items, which is exactly as it should be.”  
Foster carer

## 2.9 **Conclusion**

Irrespective of the reasons that they enter the care system, the impact of being separated from birth family has a profound effect on a child’s emotional wellbeing, on their sense of identity and on their capacity to cope through times of stress.

It is hoped that Siblings Forever will continue at the same pace as it has done, so successfully, over the past six years. There are opportunities for it to extend into a shared project with Peterborough, and also for it to potentially contribute to further research and policy development around siblings. Ultimately the benefits of this project are for the brothers and sisters, providing them with the precious opportunity to just be together.

## 3. **ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

Report authors should evaluate the proposal(s) in light of their alignment with the following three Corporate Priorities.

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

There are no significant implications for this priority.

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

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 3.3 **The best start for Cambridgeshire’s children**

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in **paragraph 2.9**.

#### 4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 n/a

Source Documents	Location
None	



**FOSTERING SERVICE UPDATE**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **John Heron  
Consultant Lead Manager - Fostering**

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

*Purpose:* **To provide the Sub-Committee with an update on the work of the Fostering Service.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is asked to note the report.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contact:</i></b>	
Name:	John Heron	Names:	Councillor Lis Every
Post:	Consultant Lead Manager - Fostering	Role:	Chairman, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
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Tel:	01223 743857	Tel:	(office) 01223 706398

### **Summary:**

One of the most important responsibilities of any Local Authority is the provision of care for children and young people who are not able to live with their birth families due to abuse or neglect. Under section 22G of the Children Act 1989 Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that there are sufficient placements for children who need to be Looked After. For most children and young people, being brought up in the context of a caring and nurturing family where their interests and education is promoted will improve their life chances and future prospects.

In 2018 Cambridgeshire County Council agreed to invest additional monies through transformation funding in order to increase the number of in-house foster carers and to ensure that there is sufficient staffing to support them.

This report provides an update on the work of the Fostering Service and efforts to recruit new in-house foster carers so far in 2019.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 In 2018 Cambridgeshire County Council General Purposes Committee (GPC) agreed to make additional funding available to the fostering service through the Transformation Fund over a three year period in order to meet demand for in-house fostering services.

1.2 The GPC agreed Transformation Funding as follows:

• Up-front marketing investment through three years tender up to	£225,000
• Additional Capacity – Marketing	£80,000
• Staffing Capacity – Recruitment, Support and Business Support	£210,000
• Marketing – direct Campaign Costs	£20,000
• Other Recruitment Incentives including refer a friend scheme	£70,000
• Additional funds to improve support for foster carers.	<u>£100,000</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£705,000</b>

1.3 This report provides information regarding recruitment activity and work of the fostering service so far in the year 2019/2020.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

2.1 During the year 2018/2019 the fostering service used the investment money to rebrand the service and undertake a major recruitment campaign in order to ensure visibility of Cambridgeshire County Council Fostering Service's position in the fostering market place.

- 2.2 Between April and September 2019 the fostering service has planned and executed a number of recruitment campaigns which build upon the work undertaken in the previous financial year.
- 2.2 A consolidation campaign was run in April 2019 which made use of re-edited and subtitled versions of existing films and materials to reinforce key messages. This was supported by Facebook and online advertising on the Heart FM website (Homepage Takeover). In addition, a radio advert was designed and used from the middle of April, throughout May and into the first week of June.
- 2.3 Cambridgeshire supported the Fostering Fortnight Campaign throughout June 2019 with a series of films on social media, radio advertising with Heart FM and the Grafton Centre advertising campaign.
- 2.4 In July 2019 a new campaign was launched to attract new carers for the Link Scheme. A range of different tactics and strategies were used to do this including three information events held throughout July and August at the Serpentine Shopping Centre in Hampton, videos of Link Carers and birth parents talking about the Link service which were placed Facebook and Twitter and a widely circulated podcast on social media and other social media posts designed to drive prospective carers to the website.
- 2.5 Alongside the general campaign running throughout August, the 'Fostering Career' campaign was planned and launched in September. This campaign encouraged people to consider fostering as a career option.

### **Marketing and Recruitment activity**

- 2.6 In conjunction with the Corporate Communications Department, the fostering service has undertaken a range of activities to plan and execute each campaign. These activities include the following;
- **Acorn data** – Using this data a new foster carer profile has been produced. Analysis of this data provides information about which demographic groups are most likely to foster, where they live and how best to target advertising towards them.
  - **Campaign Partners** – A number of local companies and organisations have been recruited to become 'Campaign Partners'. These organisations have agreed to carry our publicity materials on their websites and share our recruitment information within their staff groups. Others have offered advertising space or printed materials. Campaign partners include organisations such as Cambridge United Football Club, Peterborough United Football Club, Heart FM, Stagecoach buses, Archant newspapers, BBC Look East, Cambridgeshire Police and Fire services and Network Rail. Each Campaign Partner is sent the campaign videos, imagery and copy for display across all of their channels prior to the campaign launch.

- **Videos** – Videos relevant to each campaign featuring Cambridgeshire Foster Carers have been produced for use on social media.
- **Facebook/Twitter** – Lead generation adverts were created to push the information sessions during the campaigns.
- **Articles Produced for School Newsletters, Libraries and Parishes**– Articles have been produced for publication in school newsletters and circulated to school offices (maintained and academies) as well as to other teachers and governors, libraries and Parishes across the county.
- **BBC** – Wherever possible, interviews have been arranged with BBC Look East radio and BBC Look East television. These have been conducted with Members, foster carers and staff.
- **Grafton Centre advertising** – The digital screen at the Grafton Centre showed our material to coincide with campaigns.
- **Press releases and articles** have been produced regarding the need for foster carers and dispelling myths about fostering.
- **Emails** - Members email has been sent to disseminate the copy and messages across the county.
- **Friday Focus** –Articles have been submitted and disseminated to all social Care staff in Cambridgeshire County Council through the Friday Focus email.

