

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**17 APRIL 2018**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

Report from: Ian Sutherland; Director, Children and Adults Services

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#### **Summary**

This report provides a briefing to the Health and Well Being 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 and the Social Work Act 2017.
- 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 were refreshed and the final version was presented to the CPB on 19 April 2017 and was subsequently agreed. See Appendix 1.

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

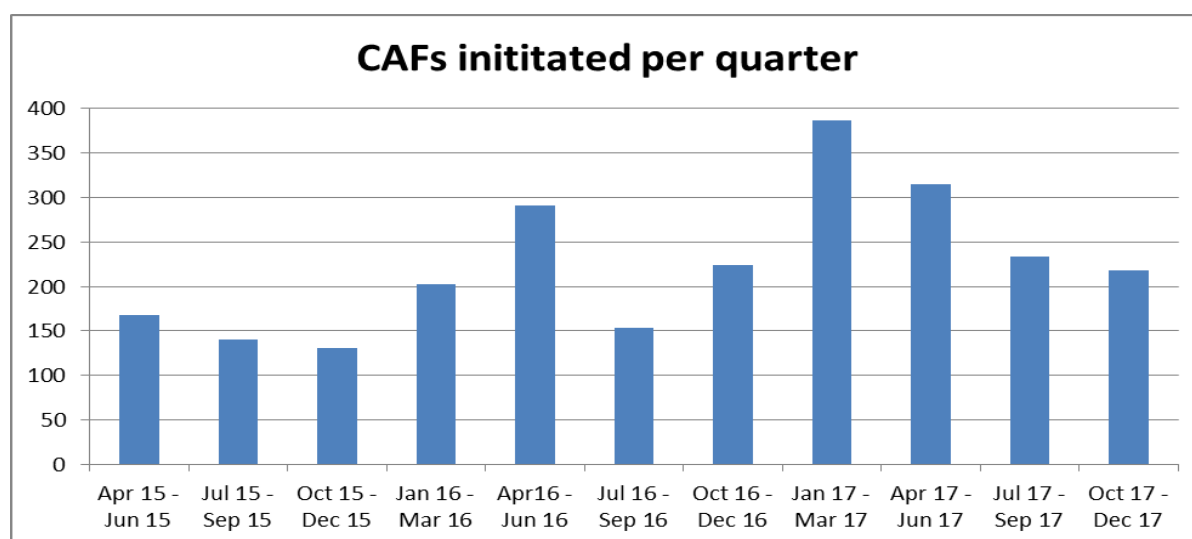
- 3.1 The CPB meets on a quarterly basis with three sub-groups reporting into the Board.
- 3.2 The three sub-groups are Education, Health of LAC and 16 Plus and Care Leavers, the latter having been established in early 2017 with the group's first meeting having taken place on 24 February 2017. The multi-agency 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 Medway Children's and Young People's Council (formerly 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**

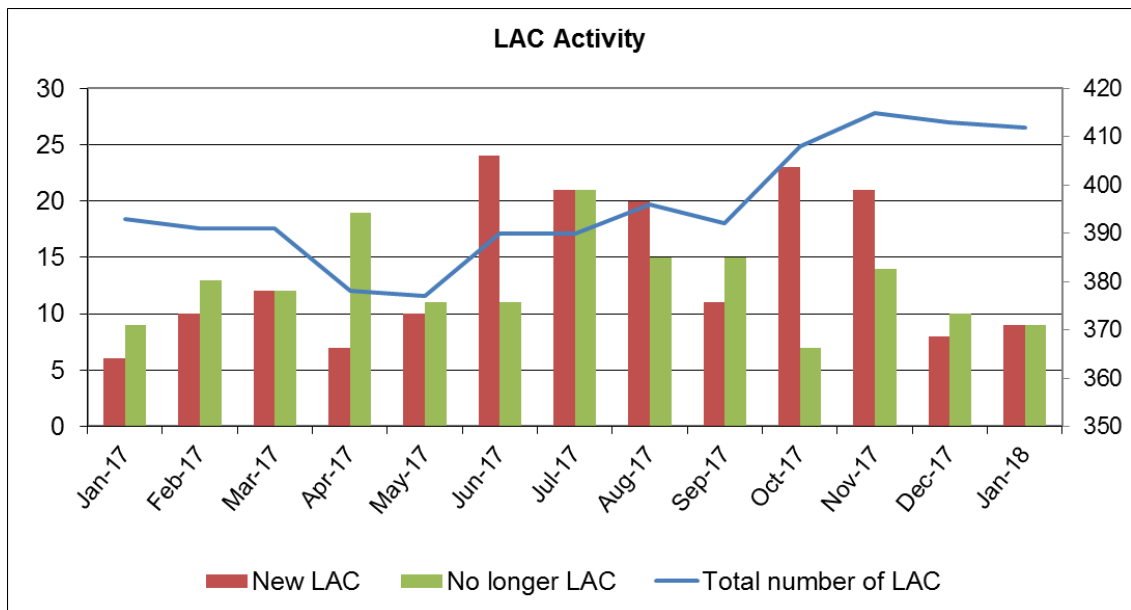
- Lead Member for Children's Services
- Vice Chair, Chair of Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Chair of Children in Care Council and Young Lives Apprentice
- Director Children and Adults,
- Deputy Director Children and Adults
- Head of Provider Services.
- Head of Safeguarding
- 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.
- 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.

