

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

25 APRIL 2017

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

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Summary

This report provides a briefing to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the role and challenge function of Medway's Corporate Parenting Board, the key focus and achievements over the last 12 months.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Corporate Parenting continues to be 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 Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and Care Leavers Regulations 2010.
- 1.2 Improving outcomes for Looked after Children features widely within the 'Council Plan'. Within the priority 'Children and young people have the best start in life in Medway', there are a number of key measures of success covering education and employment for care leavers, accommodation for care leavers, progress on adoption and educational outcomes for LAC.
- 1.3 The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) does not hold a budget, although it contributes in its scrutiny function towards achieving timely outcomes for children in care, including permanency arrangements, thereby reducing drift, delay and cost in the placements budget.

2. Background

- 2.1 This annual report to the Health & Wellbeing board provides the opportunity for review and challenge of the performance of CPB in relation to securing good outcomes for LAC.
- 2.2 Medway's CPB is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services.

2.3 The Terms of Reference of the CPB are being refreshed and the final version will be presented to the CPB on 19 April 2017 for consideration.

3. Structure of the Board and how it carries out its work

3.1 The CPB meets on a quarterly basis with three sub-groups reporting into the Board.

3.2 The three sub-groups are Education, Health of LAC and 16 Plus and Care Leavers, the latter having been established in early 2017 with the groups first meeting having taken place on 24 February 2017. The multi-agency sub-groups are chaired by a senior officer and meet as a minimum once between each CPB. The Chairs of the sub-groups are core members of the Board and have a standing item on progress made against actions.

3.3 Representatives from the Children in Care Council (CiCC) attend every CPB meeting to share their news and issues, as well as being supported to offer challenge and contribution to the work of the group.

3.4 The Lead Member for Children's Services, Director of Children and Adults, Deputy Director Children and Adults, Head of Provider Services, Head of Safeguarding and Virtual Head Teacher attend the Children in Care Council meetings, which are led and chaired by the young person who is chair of the CIC Council.

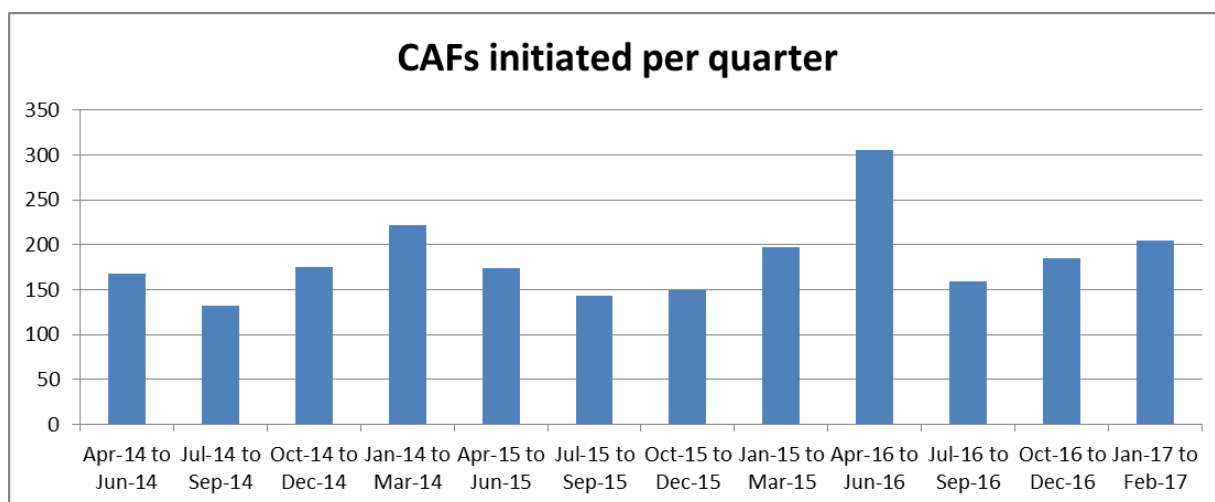
3.5 The CPB scrutinises a performance dashboard of data at each meeting in addition to the performance reports of each sub-group.