## 2.7 In addition to the above:

- **Questionnaire** – Questionnaires were disseminated to people who have previously enquired but had not replied to follow up contacts. These will be analysed to inform future marketing and recruitment activities.
- **Foster Carer Newsletter** - the new Foster Carers Newsletter has been well received by foster carers. This is evidenced by the high open and click through rates and positive feedback to social workers. The aim of the newsletter is to help inspire, educate, inform and engage, ultimately retaining existing foster carers and encouraging foster carers to recruit their friends.
- **Refer a Friend** – A new refer a friend scheme has been devised and was launched in October 2019 to encourage existing foster carers and staff to recommend a friend to become a foster carer. A carer or staff member who recommends a friend who is ultimately approved as a foster carer for Cambridgeshire County Council will receive High Street Vouchers to the value of £300. This will be funded from the Transformation Fund.



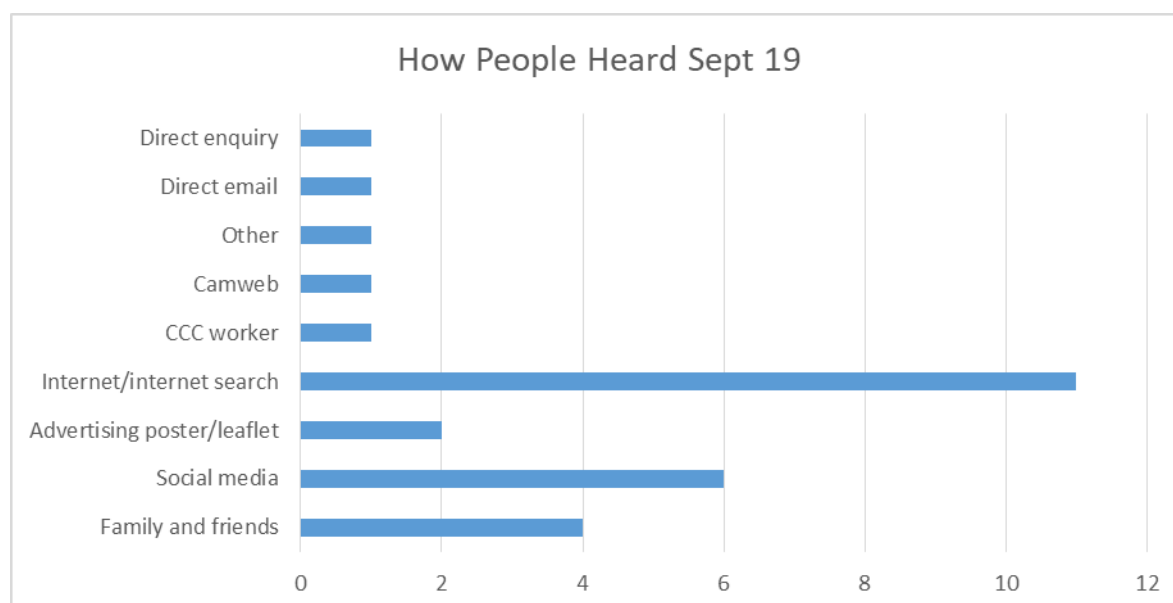
### **Outcome of the July Link campaign**

2.8 The campaign resulted in 17 enquiries. Six enquiries resulted from information events and eleven came through Facebook. Of these:

- Two households received initial visits. One has applied and is now in assessment. The other is not quite ready to apply, but wishes to do so in the near future
- One household was referred on to Peterborough due to location
- Nine households are either not suitable or have decided not to proceed
- Four households requested a call back in late August/ September and two of these have since decided not to proceed. The other two are still considering their options.
- Three have not responded to follow up contact, but attempts are still being made.

### **Outcome of the September 2019 Fostering Career Campaign**

2.9 Twenty eight enquiries were received in September. One application was received in September and the Fostering Recruitment Assessment Team (FRAT) is still following up on the other enquiries. Information on how people were engaged is shown below.



### **Recruitment Performance to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

2.10 The recruitment and marketing activity discussed above has yielded good results. While it is disappointing that the number of enquires received is actually lower than the number received in the same period last year, (171 in 2019 compared to 224 last year - 24% less) the number of prospective fostering households in assessment, is significantly higher. (It is also interesting to note that many other Local Authorities are reporting a decrease in the number of people enquiring about fostering).

- 2.11 At the end of September 2019, 22 families were in assessment compared to just 13 in 2018, an increase of 69%. This can be attributed to a number of factors which include smarter and more targeted marketing (use of Acorn etc) and work undertaken within the fostering recruitment team regarding initial visits and conversions. This will be further supported by a new Fostering Recruitment Assessment and Training Team Manager who has just arrived in post.
- 2.12 Eleven new fostering households have been approved in the first six months of the year offering an optimum of 15 new fostering beds.

### **Profile of children**

- 2.13 The number of children in care has been rising on a national level since 2008. This has also been true in Cambridgeshire. However, the number of Children in Care in Cambridgeshire has begun to fall since the summer of 2019. At its peak during the school holidays in August 2019 the number of children in care had fallen from 791 to 769 at the end of September.
- 2.14 At the end of Quarter 2 the fostering service was providing care for 272 children.
- Time limited placements: 117
  - Matched placements: 66
  - Unaccompanied children: 3
  - Connected persons (Reg 27): 25
  - Connected Persons (Reg 24): 14
  - Staying Put: 11
  - Supported Lodgings: 10
  - Link: 26

### **Profile of Foster Carers**

- 2.15 At the end of September 2019, the total number of households providing care for children was 203. This includes Short-term, Long-term, Respite, Supported Lodgings, Link and Connected Person's. This is an increase of six households over Quarter 1.
- 2.16 Approved foster carers;
- Short Term, Long Term and Respite - 142 (providing an optimum of 276 beds)
  - Reg 24 – 12
  - Connected persons Reg 27 - 23
  - Supported Lodgings – 12
  - Link carers - 14
- 2.17 Actual Utilisation: 1.3 placements per household.