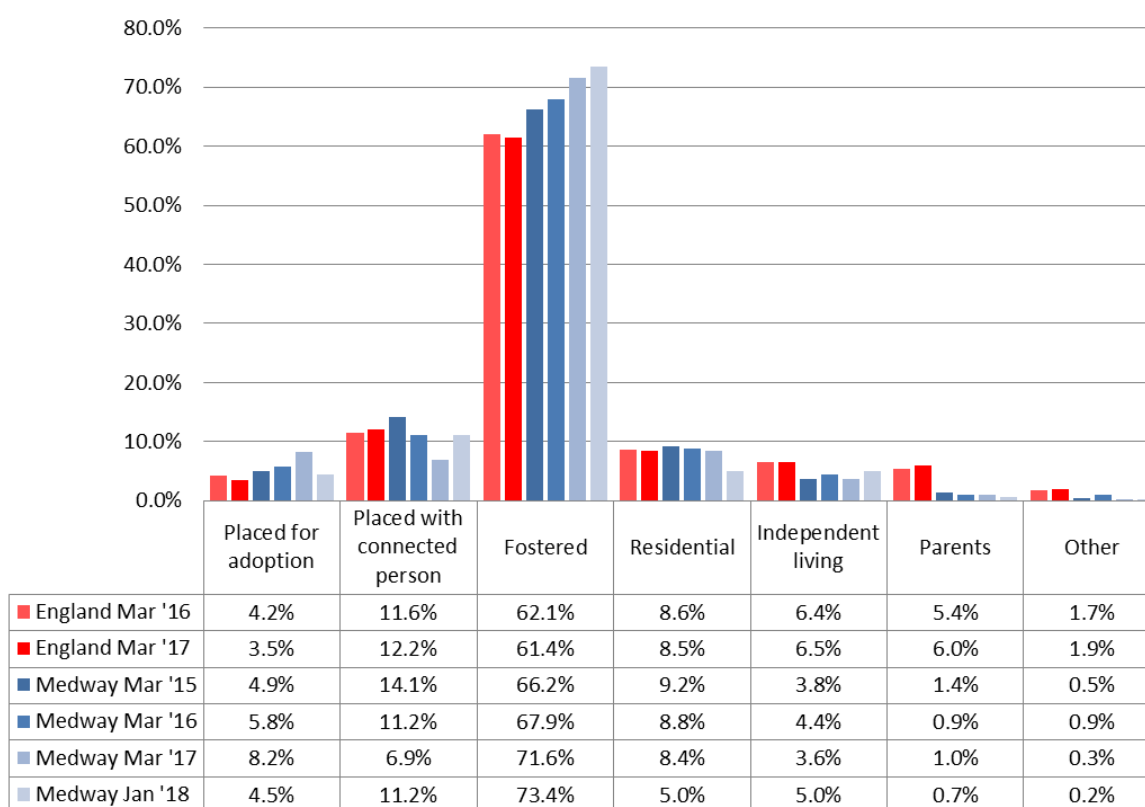


**5.7 Objective 2 - Provide and commission the right mix of placements**

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 (an increase of over 4%) are placed with connected carers and we value these placements as a way of supporting young people to stay within their families and communities. Nationally 17,250 children and young people have been made the subject of Special Guardianship Orders over the last five years.

