

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

28 APRIL 2018

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

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Summary

The report summarises progress made on the LAC Strategy Action Plan and outlines the programme of work for the Corporate Parenting Board in 2016-17. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note progress and support ongoing implementation.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Corporate Parenting is a high priority for government who have regulated the duties of Councils towards the children in its care through legislation and guidance. This has been reinforced through the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Care Planning, Placement and Review Guidance 2011 and Care Leavers Regulations 2010
- 1.2 Medway Corporate Parenting Board has responsibility to support and challenge the Council in its responsibilities to children in care and care leavers. It is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services

2. Background

- 2.1 Medway Children's Services has been working to an Improvement Plan, overseen by an External Board and the DFE. Following an Ofsted inspection in 2015, services were graded Requires Improvement, and the Minister agreed to lift the Improvement Notice and end the role of the External Board. Children's Services are now subject to a period of supervision from the DFE.
- 2.2 In response to the Ofsted recommendations, a Medway Strategy for Action 'Together We Can' has been produced and submitted to Ofsted for agreement. This strategy includes actions aimed at improving practice and meeting the needs of Medway's Looked After Children and Care Leavers. These actions will be overseen by the Corporate Parenting Board and the attached work plan reflects the priorities in the overarching strategy.

3. Advice and analysis

3.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Health and Wellbeing Board members to read and discuss the progress update and note the revised and updated programme of activity for the Corporate Parenting Board.

3.2 There are no policy or structure implications

4. Engagement activity

4.1 Representatives of the Children in Care Council attend the Corporate Parenting Board and have opportunity to contribute to the planning and progress review.

5. Risk management

5.1 Failure to make required progress in relation to the improving practice for looked after children and care leavers presents a risk to the Council in relation to future Ofsted inspection grading.

6. Consultation

6.1. The action plan has been developed and agreed by Corporate Parenting Board and presented to Health and Wellbeing Board for comment. Regular reports are also made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7. Financial and legal implications

7.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this paper other than ongoing support for statutory duties and functions.

7.2 Colleagues from legal services have reviewed the plan.

8. Recommendation

8.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the progress made and agree to support the continued implementation of the LAC Strategy.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan 2016-2017

Background Papers

None

Corporate Parenting Board – Annual Work Plan 2016-7

1. Introduction

Corporate Parenting is a high priority for government who have regulated the duties of Councils towards the children in its care through legislation and guidance. This has been reinforced through the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Care Planning, Placement and Review Guidance 2011 and Care Leavers Regulations 2010.

Medway's Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services, who has undertaken this function since May 2013. Since January 2014, representatives from the Children in Care Council (CiCC) have attended every CPB meeting for a standing item to share their news and issues, as well as being supported to offer challenge and contribution to the work of the group.

The core purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board is outlined in the Terms of Reference

- To ensure that Medway Council and its partner agencies effectively discharge their duties towards looked after young people and care leavers.
- To ensure young people are supported, through a variety of methods, to communicate their needs, wishes and feelings about the care they receive to Elected Members.
- To ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board is proactive in securing better outcomes for looked after children through appropriate challenge, engagement and discussion with Officers, partner agencies and other Elected Members.

The challenge and scrutiny role of the Board is focused on driving the overarching Looked after Children (LAC) Strategy 2015-2018. This Strategy was revised and updated in January 2015 including young people's input from the Children in Care Council. It brings together actions and priorities in the form of the LAC Strategy Action Plan. These are based on priorities from the Medway Strategy for Action, a joint plan for Children's Services, and recommendations from the August 2014-January 2015 Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Group focussing on improved outcomes for Care Leavers. The LAC Strategy has 8 key objectives which drives the work of the sub groups reporting to the main board.

This document provides an update on progress on the LAC strategy over the year 2015-2016, and proposes a plan for work for Corporate Parenting Board for the coming year 2016-2017.

2. Looked After Children Strategy Action plan

Objective 1 - Provide timely and high quality intervention to help children remain with or return to their families, as long as it is safe to do so.

What has been achieved?

The SMART team has been operational since November 2015, based within the Children's Advice and Duty Service. Their work is focused on supporting young people to remain with their families where safe to do so, or to return to their families if they come into care in a crisis situation. They also manage return interviews for young people who are missing and support young people at risk of homelessness.

Other support services for families include parenting programmes, family based interventions through IFSS, and increased use of Family Group Conferences.

Priority action for CPB in 2016-2017:

	Task	Impact	Baseline	RAG Oct 16	RAG March 17
1	Support the development of the SMART team and other edge of care services and track impact on numbers of children coming in to care	Improved work with families, parenting support and a reduction in the number of looked after children and young people	Number of LAC at end February 2016 is 455		

Objective 2: Provide and Commission the right mix of placements

What has been achieved?