## **Carers on Hold**

- 2.18 At any one time a number of foster carers will be 'on hold'. This can be for a number of reasons for example some foster carers will be on hold at their own request due to health or their own family commitments. On other occasions foster carers may be placed on hold by the service due to concerns relating to standards of care or allegation enquiries.
- 2.19 On the 30<sup>th</sup> September 21 households, or 33 beds were 'on hold'. Of these, six households have primary vacancies, that is do not have any other foster children living with them. Between these households, they have 10 beds on hold.
- 2.20 15 households have a total of 23 secondary vacancies. These foster carers are approved for more than one child and the second or third vacancy is on hold. The majority of these are vacant due to having to match the right child needing care with the children or children already living with the foster carer.
- 2.21 The fostering service closely monitors carers on hold and works hard with these carers to maximise utilisation of all care arrangements. The service is currently working with three standards of care concerns.

## **Foster Cares Leaving Cambridgeshire**

- 2.22 Each year fostering services can expect to lose a number of foster carers, the average being 10%. Unfortunately, in the same period five households have resigned from Cambridgeshire. Although this is disappointing, the service anticipates that only a further three households will resign from foster caring in this financial year. This will be below the national average.
- 2.23 Of the five households that have resigned so far this year:
- One has not accepted a placement since 2016. They have been undertaking building work which is still not nearing completion
  - One was approved in 2018 but has never accepted a child into their home
  - One foster carer has moved out of Cambridgeshire and back to be with their extended family
  - One fostering couple resigned to concentrate on their marriage
  - One foster carer resigned following unsubstantiated safeguarding concern
- 2.24 Of the three that the service anticipates will resign this year:
- One is being taken back to fostering panel following safeguarding concerns
  - One is considering retirement due to age
  - One is caring for a family member injured in an accident but may return
- 2.25 No Cambridgeshire foster carers left to join an independent fostering agency.

## **Pipeline**

- 2.26 In addition to the 11 households already approved an additional 22 households are in assessment representing a potential of a further 34

fostering beds for children. Of these, seven households have expressed an interest in fostering teenagers. Together these households would provide an optimum of 15 beds for teenagers.

- 2.27 It is anticipated that the fostering service will have approved 33 households by the end of this financial year providing an optimum of 49 beds.

### **Planned Activity for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4**

- 2.28 The 'Fostering Career' campaign will continue to run throughout October 2019 and into November and planning is underway for the December 'Wishes' campaign which will be a festive message focused on encouraging enquiries over the Christmas period. In January 2020 we will be working with schools and colleges on a 'New Year New You' campaign.

- 2.29 Other planned activity includes:

- Refer a friend incentives will be rolled out throughout October and November.
- The Virtual School in conjunction with the Fostering Service is hosting a conference for foster carers to inform them of new processes. Sir John Timpson will be the key note speaker at the conference.
- This year's Harry Potter Foster Carers Awards event will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019. It is expected that around 180 people will attend this event.
- A recruitment and information stand has been booked for the Parish Council Conference and a fostering feature has been sent out to all parishes and councillors for circulation.
- Cambridgeshire will be represented at the marketing forum with Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Essex and Suffolk Local Authorities.

### **Other Work**

#### **Long-term Fostering.**

- 2.30 It is the aim of Cambridgeshire Country Council's Corporate Parenting Service to provide stability, a sense of belonging and a better sense of normal family life for those children in our care whose plan is to remain living with their Long-Term Foster Carers.
- 2.31 Within the last year the Fostering Service has been through a significant reorganisation. This reorganisation has brought the 'Family Finding' function together with the Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Team (FRAT) creating a more streamlined approach to matching and ensuring that recruitment and assessment of carers is informed by knowledge and understanding of the needs of the children in our care and for whom we are hoping to secure permanence.
- 2.32 This approach has resulted in strengthening working relationships, increasing knowledge of the different functions within fostering and ensuring all professionals within the service understand and take responsibility for securing permanence within the remit of their individual roles.

- 2.33 The Family Finding function within the Fostering Service is predominantly undertaken by a team of 4 Family Finding Social Workers (3 x Full Time Equivalents) who are responsible for searching, identifying and matching foster carers and placements which fully meet the needs of children who require Long Term Fostering. The search will include giving consideration to the child/young person's needs and how best these can be met including managing risk and keeping children safe.
- 2.34 The Family Finding Social Workers lead and coordinate the matching process holding six weekly Long Term Planning Meetings (LTPM's) together with the child's/young person's social worker, the fostering social worker, the child (if appropriate), the foster carer and any other professional as required. This meeting takes into account the views of all relevant parties including the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The LTPM's are held regularly and until the match between child and carer is clear at which point a Matching Meeting is held.
- 2.35 Prior to the restructure of the Fostering Service all proposed matching considerations were presented to Foster Panel for recommendation of approval. This process was identified as being overly bureaucratic and potentially causing delay in implementing the child's care plan for permanence. This task has now been removed from core Panel business and is quality assured by the Team Manager, Service Manager and then presented to Decision Maker (in Cambridgeshire this is delegated to the Lead Corporate Parenting Manager) for consideration and approval. The reasons for these changes were informed by the Care planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015.
- 2.36 At the beginning of April 2019 Family Finders were working with 110 children who had a plan for permanent fostering. Since this time Family Finding have matched 51 children, and are actively family finding for 89 children. An additional 36 children had care plans for long-term fostering but these children were not yet ready to be matched.