4. Membership

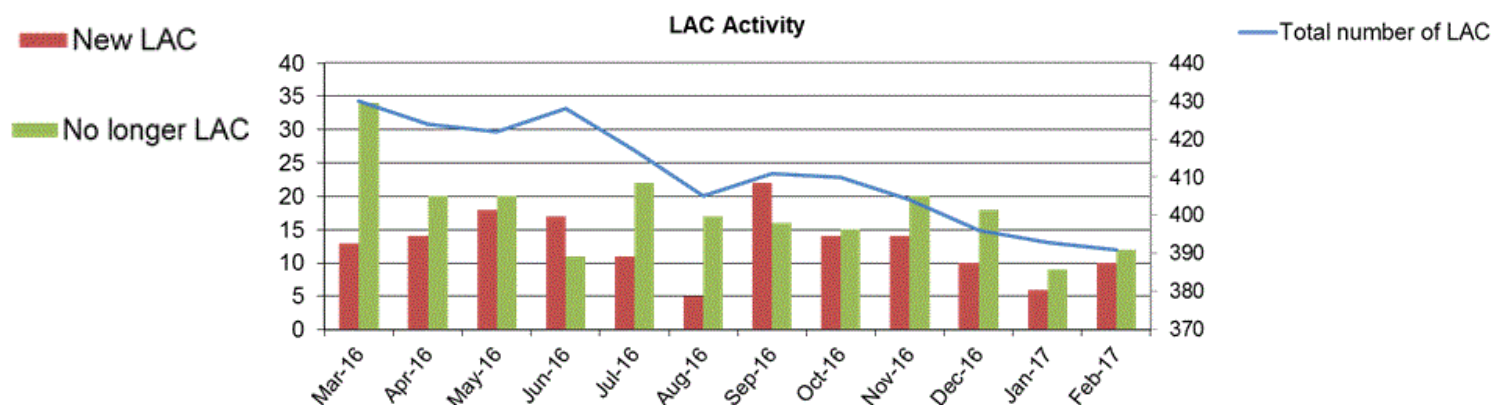
- Lead Member for Children's Services
- Vice Chair, Chair of Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Chair of Children in Care Council and Young Lives Apprentice
- Director Children and Adults,
- Deputy Director Children and Adults
- Head of Provider Services.
- Head of Safeguarding
- Elected Members as directed by the Cabinet Advisory Group
- LAC Health Lead
- Virtual Head Teacher
- Youth Offending Team representative
- CAMHS representative.
- Two foster carer representatives.
- One adopter representative.
- Other officers to be required to attend as necessary e.g. housing, further education, children's commissioning.

5. Board Achievements

- 5.1 The challenge and scrutiny role of the board is predominantly focused on driving the overarching Looked after Children Strategy 2015-2018. This Strategy was revised in Jan 2015 including young peoples input from the Children in Care Council.
- 5.2 The LAC Strategy has 8 key objectives which drives the work of the sub groups reporting to the main board.
- 5.3 **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.**
- 5.4 Children's needs are best served in their own families where this can be safely supported. Helping families stay together is best supported by early identification of need with effective early intervention. Early intervention and prevention services can over time reduce the number of children and young people needing to become looked after.
- 5.5 Success measures in this area include the extent to which Early Help has been mobilised and the volume, scale and quality of intervention undertaken with families. The graph below shows the number of Early Intervention Assessments (previously CAFs) carried out. In addition to our Intensive Family Support Service, these will also be undertaken by Schools, Health Care Professionals, Voluntary agencies and the wider group of partners.