The fostering service has realigned its functions to respond to enquiries in a timely way. Its approach to marketing has been reviewed, and the website updated. Recruitment is now targeted at specific needs areas, and a bespoke parent/child scheme has been developed. A children's guide to fostering has been produced involving young people, and will be uploaded onto the website and distributed to all foster carers.

The Access to Resources Panel is now fully operational, and is chaired by the Assistant Director. Use of Independent Foster placements continues to be high but use is closely monitored and care plans are reviewed to avoid drift and delay.

Priority action for CPB in 2016-2017:

	Task	Impact	Baseline	RAG Oct 16	RAG March 17
2	Monitor the success of the targeted recruitment campaign to recruit more Medway in-house foster carers and supported accommodation providers, and provide support to help retain existing carers	Choice and availability of placements in Medway is increasing	Number of Medway in house carers and supported accommodation providers		

Objective 3 – Promote timely permanence planning for all children to ensure they have opportunity of a stable , permanent home and long term relationships in a placement appropriate to their needs

What has been achieved?

Terms of Reference for the Permanence Panel have been reviewed and there is now a clear process in place to review all children who require a plan for permanence.

The fostering service has revised its process for assessment of Connected Carers and applicants for Special Guardianship, and these are now progressing in a more timely way

Priority action for CPB in 2016-2017:

	Task	Impact	Baseline	RAG Oct 16	RAG March 17
3	Ensure looked after children have a permanence plan in place as part of their Care Plan – receive reports as part of data set and hold service to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timescales for care proceedings and adoption/special guardianship orders are improving and meeting national targets • Permanency arrangements are in place in a timely way 	%age of LAC with an up to date Care or Pathway Plan 92% at end February 2016		

Objective 4 – Ensure that looked after children achieve their potential and can access suitable education, employment and training

What has been achieved?

In academic year 2014/14 the Virtual Head Teacher (VHT) or team graduate attended every summer Year 10 PEP to model good practice, review progress in Maths and English and agree tuition where required. Analysis of impact of 2014-15 pupil premium spend indicates that impact of tuition remains mixed. It is not always the most appropriate intervention. Tuition is most effective when it has precise time-limited targets and the Virtual Head teacher and a senior educational psychologist have reviewed every pupil premium request in 2015-16 to ensure that all interventions are appropriate and to offer advice and guidance when necessary.

Virtual school completed a PEP audit for end of academic year 2015/16. School judgements are now monitored through the Education and NEET sub group dashboard. The percentage of LAC in good or better schools is increasing. Any pupil in an inadequate or requires improvement school is monitored and supported. The Virtual School has introduced a NEET PEP tailored to the needs of young people aged 16-18. The Education and NEET subgroup monitors all PEPs through the data dashboard.

Priority action for CPB in 2016-2017:

	Task	Impact	Baseline	RAG Oct 16	RAG March 17
4	Ensure looked after children and young people have a PEP in place and are supported to achieve their individual progress targets	Children’s education outcomes are improving and the gap between looked after children and Medway children is reducing	% CLA pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent including English and Mathematics GCSEs		
5	Support young people leaving care to engage in education, training and	Young people are engaged in education employment and	Numbers of care leavers in education,		

	employment opportunities through apprenticeships, work opportunities, and interview support	training	<p>employment and training on their ¹19th, 20th and 21st birthdays (rolling 12 month figure)</p> <p>45.6% in employment, education or training at end February 2016</p> <p>86.3% in suitable accommodation at end February 2016</p>		
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Objective 5 – Improve the health and wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers

What has been achieved?

- Initial health assessments being completed within the statutory 28 day timescale have seen a significant improvement at times. However progress towards the 85% target remains inconsistent.
- The completion of Review Health Assessments continues to be consistently over the 85% performance measure.
- The completion of health histories remains an important feature of supporting Looked After Children into independence. A 100% of Health histories are now being completed within the agreed timescale.
- The employment of a dedicated administrator between the LAC team and nursing team is ensuring DNAs and cancellations are dealt with in a timely manner.
- Access to Frameworki for the LAC nursing team is supporting ease of access to information and data sharing which enables more effective scheduling of appointments and visits.
- The appointment of a dedicated leaving care nurse in January 2015 is enabling the needs of care leavers to be better understood. The positive impact of this role has been recognised in both Ofsted and CQC reports during 2015.

¹ From April 2017 this figure will include 17 and 18 year olds. This data has been required from April 2015 but the figure is reported on a rolling 12 month basis.

- Commissioning of the Open Road substance misuse service in response to an identified need is ensuring that LAC get the support they need at the time they need it by the right professional. Co-location at MHS Broadside is also ensuring ease of access for Children Service professionals to the Open Road service.