### Percentage of LAC by placement type



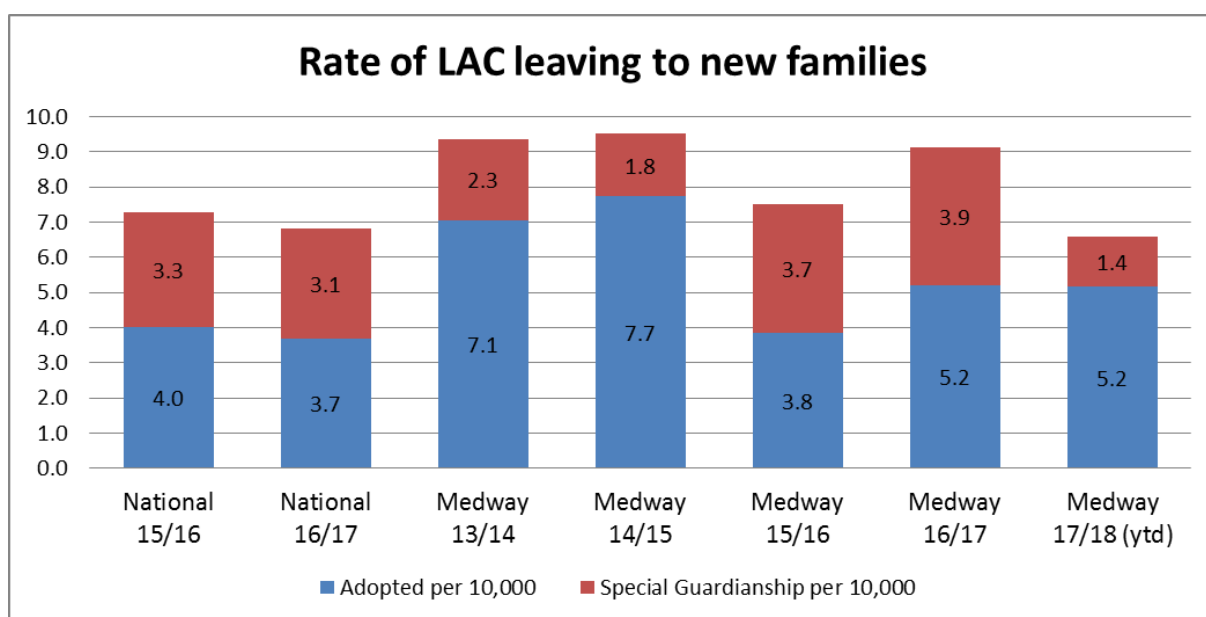
- 5.10 Attracting local people to become foster carers remains a key priority. Reorganisation within the fostering service has been made to accelerate the recruitment and training of more local foster carers, for the next 3 years, to provide placement's for Medway children.
- 5.11 By the end of March 2018 the service had made a net gain of 29 fostering placements to enable us to place Medway children with Medway carers. The year ahead will focus on recruiting people who can offer parent and child placements specifically people who have experience of working or caring for those with Learning Disabilities, due to the demand for this type of placement.
- 5.12 A new framework for Independent Fostering Agencies has been commissioned. As well as enabling the Council to deliver efficiencies, the framework will improve sufficiency and quality of placements for our Looked After Children. We will be working fewer providers in order to focus on service improvement.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Placed by Medway within another LAs boundary.	153	152	152	161	168	164	173	174	178	178

5.13 **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.**

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

5.15 The rate of children leaving care to adoption or special guardianship is marginally less than the national average. In 2017/18 to date (Apr 17 to Jan 18) 33 children were adopted and 9 went to special guardians to achieve a combined rate of 6.6 per 10,000 children against a national rate of 6.8 per 10,000.



5.16 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.

5.17 Cabinet gave 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.

5.18 In February 2018, the DfE confirmed that the Minister had agreed to provide set up funds for the RAA project. The DfE commented that successful progression of RAA projects have been where agencies have worked closely together previously.