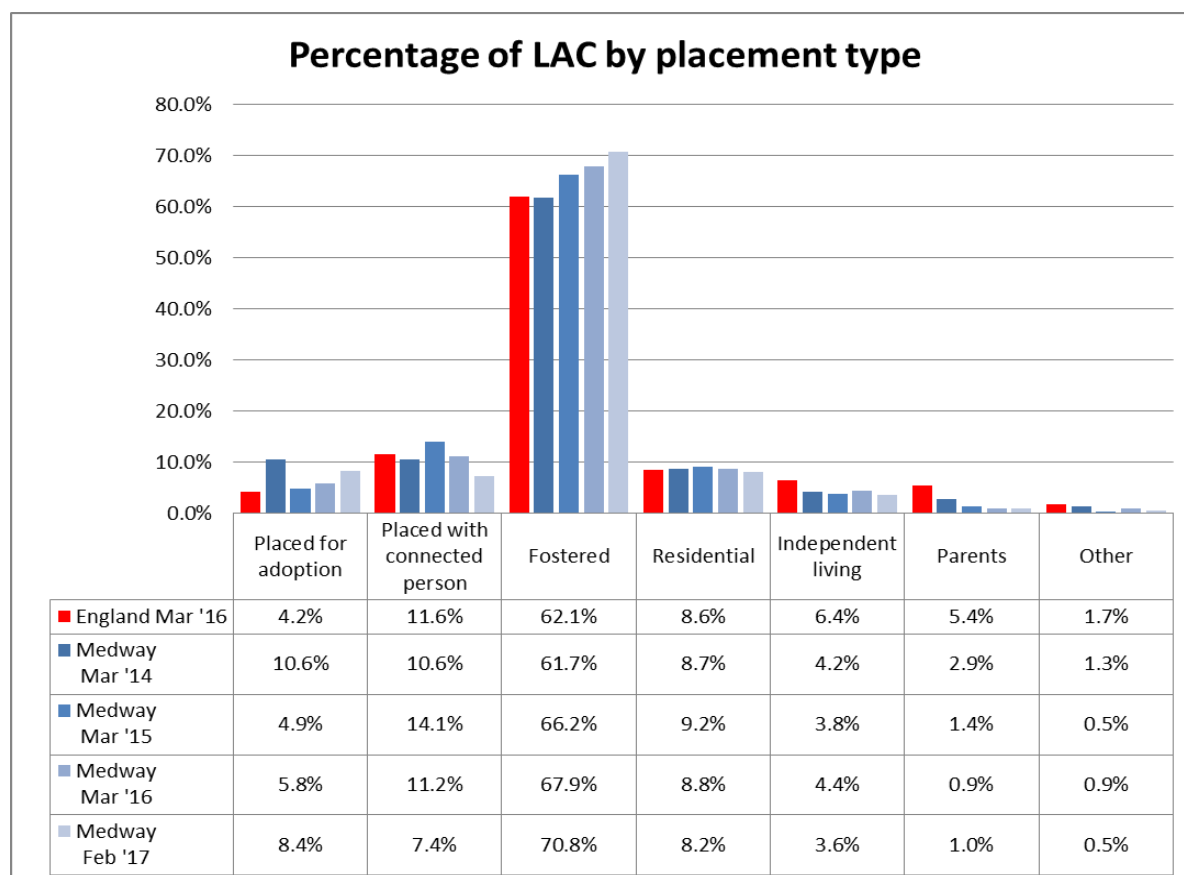
5.6 The below graph shows the overall numbers of looked after children. A number of measures are being put in place to further reduce the numbers of Looked After Children, including 'edge of care' initiatives to provide alternate ways to support young people in their families and prevent them coming into care.



5.7 **Objective 2 - Provide and commission the right mix of placements**

5.8 The CPB needs to assure itself that Medway has the right range of placements to meet the assessed needs of our LAC as outlined in our LAC Strategy and Sufficiency Strategy.

5.9 More of our young people are placed with connected carers and we value these placements as a way of supporting young people to stay within their families and communities.