### **Placement Stability**

- 2.37 As stated above, it is important that children in care are afforded stability, security and a true sense of belonging if they are to grow up reaching their full potential. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is through high quality support to children and their foster carers. It is crucial to avoid placement disruptions and the subsequent moves for children. The experience of this can have lasting and devastating consequences for children and young people. If the right type of support or intervention can be offered, at the right time and at the right frequency the number of children at risk of placement breakdown could be significantly reduced.
- 2.38 Additionally, by increasing the intensity of provision to existing in-house foster carers during times of placement instability and crisis will encourage carers to persevere, feeling supported and valued as a member of the team around the child. This in turn will increase placement stability and reduce the reliance on

the Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's).

- 2.39 The Reunification and Placement Stability Service (RAPS) currently offers placement stability support to children and their foster carers. However, this is limited due to capacity of the service. It is therefore proposed that RAPs and the fostering service work together to extend and develop this offer to introduce a tiered level of available support. In order to achieve this, the RAPs service will require additional staffing. Funding for this will be identified from the Transformation Fund in the first instance, however it is anticipated that this work will lead to significant savings in the future.
- 2.40 Achieving placement stability increases positive outcomes for children and young people across all areas of their lives including education settings, access to health care and being connected to their community. Once achieved a 'step down' to less intensive care or reunification can be considered. This offer alongside existing support to carers will increase both resilience and retention of foster carers.

### **3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 Resource Implications**

The Transformation Funding is being used to fund a wide range of fostering carer recruitment and retention activity. It is also proposed that it should be used

#### **3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

N/A

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

Under section 22G of the Children Act 1989 Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that there is a sufficient quantity, range and choice placements to meet the needs of all children who need to be cared for by the Local Authority.

#### **3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications**

As above.

#### **3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications**

The fostering service is working closely with Corporate Communications in order to engage with the public and to recruit and retain foster carers.

#### **3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

Members are asked to support recruitment and retention activities where possible

### 3.7 Public Health Implications

Source Documents	Location
None	





**LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **Kate Knight  
Lead Corporate Parenting Manager**

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

*Purpose:* **To update the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on the implementation of the Local Offer for Care Leavers. This was developed to respond to changes to Leaving Care Services arising from the Children and Social Work Act 2017, including the newly articulated ‘Corporate Parenting Principles’, the extension of Personal Adviser support to all under-25 year olds with Care Leaving status and specifically the requirement to develop a ‘local offer’ for care leavers.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is recommended to:**

- a) note the implementation and development of Cambridgeshire’s Local Offer to Care Leavers and support awareness and implementation of the offer within and with the partners of the Council;**
- b) consider how Elected Members might wish to be involved and/or champion the offer for Cambridgeshire’s care leavers;**
- c) Encourage partners to continue to engage with the development and implementation of Cambridgeshire’s Local Offer to Care Leavers.**

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## **Summary:**

The aim of this new duty is to protect care leavers aged 21 to 25 from feeling isolated, not having anybody to turn to for advice or support or continuing to struggle with the move to adult life. Local Authorities are Corporate Parents to care leavers up to the age of 25 and should support them in a way which is in line with the way birth parents support their own children as they grow up, helping them move towards an independent life.

We have redesigned our care leaving teams as a dedicated service for care leavers. We have created a service focusing on supporting our children in care to become successful adults. To support this we now have four personal advisors attached to the children in care teams, to work just on supporting the young person with their independent passport and all actions requiring this specialist service. We have developed two strong care leaving teams based in the North and the South of the County and we have increased our personal advisor capacity so that we can meet the requirements of our extended duties to deliver a service to all qualifying young people with Care Leaving status up until the age of 25 years. We have also increased our social work capacity in the teams in order to develop a clear review process of the pathway plans for all our care leavers. We have developed a specialist training pathway for our staff and we are focusing on transition planning and improving the quality of our pathway plans.

In accordance with legislation we have developed and published Cambridgeshire's 'Local Offer' and we are working hard to develop this. Cambridgeshire's Local Offer is designed to provide all the information a young adult with Care Leaver status might need in one easily accessible place. The website Pathways4US can be found at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/children-s-social-care/care-leavers-local-offer/>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 has successively strengthened the responsibility of public bodies to children in care and young adults with Care Leaver status. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 further improves support for looked after children and strengthens the duty and responsibility of all Local Authorities, including District Councils and organisations providing support and services for children and young people.
- 1.2 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 states that Councils and partner organisations must have regard to a set of Corporate Parenting Principles when exercising their functions. This applies to the whole Council and not just to children's services and to all Care Leavers up to the age of 25 years. This legislation also applies to officers and Members alike. While the offer has extended the duties, the emphasis is on supporting young person to make a successful transition to adulthood. This can be directly or by helping the young person build a positive social network around them. This involves ensuring these young people are connected and stable in their community. In order to achieve this each young person needs to live in stable and suitable

accommodation, be able to access education, employment and or training and feel secure in their identity and emotional wellbeing. The personal advisors job is to coordinate the support the young person needs, until they can manage this themselves. We expect with the young person's growing maturity and independence that the support they will need will reduce over time.