5.19 The partnership is awaiting confirmation of the amount of Government funding that will be provided for 'set up' costs. Recruitment of a Strategic Lead will be undertaken and a Project Manager appointed to drive through the various work streams in line with the project plan to ensure implementation in line with the government's timescale of 2020. Based on a three year average of placement orders granted across all three local authorities, it is estimated that approximately 135-150 children annually will be placed by the RAA.

- 5.20 Medway approved 15 adoptive households, 13 of whom have had a child placed with them. This includes one fostering household who adopted a child with complex medical and developmental needs. The number of approvals has decreased from the previous year and this reflects the national picture of adopter recruitment, which is currently challenging.
- 5.21 A total of 40 Medway LAC were adopted in 2017, some from traditionally 'hard to place' groups including a sibling group of 4, a sibling group of 3 and 12 over the age of 5 when they were placed. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their prospective adoptive family has decreased from 610 days to 503 days, which is lower than the national average; and the average time between the Court giving authority to place and moving in with their family has reduced to 200 days, again lower than the national average.
- 5.22 **Objective 4 - Ensure that looked after children and young people achieve their full potential and can access suitable education, employment or training.**
- 5.23 The Virtual School Head reports regularly to Corporate Parenting Board on educational progress made by children in care across their current key stage. A new interim Virtual Head (Sarah Hall) took up post at the end of January 2018 and the post is now managed within Provider Services.
- 5.24 A development plan is being drawn up to extend the remit of the Virtual School to include a Deputy Head to enable us to meet the needs of our LAC and most complex children in need from pre-school up to the age of 25 years.
- 5.25 Pupils did not make as much progress in KS1 and KS2 maths as they did in the other subject areas however with a cohort of 31 the confidence range for the Medway CLA progress figures is significantly wider than that of national e.g. Medway + 2.35 in reading compared to + 0.2 nationally.
- 5.26 The percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected standard in English and Maths GCSE has increased in the last academic year. We now have 6 Care Leavers studying at university.
- 5.27 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.
- 5.28 **Objective 5 - Improve the health and emotional well-being of looked after children and young people and care leavers**
- 5.29 40 children became looked after by Medway Council between 1 October 2017 and 31 December 2017; of these, 26 had a completed initial health assessment within 28 days of their initial placement. The percentage of in date review health assessments for the same period is 94% and up to date dental assessments for the same period is 93%. Both of these figures meet national targets.

(Since 1 April 2017, both health and children's social care reported on initial health assessments being completed within 28 days of young people coming into care as previously the agencies had used different reporting periods).

- 5.30 100% of Review Health Assessments were continually in date for December 2017.
- 5.31 The Health LAC Team are moving from Medway Foundation Trust to Medway Community Health (MCH) as the whole children's community services have been re-commissioned to MCH.
- 5.32 A new Young Persons Wellbeing Service has been re-procured, with the transition to a new service delivery model to be completed by 1 April 2018. This service has been commissioned on a Medway only footprint as this will ensure that we have a complete focus on the needs of Medway children and young people with the ability to collaborate strategically with Kent, NHS England and other south-east Local Authorities on key pathways, for example crisis care and inpatient admissions. The new service has been designed to reduce access and waiting times by increasing throughput, a more flexible and needs led approach to support and improve collaborative working with the wider children's workforce.
- 5.33 **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.**
- 5.34 In 2017, the Children's Service and Safeguarding moved to an area based model delivered through social work pods i.e. small teams. Four areas have been established with a balanced level of demand. Aligning the social work pods to areas has enabled better joint working with partners responsible for the safeguarding of Medway's children. The changes in service structure are intended to provide consistency of social work throughout the intervention with the family. The changes have increased the numbers of first line managers (Practice Managers) and decreased the ratio of manager to practitioner in order to improve the quality of practice with children. The service has also commenced an ambitious training plan with the Institute of Family Therapy to support quality interventions with families and retain valuable staff.
- 5.35 The 'front door' to Children's Services is being re-structured to develop a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub within the new structure. The Education Safeguarding Officer from MSCB now works alongside social workers delivering a much improved interface with schools. The name for the service is First Response, thus placing emphasis on providing the initial response to concerns about the welfare of children in Medway.
- 5.36 The Service has achieved significant success in the partnership with the Centre for Systemic Social Work (CSSW). This is one of the DfE Partners in Practice initiatives designed to promote sector led improvement in Social Work practice. The partnership was approved by the DfE Board in December 2017 following a thorough assessment of the suitability of the service to benefit from such substantial investment. The CSSW will provide a



comprehensive programme of training and development to support whole system change in Children's Services.