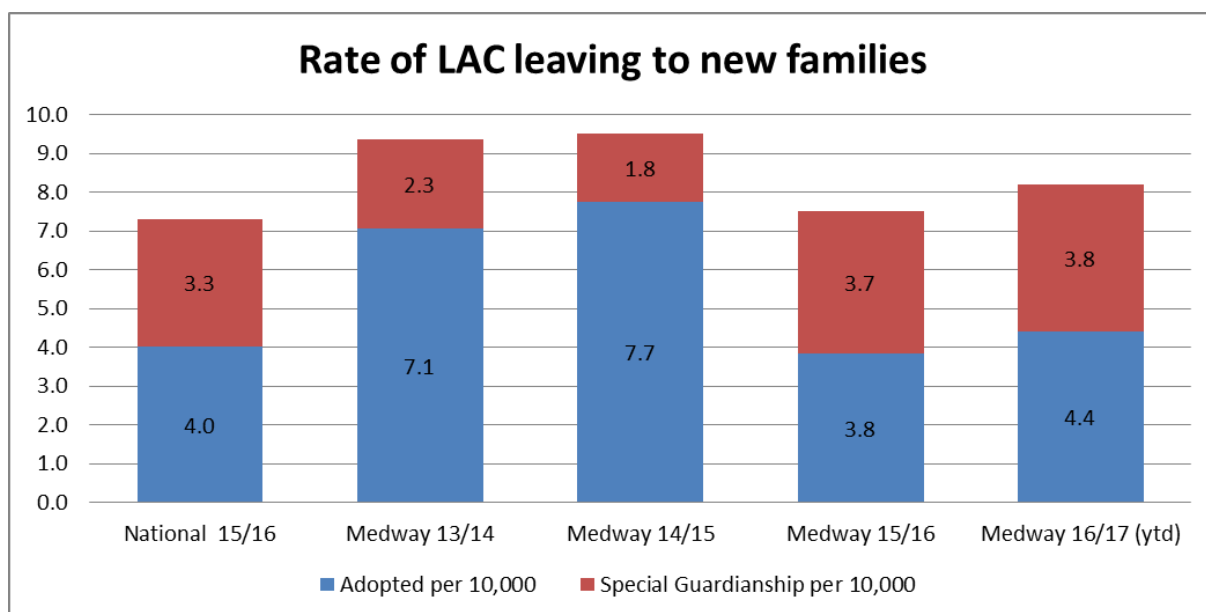
5.10 Attracting local people to become foster carers remains a key priority. Financial investment in the fostering service has been made to accelerate the recruitment and training of more local foster carers, for the next 3 years, to provide placements for Medway children.

| | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Placed by Medway within another LAs boundary. | 184 | 192 | 200 | 215 | 177 | 181 | 173 | 172 | 172 | 163 | 161 |

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

5.12 Increased scrutiny is in place to ensure permanence for LAC through adoption or other orders/alternative arrangements.

5.13 The rate of children leaving care to adoption or special guardianship continues to be higher than the national average. In 2016/17 to date (Apr 16 to Feb 17) 28 children were adopted and 24 went to special guardians to achieve a combined rate of 8.2 per 10,000 children against a national rate of 7.3 per 10,000.



5.14 The service remains highly ambitious to continue to address overall timescales for adoption and performance is now in line with local authorities in the South East.

5.15 Following Cabinet's agreement, in November 2016, to Medway entering into formal dialogue with a view to the establishment of a Regional Adoption Agency with local authority partners; London Borough of Bexley and Kent County Council, discussions are progressing regarding the proposal with a project manager being appointed.

5.16 Objective 4 - Ensure that looked after children and young people achieve their full potential and can access suitable education, employment or training.

5.17 The Virtual School Head reports regularly to Corporate Parenting Board on educational progress made by children in care across their current key stage.