- 1.3 Cambridgeshire's Local Offer is based on a needs led assessment with the young person and this varies according to their age.
- 1.4 For care leavers between the age of 16 and 17 the local authority is under an absolute duty to accommodate them, as well as providing them with a personal advisor.
- 1.5 For care leavers aged 18 to 20, there is a proactive duty on the local authority to keep in touch with care leavers (section 23 C (2) of the Children 1989 Act), which does not apply to care leavers aged 21 or over (neither those who are already entitled to support because they are in education or training, nor those who will be covered by the new duty).
- 1.6 For care leavers aged 21 or over, the duties in the Children Act 1989 introduced through the Children and Social Work Act – to assess care leavers' needs, and develop and keep under review a pathway plan – applies only where the young person requests support.
- 1.7 Therefore, the new duty does not necessarily mean that the local authority needs to provide the same level of support to care leavers aged 21 to 25 as it does those aged 18 to 20. The new duty does however, enable local authorities to respond positively to requests from care leavers aged 21 to 25 who may continue to be struggling with adult life.
- 1.8 Cambridgeshire currently supports 350 young adults with Care Leaver status. At the time of writing we have 769 Children in Care. Since offering our extended duties we have had a mixture of young people accessing support for a variety of needs. This has included help with accessing higher education, housing, mental health and financial worries. We have assessed each need on an individual basis and offered support and advice as appropriate. When a young person reaches the age of 21 and if they are not in Higher Education, their personal advisor will discuss with them whether they wish to continue to receive support post 21. Where they do not want support their pathway plan will be updated to reflect their current needs. If they do want a service they can request this up and to the age of 25.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

### **2.1 Corporate Parenting Principles**

We are looking for a whole system change which would fully embed the Corporate Parenting Principles. We see the Local Offer as 'part of the day job'. All staff within the Corporate Parenting Service should be aware of the Offer and what it entails and how they can support young people to access it.

We are aware, that many care experienced children, can see their 18th birthday as a difficult time. Our young people have told us that they do not feel prepared to leave care and are often not given the right information or advice in order to support this transition. Young people have little faith in their pathway plans and often can't see the point in them. The personal advisor role attached to the children in care teams has been specially designed to avoid this fear and experience. The social work posts in the leaving care teams have been specially designed to support this transition and ensure that pathway plans are continually reviewed and relevant post 18.

Our aim is to fully support and prepare our children in care so that they are able to manage appropriate transitions successfully. We start independence and transition planning at 14 years old. These steps should be based around education or training choices and options. So for example, if we have children living out of county in residential settings under 16, we should be actively supporting them to come back in county for education, employment or training options in year 12. This means supporting them to attend local open evenings for sixth form or college or applying for apprenticeships in year 10 and 11. We then need to link their accommodation options which will support them accessing these choices. We want young people to be well prepared and in control of their care plans. Cambridge Housing Association and Break, Staying Close Staying Connected, offer outreach support for young people who will be moving to them in the future.

If young people are settled in foster care we want to inform them of their options post 16, including staying put and ensuring that they have the right information in order to make informed choices. Their pathway plans need to be up to date and reflective of young people's plans and options. We are aiming for smooth transitions into the leaving care teams when the time is right for the young person. Where young people are struggling, they will have access to our specialist personal advisors, to help them access further support and advice.

We intend to influence local authority culture so that all staff and departments within it consider the impact of their work for children and young people for whom the local authority is a Corporate Parent. We want to spread the message, that aspiring for and investing in these young people now will create independent and successful citizens for Cambridgeshire in the future.

The Principles state that local authorities (including county, district, borough and combined authorities) must 'have regard to the need' to take certain actions in their work for children in care and care leavers.

These are:

- To act in their best interests and promote their physical and mental health and well-being
- To encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account their views, wishes and feelings
- To help them gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

- To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for them
- For them to be safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

This reinforces the established understanding that Corporate Parenting responsibilities extend beyond the County Council to its statutory partners and the Act seeks to further consolidate this through the formulation of the Council's local offer.

### **3.0 The Local Offer for Care Leavers**

A successful bid was made to the transformation fund in the summer of 2019 and we are delighted to have been awarded the monies for a fixed term 12 month contract for a specialist personal advisor dedicated to the local offer. Joe Gilbert has been in place since the beginning of October and has already started making great strides in this area.

Our ambition for Cambridgeshire County Council is to develop a Kite Mark status to be care aware – this will encourage the Council, its partners and local business to consider our children in care and care leavers at all opportunities. The Offer currently incorporates what we and our current partners offer to care leavers in preparing for adulthood and independent living.

### **4.0 Developing Cambridgeshire's Local Offer**

The Local Offer is designed to provide all the information a young adult with Care Leaver status might need in one easily accessible place and also to link them with relevant opportunities in the community. We have recently put in place a team of three Specialist Personal Advisors to pioneer this, each Specialist PA has their own remit. Philip Turton is focusing on Homelessness Prevention. Rebecca McCallum is focusing on engaging our Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training and Joe Gilbert is developing relationships with local businesses in the community to provide additional opportunities such as securing workplace opportunities, Care Leaver discounts or sponsorship funding. This aspirational approach is unique to Cambridgeshire County Council and should provide an exciting opportunity to develop a really strong support infrastructure for our young people. In the month since this approach has been adopted we have already managed to secure £3,000 funding to purchase bicycles for our Care Leavers to enable them to access education, employment and training and also agreed large discounts for Care Leavers for furniture costs when setting up their homes.

Over the next year as we develop our Care Leavers offer from its initial foundations to a well-established support network our website will evolve to reflect this, with the latest developments being put on as they happen, keeping our Local Offer current and relevant.

### **2.4 Education, Employment and Training**

We currently have 34% of our 16 to 21 cohort of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Of the young people that are NEET 33% (out of the 34% total) are in categories of “not yet ready” and 12% are categorised as NEET due to their self-reported “mental health needs”, in other words 45% of our NEETS are some considerable way from the job market. This is the cohort that we need to focus on getting ready for the job or training market.