A review of Children's Services at MFT during 2015, including LAC health, has highlighted a number of inefficiencies which are currently being addressed. This includes increasing the leaving care nursing provision by ensuring that all nurses can deliver on this role and clarifying the activity levels in relation to health assessments and fostering and adoption medicals. Further work in these areas has led to a draft service specification for 2016/17 being agreed with the MFT team which will now go through a process of ratification. It is envisaged that this revised specification will form the basis of the service going forward from April 2017.

CAMHS:

- In 2015 additional funding was secured via Parity of Esteem monies to increase the availability of emotional health and welfare services for Children in Care. This has enabled the Oakfield Psychology Service to increase its provision from a case load of 30 to 80 at anyone time. The service now provides in addition to one to one consultations, group sessions, training and support for foster carers and residential staff as well as the production of court assessments in order to support permanency for children. This service is now Medway's main provider of emotional health and welfare services for Children in Care. There are currently no waiting times for this service.
- The Oakfield Psychology service has transferred from Medway Foundation Trust to being provided from a range of community settings around Medway. This is enabling ease of access for children and their carers as services can now be accessed closer to home.
- In September 2015 renewed funding was secured to ensure that the All Saints Children Centre continued to provide a post abuse and post sexual abuse service. In order to secure sufficient and appropriate referrals the service is now attending weekly meetings within the Tier 2 Single Point of Access. This is enabling multi-agency review of all new referrals to ensure that children receive the most appropriate service in a timely manner.
- Throughout 2015 monthly meetings were held with Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust who provide Medway's specialist Children in Care CAMHS service. This has enabled the council and the provider to resolve a number of issues related to performance and outcomes for Children in Care. Work is planned to continue in this area through the usual contract management processes.

Priority actions for CPB in 2016-2017:

	Task	Impact	Baseline	RAG Oct 16	RAG March 17
6	Ensure looked after children and care leavers can access timely physical and mental health services and are supported to make healthy lifestyle choices	Children's health outcomes are improving across a range of measures, including both physical and emotional health and wellbeing.	%age of Initial and Review health assessments completed in time		
7	Support the delivery of the Local Transformation Plan in line with Medway's Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy	A whole systems pathway designed to meet the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people, including provision for looked after children	Numbers of looked after children accessing CAMHS services		

Objective 6 – Ensure that the recommendations from the Support for Care Leavers Task Group are implemented

What has been achieved?

The LAC nurse for care leavers is in post and has worked with 57 young people since January 2015. The young people have benefitted from this service by ensuring immunisations are up to date, support with medical appointments, have access to the correct health and mental health services, support in managing any health conditions, sexual health and contraception advice, health promotion and health education, and ensuring they are registered with a G.P and Dentist.

A procurement process has been undertaken for supported accommodation which has raised quality standards.

The Princes Trust building is now available to the Leaving Care service and provides weekly drop in facility for care leavers. A range of programmes are available including healthy eating, sexual health, job seeking.

The NEET to EET group meets monthly to identify suitable opportunities for care leavers.

Priority actions for CPB in 2016-2017:

	Task	Impact	Baseline	RAG Oct 16	RAG March 17
7	Monitor progress on recommendations and receive regular reports	Care leavers have access to appropriate health services and accommodation to meet their needs and are supported to make an effective transition into adulthood	%age of care leavers with a health plan – 100% end Feb 2016 %age in suitable accommodation – 86.3% end Feb 2016 %age in education, training or employment – 45.6% in Feb 2016		

Objective 7 – Ensure that adoption is considered as a permanent option in a timely manner for young people where a return to birth family is not possible.

What has been achieved?

Permanence Panel has been meeting fortnightly to ensure all cases are considered in a timely way. The Terms of Reference have been reviewed with the aim that all children are presented to panel within 8 weeks of being accommodated, so plans can be put in place at the earliest opportunity, and to inform the 2nd LAC review.

The licence has been renewed for Linkmaker, a specialist adoption agency, to ensure access to the widest range of approved adopters to meet the individual needs of children.

Recruitment activity is ongoing and reviewed regularly

More than 20 applications have been made to the Adoption Support Fund with funding agreed to date of more than £116,000 and a number of further applications are currently being made. The Adoption Support Fund is now extended to include those with Special Guardianship Orders so we expect these numbers to increase and these families will have access to additional support.

Individually tailored one-to-one workshops on life story work have been offered by a social worker in the adoption team to any of the children’s social workers requesting it. There has been a good take up of this offer of support.

Priority actions for CPB in 2016-2017:

	Task	Impact	Baseline	RAG Oct 16	RAG March 17
8	Monitor progress on arrangements for regionalising adoption services	The Adoption Service will meet new regulations and access to a choice of placements will be maximised.			

Monitoring of Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan.

The plan will be monitored through regular reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board.