5.18 Progress in key stages 3 and 4 compares well with national expectations. Performance is less strong at key stages 1 and 2 with one possible reason being that the majority of those in key stages 3 and 4 have been in care for a longer period, and that the benefits of stable care and the sustained ongoing support they receive from the Virtual School, including use of Pupil Premium, which has enabled their progress to accelerate.

5.19 As well as analysing the progress of year groups and key stages, the progress of individual children is tracked through the Virtual School and work of the sub-group and additional support is provided for individual children as required to promote continued progress.

5.20 Objective 5 - Improve the health and emotional well-being of looked after children and young people and care leavers

5.21 26 children became looked after by Medway Council between 1st January 2017 and 31 March 2017; of these, 21 had a completed initial health assessment within 28 days of their initial placement totalling 81%. The percentage of in date review health assessments for the same period is 91% and up to date dental assessments for the same period is 84%. Both of these figures meet national targets.

(In order to ensure accurate data reporting as of 1 April 2017, both health and children's social care will report on initial health assessments being completed within 28 days of young people coming into care. Due to differences in reporting periods between the 2 agencies there have been some discrepancies; however the change in reporting periods should ensure consistent data is now published).

5.22 Ensuring access to CAMHS services for all of our LAC remains a challenge, but additional resources have been allocated by the CCG to improve provision at Tiers 2 and 3. A Single Point of Access has been established.

5.23 Objective 6 - Aim to keep looked after young people and care leavers safe through the provision of trained, supported and motivated staff who understand and are alert to the potential for exploitation and abuse of young people and who take the right action at the right time.

5.24 New Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) templates and pro-forma (e.g. risk assessment, safety plans) have been rolled out to social work staff and professionals in all agencies to support them in identifying and taking the appropriate action where looked after children and young people are at risk of CSE. Indicators of risk of harm are grouped in the categories:

- Category 1 (At Risk): a vulnerable child who is at risk of being targeted and groomed for sexual exploitation;
- Category 2 (Medium Risk): a child who is targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex for drugs, accommodation (over night stays) and goods, etc. The likelihood of coercion and control is significant; and
- Category 3 (High Risk): a child whose sexual exploitation is habitual, often self defined and where coercion/control is implicit.

5.25 The CSE Screening Tool is used flexibly to take account of each child's individuality, the uniqueness of his/her circumstances and the changes that may occur for him/her over time. This enables the social worker to effectively plan, intervention and review a case. The tool is accessible to all agencies via the MSCB.

5.26 Medway has CSE champions throughout its Children's Safeguarding Services, managed by the Medway Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB), each of the Senior Social Workers in the Area Teams are CSE Champions, this role entails them attending regular CSE meetings to enhance their practice and ensure that the learning is disseminated back to all their colleagues in their social work area. Champions ensure that CSE awareness enables social workers to recognise the risk indicators of different forms of harm to children and young people "including sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect". Their role is to motivate services to be alert and responsive to risk.

5.27 External training has also been provided, and the co-location of the police and the social work teams affords better joint working and investigation. The framework for risk management of CSE includes monthly reviews of missing children and escalation processes when they have concerns.

5.28 The MSCB runs regular multi-agency **CSE training**, it ensures that the champions' training needs are prioritised to ensure Reflective Supervision and case direction – through the remodelling of the Children's Safeguarding Service and the formulation of the 15 Pod's in four Area's 1-4, (covering Medway Council, the ethos of reflective supervision/practice enables the social workers to bring different opinions, experiences and approaches. The social workers can share and learn from each other and are able to use the group supervision to consider the possibility of "child sexual exploitation" as one of a range of adult behaviours that can pose a risk to young people and then between them the pod members will assist the social worker in formulating an effective care plan.

5.29 Governance and coordination of information sharing, corporately and across the partnership, is further strengthened through the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Group and multi-agency co-located specialist CSE Investigation Unit.