- 5.37 Four Practice Managers have been successful in their application to the Firstline Leadership development programme supported by the DfE. This venture will enable our most promising managers of frontline social work to develop their leadership of practice abilities thereby improving outcomes for children.
- 5.38 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.
- 5.39 The MSCB runs regular multi-agency CSE training; it ensures that the champions' training needs are prioritised to ensure Reflective Supervision and case direction.
- 5.40 Multi Agency CSE meetings are chaired by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, the meetings run 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.
- 5.41 **Objective 7 - Prepare young people for a successful transition to adulthood**
- 5.42 The 16 Plus and Care leavers Sub Group have developed a multi agency action plan to address the needs of Medway's Care leavers which will be reviewed in July 2018.
- 5.43 Medway's first Leaving Care Conference in October was positively received by all who attended.
- 5.44 Work streams of the sub group have included:- drafting of the Care Leavers Offer, including consultation with young people with the final offer being published in June 2018: ongoing work with Commissioning around supported accommodation and needs of care leavers: provision of accommodation: scoping of implementation of an interactive health App( Public Health /Care

Leavers and the CCG): the Job Centre Plus Agreement was signed off in September 2017 and Facebook page set up to promote activities for 16 plus.

- 5.45 Ensuring care leavers have access to opportunities for employment and education remains challenging and whilst Medway was marginally below the national average in 16/17, we have dropped below this further so far this year (Apr 17 to Jan 18).

Care Leavers in employment, education or training on 19th, 20th or 21st birthday	National 15/16	National 16/17	Medway 14/15	Medway 15/16	Medway 16/17	Medway 17/18 (YTD)
	49%	50%	48%	49%	48%	47%

- 5.46 A Leaving Care Nurse works specifically with young people leaving care and makes sure they can readily access their health history and support them with ongoing health needs.
- 5.47 A 'Your Future, Your Choice' booklet which outlines options around employment and training is provided to all care leavers.
- 5.48 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.
- 5.49 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	National 16/17	Medway 14/15	Medway 15/16	Medway 16/17	Medway 17/18 (YTD)
	83%	84%	89%	90%	88%	89%

- 5.50 There are currently 4 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.
- 5.51 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.
- 5.52 **Objective 8 - Ensure that looked after children and care leavers' views and experiences inform current and future service delivery**
- 5.53 Each CPB meeting receives an update on the wide range of activities and work undertaken by the MCYPC and support from the Young Lives Foundation ensures that the young people contribute actively throughout, including decisions made.

- 5.54 MCYPC monitor how successful the Pledge is at every CPB and MCYPC meeting, with the local authority being responsive to suggestions and actions.
- 5.55 Medway Youth Council (MYPC) is part of Medway Youth Service and is currently applying the Hear By Right standards from the National Youth Agency. This is a quality assurance scheme for youth voice aimed at organisations working with young people that aims to ensure that young people are actively involved in decision making at all levels of the organisation.
- 5.56 MYC are involved in decisions about service delivery in two main ways. Firstly through attendance at various Medway Council and partner events and consultations (including Kent Police and NHS) where they are regularly represented. This is a two way process as speakers from other departments and partner organisations regularly present at MYC meetings and engage with members to gain their opinions. MYC are also strategically represented at Medway Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel, commenting on plans put forward that effect young people and giving a youth perspective on more general plans for the area. MYC representatives seek to represent the views of young people from their schools and youth centres and are encouraged to speak beyond their views, making sure they also consider the views of those they represent. Each year the Youth Council runs the UK Youth Parliament 'Make Your Mark' campaign, which aims to set local and national agendas informed by the voice of young people. Last year, MYC captured the views of 5071 young people from Medway, beating the UKYP target for Medway.

## **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 Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider and comment on the annual report and the effectiveness of the Corporate Parenting Board.

## **Lead officer contact**

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Medway Council Corporate parenting Board terms of Reference  
Appendix 2 – Medway Council Sufficiency Report 2017-18

## **Background Papers**

None