Rebecca McCullum, Specialist PA has been working with the Virtual School and a number of programmes to try and support our children in care and care leavers in order to get ready for the education or labour market. She has been working with Beat Learning to develop a brand new training programme based in Cambridge. This will offer a bespoke learner engagement programme, for which our Children in Care and Care Leavers will be prioritised. The recruitment day was held on the 1 November 2019, with the aim to start young people the following week. Beats are also running the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme in Peterborough. This is well attended by our unaccompanied children. This is an area which will need a significant amount of resource in the future in order to significantly improve our NEET figures for our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

Rebecca attends the County Council Apprenticeship offer meeting and there is a plan to try and develop opportunities for our care leavers within this. This will involve supporting young people getting ready for apprenticeships, work experience, traineeships and possibly apprenticeships (adult care and disabilities). The next meeting is on 11 November 2019. Rebecca has also met with the manager of Nacro training centre in Wisbech in order to support the review of their learning offer for our Children in Care and Care Leavers. She is also leading on the development of the cohort of K9 walk your worries away.

## **2.5 Education, Training and Employment (ETE) (66% of 16-21 CIC/care leavers)**

### **Further education**

Numbers in post 16 further education continue to increase. At the start of the academic year we had a record 66% (of the 66% ETE total) of our Children in Care and Care Leavers studying in either a school sixth form or a Further Education college. Large numbers of these are concentrated at Peterborough Regional College and Cambridge Regional College so continuing to build on the close working relationship with these colleges is essential. Approximately 80 starter stationary packs were distributed to young people semi-independent/independent living prior to starting their educational placements.

## **2.6 Higher Education**

Nine Level 3 learners attended the Care Leaver Pathways to University day with Anglia Ruskin University. The day included sessions on: Why go to university, getting started on your personal statement, support services and a chance to look round on a normal working day.

Six young people started at University this autumn and in a bid to improve retention have been offered a £50 voucher if they supply their personal advisors with their first semester assignment and exam marks. They are also being offered support with any other issues they may have such as student finance, accommodation etc. We have 13 young people already at university and one of these has just started a master's course. One adult from the September's figures has just finished her masters and is applying for work.

## **2.7 Mentoring Project**

We have visited Luton Borough Council to view their mentoring scheme. We have identified ten young people in collaboration with Cambridge Regional College to be mentored under this scheme. The next step is to secure funding for this project.

## **2.8 Aspiration Audit**

The plan is to collate the aspirations of the current year 9 cohort of Children in Care and develop opportunities that enable them to explore these career fields further. This was launched to foster carers at the virtual school foster carers conference.

## **2.9 Preventing homelessness - Rough Sleeping Strategy**

The Specialist Housing Personal Advisor has now been recruited and has been in position for six weeks. Initial scoping has taken place and work has begun on developing the joint housing protocol. The scope of the role is reducing homelessness for our care leaving cohort and reducing the risk of homelessness for our Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The Specialist Housing Personal Advisor is currently working alongside the Children in Care team workers and the leaving care workers to review the transition process to ensure that housing vulnerabilities are identified and addressed when transition plans are being proposed.

The role is also to support, assist and advise on all housing issues while being the point of contact for all local agencies. To coordinate a county wide multi agency approach to homeless prevention and to identify and support all young people who may be at risk of homelessness

The Lead Corporate Parenting Manager is completing a monthly audit of all children who have been subjected to three plus moves. This is to support an evaluation of placement stability throughout the service and to identify children or young people who need additional support either now or in the future.

## 2.10 Governance

A steering group is being developed which will require members from a wide variety of sectors. This will feed into the corporate parenting governance boards which are also being developed.

## 3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Resource Implications – 12 month fixed term contract currently funded by the transformation fund.
- 3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications NA  
None
- 3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications  
None
- 3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications  
None
- 3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
None
- 3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
None
- 3.7 Public Health Implications  
None

Source Documents	Location
None	None



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TRAINING**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 November 2019**

*From:* **Anna Cullen, Principal Social Worker  
Lesley Liston, Senior Learning and Development Advisor,  
LGSS**

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

*Purpose:* **The Sub-Committee has requested regular updates on  
workforce development issues.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is recommended to note and  
comment on the report.**

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**Summary:**

Since the last update to the Sub-Committee in March 2019 there have been a number of developments affecting workforce development, some of which members of the Sub-Committee will already be aware.

This includes the re-alignment of Assistant Directors across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, leading to a reallocation of key roles and responsibilities. Workforce Development now falls under the responsibility of Nicola Curley who will prioritise updating the Workforce Development Strategy to unify both authorities.

The workforce are in the process of training for and embedding the Family Safeguarding Model across Cambridgeshire. This will improve outcomes for children, particularly as one of the successes of the model in other authorities has been to keep larger numbers of children safely at home with their families.

The Social Work Apprenticeship has finally started to be rolled out across the country, with our Cambridgeshire County Council apprenticeships about to start in early December 2019.

The new social work regulator, Social Work England, will take over from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) on 5th December 2019, giving clearer standards, expectations and accountability of social workers.

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Sub-Committee was previously provided with the proposed plan of supporting staff through transition into a new structure in September 2018.
- 1.2 The Change for Children Programme led to a transformation of Children Services being launched in November 2018 and a follow up update was requested on our recruitment, retention and training by the Sub-Committee in March 2019.

**2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 As previously noted, each Local Authority is required to give information annually to the Department for Education about the numbers of social workers, vacancies and agency worker rates, which can then be compared with neighbouring authorities. For Cambridgeshire in 2018 (last set of available figures), we had a turnover rate of 17.9%, (15% in 2017) which compares with a regional rate of 14.00%. Our vacancy rate in 2018 was 13.7% (had been 17% in 2017) whereas the regional rate is worse than ours at 16.6%. In terms of percentage of agency staff, in 2018 we had a rate of 11.2% (16% in 2017) which was the same as the regional average rate, so an improvement for Cambridgeshire and comparable with neighbours. The Census is requested on 30 September each year, and the new data will be available nationally in the

New Year.