5.30 Medway Children’s service has a special CSE alert flag that is input onto a child / young person’s file by the Practice Manager or area manager, once it has been established through the assessment tool that a child / young person is at risk or vulnerable to CSE. The flag alerts any potential worker to the vulnerabilities of the young person, so any intervention that takes place is mindful of the vulnerabilities of that young person. It also makes it clear to managers / IRO (independent reviewing officers, if applicable) which children/ young people are considered vulnerable and that the care plans reflect the level of concern and risk.

5.31 Multi Agency CSE meetings are chaired by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, the meetings runs monthly. The social worker, their line manager, and the Area manager (if applicable) attend the meeting with the completed specialist CSE risk assessment tool and the child’s care plan. The panel considers the risk to the young person and ensures that there is multi-agency shared intelligence on the young person and an effective safeguarding plan. The panel regularly reviews the cases brought to panel and ensures that previous recommendations are followed through. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that the profile of those young people and care leavers in Medway who are most vulnerable to exploitation have a ‘shared risk’ safety plan of intervention.

5.32 **Objective 7 - Prepare young people for a successful transition to adulthood**

5.33 Ensuring care leavers have access to opportunities for employment and education remains challenging and whilst Medway was in line with the national average in 15/16, we have dropped marginally below this for the 16/17year so far (Apr 16 to Jan 17).

| | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Care Leavers in employment, education or training on 19th, 20th or 21st birthday | National 15/16 | Medway 13/14 | Medway 14/15 | Medway 15/16 | Medway 16/17 (expected) |
| | 49% | 44% | 48% | 49% | 47% |

5.34 A Leaving Care Nurse works specifically with young people leaving care and make sure they can readily access their health history and support them with ongoing health needs. Care leavers also receive psychological support from Oakfields Psychological services.

5.35 A ‘Your Future, Your Choice’ booklet which outlines options around employment and training is provided to all care leavers.

5.36 Leaving Care work closely with Jobcentreplus to track and support young care leavers seeking work and those who are currently unable to seek work due to health related matters.

5.37 In respect of Care Leavers accessing suitable accommodation, Medway continues to maintain performance significantly above the national average.

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Care Leavers in suitable accommodation on 19th, 20th or 21st birthday | National 15/16 | Medway 13/14 | Medway 14/15 | Medway 15/16 | Medway 16/17 (expected) |
| | 83% | 78% | 89% | 90% | 89% |

- 5.38 The Leaving Care Team have worked closely with the Joint Commissioning Team and partners, to review accommodation provision for this group of young people and develop a commissioning strategy.
- 5.39 There are currently 8 young people aged 16-21 who are in custody either on remand or serving sentences. The Transition Panel for Complex young People is monitoring the plans for release and ensuring all relevant support is identified prior to release.
- 5.40 An increasingly high number of young people who are deemed sick/disabled are being offered support from the health team and Job Centre Plus, to work towards EET opportunities.
- 5.41 More focus will also be placed on ensuring plans for EET are considered earlier in a child's life by their Social Worker.
- 5.42 **Objective 8 Ensure that looked after children and care leavers' views and experiences inform current and future service delivery**
- 5.43 Each CPB meeting receives an update on the wide range of activities and work undertaken by the Children in Care Council and support from the Young Lives Foundation ensures that the young people contribute actively throughout, including decisions made.
- 5.44 More recently the Children in Care Council have presented the Pledge to the CPB and responses will be provided regarding progress on the actions requested in the Pledge.

6. Risk management

- 6.1 The key issue facing CPB in its oversight and challenge function is the capacity and financial pressures posed by the increase in LAC population on all service areas supporting looked after children, and ensuring that as effective corporate parents, this does not hinder the care, support, aspirations or continued improvement in outcomes for our children in care.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 The HWB is asked to consider and comment on the annual report and the effectiveness of the Corporate Parenting Board.

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Appendices

None.

Background papers

Corporate Parenting Board Draft Terms of Reference
Job Description - Child Sexual Exploitation Champions
Medway Council - Looked After Children Strategy 2015-2018
Medway Council Children's Services - Sufficiency Report 2016-17