- 2.2 Currently, safeguarding teams in the north have 95% permanent staff with three vacancies, and 14 agency workers (21%). Safeguarding teams in the south have 94% permanent staff (was 67% in March of this year) with five vacancies and 11 agency workers (11%). The Corporate Parenting service (including Fostering) has 96% permanent staff in posts with four vacancies and 10 agency workers (5%). The Integrated Front Door has 92% permanent posts filled, with four vacancies and six agency workers (13%). Safeguarding and Quality Assurance has 97% permanent posts filled, with one vacancy and 4 agency workers (9%). Overall, this represents 94.8% of permanent posts filled, 17 vacancies and an agency worker rate of 11%. This is an improvement on our vacancy rate, and our agency worker rate appears to be roughly the same as the end of 2018.
- 2.3 To address the recruitment challenges this year, Cambridgeshire developed an award-winning recruitment campaign for social workers in both Children's and Adults services, with a tailored approach for each sector. This appears to be having a positive impact, reaching potential colleagues via social media. The focus for our recruitment team is now to streamline their 'onboarding' process, ensuring that colleagues can start work as smoothly and quickly as possible to minimise the time lag in filling any vacancies
- 2.4 We continue to recruit a proportion of Newly-Qualified social workers (NQSWs) into the Authority, and working with the Greater Cambridgeshire Social Work Teaching Partnership, we are developing a workforce projection model for the next few years, which will help us predict more accurately how many newly-qualified staff we need to recruit each year, which also ensures we have the right support in place to nurture this staff group and encourage them to remain within the Authority. There are currently 33 NQSW's undertaking the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) across Children's Services across three cohorts.
- 2.5 Our well-established ASYE programme continues to support new staff in the field, and our Step up to Social Work offer and Practice Educator training complement this for both newly-qualified staff and established practitioners who are looking to develop their careers. Our Social Work Apprenticeship programme will be commencing in Early December through the University of Warwick with assessment days by the University happening shortly. Additionally, Apprenticeships are also available in Leadership and Management and being developed for Children, Young People and Families practitioners.
- 2.6 With the change of remit for our Assistant Directors, the Workforce Development Strategy Group is now being chaired by Nicola Curley. The Group has just met for the first time in October and will focus on developing a Management Development pathway, recruitment and retention issues, developing a progression framework and career pathway.

- 2.7 All professionals have access to the Learning and Development pathway document for the Early Help and Social Work workforce. This document is being reviewed with Peterborough City Council to establish commonalities and necessary differences in the offer and will be approved by the Workforce Development Strategy Group. The offer will include mandatory training, specialist training opportunities as well as information on Apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications. Alongside face to face training there will be a blended learning offer including eLearning and online resources.
- 2.8 In terms of a practice model, Cambridgeshire is embracing the Family Safeguarding Model, developed in Hertfordshire and rolled out successfully in Peterborough in the past couple of years. This model focuses on direct work with families and aims to keep children safely at home where possible. It should reduce the numbers of children in care over time. Staff in Cambridgeshire are training at the moment to implement the new model, and are also being trained in one of its core skills, Motivational Interviewing. Alongside this, staff are also being trained to use the new Liquid Logic system. Both Family Safeguarding and Liquid Logic are rolling out in January 2020, which, whilst both positive developments in themselves, does represent a major change for staff.
- 2.9 On a national basis, the new social work regulator, Social Work England, comes into effect on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Social workers will transfer over automatically from the HCPC, and will be required to maintain their professional development records online with the regulator on a regular basis. Staff will be required to espouse a new set of professional standards, specific to the profession.

### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

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

There are no significant implications for this priority.

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

There are no significant implications for this priority.

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

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

n/a

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	

# CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD AGENDA PLAN

Published 11 November 2019

**Agenda Item No: 13**

## Summary

The Forward Agenda Plan shows the dates and times of future meetings, where they will be held and what reports will be considered.

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports to Sarah-Jane Smedmor	Approved reports to Democratic Services by
<b>Wednesday 20 November 2019 – 4.00pm – Room 128, Shire Hall, Cambridge - Theme: Stability and Permanence</b>					
	Minutes and Action Log	Democratic Services	Not applicable		
	Performance Report (standing item)	K Knight	Not applicable		
	Sub-Committee Workshop/ Training Plan (standing item)	F van den Hout	Not applicable		
	Young People's Participation (standing item)	C Betteridge	Not applicable		
	Education Transport for Children in Care and Care Leavers	C Buckingham	Not applicable		
	A Guide to Corporate Parenting for Members	F van den Hout	Not applicable		

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports to Sarah-Jane Smedmor	Approved reports to Democratic Services by
	Independent Review Officers' Annual Report: April 2018-March 2019	Olly Grant	Not applicable		
	Fostering Service Update	J Heron	Not applicable		
	Update on the Local Offer ( <i>bi-meeting update</i> )	K Knight	Not applicable		
	Workforce Development ( <i>quarterly standing item</i> )	A Cullen and L Liston	Not applicable		
	Agenda Plan	Democratic Services	Not applicable		
<b>Wednesday 15 January 2020 – 4.00pm – Room 128, Shire Hall, Cambridge - Theme: Health</b>					
	Minutes and Action Log	Democratic Services	Not applicable		
	Virtual School  <i>i. Un-validated exam results</i>	C Hiorns	Not applicable		
	Performance Report ( <i>standing item</i> )	K Knight	Not applicable		
	Sub-Committee Workshop/ Training Plan ( <i>standing item</i> )	F van den Hout	Not applicable		
	Young People's Participation ( <i>standing item</i> )	C Betteridge	Not applicable		

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports to Sarah-Jane Smedmor	Approved reports to Democratic Services by
	Workforce Development (quarterly standing item)	S-J Smedmor	Not applicable		
	Delayed health assessments for Children in Care accommodated outside of Cambridgeshire	M Mayes, CCS	Not applicable		
	Draft Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Annual Report 2018/19	Sarah-Jane Smedmor	Not applicable		
	Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers Task and Finish Group report and recommendations	P Parker	Not applicable		
	Agenda Plan	Democratic Services	Not applicable		
<b>Wednesday 25 March 2020 – 4.00pm – venue tbc</b>					
	Minutes and Action Log	Democratic Services	Not applicable		
	Performance Report (standing item)	K Knight	Not applicable		
	Sub-Committee Workshop/ Training Plan (standing item)	F van den Hout	Not applicable		
	Young People's Participation (standing item)	C Betteridge	Not applicable		

Committee date	Agenda item	Lead officer	Reference if key decision	Deadline for draft reports to Sarah-Jane Smedmor	Approved reports to Democratic Services by
	Refreshed NEET Strategy: Reducing the number of Children in Care who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (Six month update report)	M Cowdell	Not applicable		
	Agenda Plan	Democratic Services	Not applicable		
<b>Wednesday 20 May 2020 – 4.00pm – venue tbc</b>					
	Notification of the Chair and Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2020/21				
	Minutes and Action Log	Democratic Services	Not applicable		
	Performance Report (standing item)	K Knight	Not applicable		
	Sub-Committee Workshop/ Training Plan (standing item)	F van den Hout	Not applicable		
	Young People's Participation (standing item)	C Betteridge	Not applicable		
	Workforce Development (quarterly standing item)	S-J Smedmor	Not applicable		
	Child and Adolescent Mental Health issues for Cambridgeshire's Children in Care: Update (bi-meeting update)	P Parker	Not applicable		
	Agenda Plan	Democratic Services	Not applicable		



**Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee Workshop and Training Plan 2017/18**

**Summary**

Each committee at the County Council has its own training plan to help its members learn more about the business that the Committee covers. Each training session is listed and a record is kept of which members of the committee attend.

	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Desired Learning Outcome/ Success Measures</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Nature of Training</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Attendance by:</b>	<b>% of Elected Members Attending</b>
1.	We are all Corporate Parents	To discuss councillors' role and responsibilities as Corporate Parents.	High	12.01.18	<i>Fiona MacKirdy, Head of County Wide and Looked After Children</i>	Seminar	All county councillors	Cllr Bradnam Cllr Costello Cllr Cuffley Cllr Every Cllr Hay Cllr Joseph Cllr Whitehead  (only members and subs of CPSC shown)	80%
2.	Looked After Children and Care Leavers	To brief Members on all areas of the Council's work in relation to looked after children and care leavers	High	11.04.18	<i>Jacqui Barry, Service Development Manager, District Safeguarding Manager</i>	Presentation and discussion	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee members	Cllr Every Cllr Hay Cllr Bradnam Cllr Richards Cllr Cuffley	80%
3.	Safeguarding training and visit to the Multi-	To refresh and update Members'	High	11.04.18	<i>Lou Williams, Service Director,</i>	Presentation, tour of	Children and Young People	Cllr Every Cllr Hay	60%

	Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	safeguarding training and offer them the chance to see first-hand the work being done at the MASH.			Jenny Goodes, Head of Service – <i>Integrated Front Door</i>	facilities and discussions with staff	Committee and Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee members and substitute members	Cllr Bradnam Cllr Cuffley	
4.	Corporate Parenting Strategy refresh	To discuss corporate parenting strategies going forward.	High	12.06.18	Jacqui Barry	Workshop	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee members	Cllr Every Cllr Hay	40%
5.	Fostering	To meet Service Managers and discuss current practice and future developments.	Medium	<del>24.07.18</del> 17.04.19	John Heron, Residential and Placements Provision Manager	Presentation/ workshop	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee members	Cllr Every Cllr Bradnam Cllr Richards	60%
6.	Mental Health	To include developmental trauma and mental health, parent infant mental health, school aged children, adolescence and mental health and resilience	High	22.01.19	Pam Parker, Clinical Psychology Lead	Presentation and Workshop	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee members	Cllrs Bradnam, Costello and Every	60%
7.	The Local Offer for Care Leavers/ Access to Universal Credit and benefits for care leavers	To brief Members on the Local Offer and benefits available to care leavers	Medium	14.06.19	Kate Knight, Lead Corporate Parenting Manager/ DWP officers	Members' Seminar	All Members	Cllrs Ashwood, Bailey, Boden, Bradnam, Bywater, Costello, Count, Criswell,	80%

								Every, French, Gowing, Hay, Hunt, Rogers, Sanderson, Wotherspoon	
8.	Developments in Children and Safeguarding Services – Family Safeguarding	To brief Members on service developments and provide an overview of District Safeguarding work	High	TBC					
9.	Permanence planning for children	To brief Members on the importance of permanence planning for children and the different types of arrangements including concurrency	High	03.10.19	Kate Knight Lead Corporate Parenting manager/Julie Ann Saunders	Training session	Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee members		
10.	Accommodation provisions for Children in Care and Care leavers	To brief Members on the variety of provisions available for Children in Care and Care Leavers	Medium	TBC	Access to Resources TBC				
11.	The Role of the Personal Advisor and update on the Local Offer	To brief Members of the role of the Personal Advisors and specialist PA roles in the context of the Local offer and opportunity to meet with PA's	Medium	TBC	Kate Knight lead Corporate Parenting Manager				

