

**CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL– 30 July 2024
(YOUNG PEOPLE’S TAKE OVER EVENT)**

**MINUTES of the meeting held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House,
County Hall, Maidstone.**

PRESENT: Shellina Prendergast, Gary Cooke, Dylan Jeffrey, Paul Bartlett, David Brazier, Kelly Grehan, Sarah Hamilton, Sarah Hammond, Caroline Smith, Maria Cordery, Alison Farmer, Tracy Scott, Rory Love, Stephen Gray, Kayleigh Leonard, Nancy Sayer and Biran Horton.

ALSO PRESENT: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services.

IN ATTENDANCE: 20 Young People, Joanna Carpenter (Participation and Engagement Manager), the Participation Team, Ingrid Crisan (Director – Operational Integrated Children’s Services), Kevin Kasaven (Director of Children’s Countywide Services), Leemya McKeown (Assistant Director, Safeguarding Professional Standards and Quality Assurance), Marian Smith (VSK Deputy Head), Sarah Howell (VSK Deputy Head), Deborah Royle (QA Manager – IRO Service North West) and James Clapson (Democratic Services Officer).

1. Apologies and Substitutes

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Ms Bride, Mr Byrne and Mr Doran,

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024.

2.1 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024 were a correct record of the meeting.

3. Chairman’s announcements

3.1 The annual VSK awards celebration would take place on 22 September at the Kingswood Activity Centre in Ashford. Further details would be circulated in due course.

4. Listen Up Workshop

4.1 The Panel received a workshop presentation that was delivered by young people with the support of the Participation Team. It was designed to highlight the importance of listening to young people and would be delivered to KCC’s Children’s Services.

- 4.2 The following points were noted from the comments raised during consideration of the item:
- The exercises were very good at highlighting the importance of active listening.
 - Consideration should be given to presenting the workshop to KCC's partner agencies, such as the NHS, and to sharing the videos with district councils.
 - The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service would work with the Participation Team to encourage partner agencies to adopt the Lundy Model.
 - It was important that elected Members were aware of their responsibilities to young people. Elements of the workshop would be included in the 2025 Member Induction Programme.
 - The young people were thanked for their presentation. The message was powerful and inspiring. It should be shared as widely as possible.
- 4.3 RESOLVED that workshop's message was noted.

5. Participation Team update

- 5.1 Ms Carpenter introduced the item and then handed over to the young people to describe their experiences as members of the Young People's Councils.
- 5.2 The key themes from the update were that the Young People's Councils;
- encouraged participation from all ages
 - were a fun and trusting environment
 - were a safe place to offload feelings, both good and bad
 - helped children and young people feel that they could talk about their lives and support each other
 - brought a feeling togetherness for children and young people
- 5.3 RESOLVED that the update was noted.

6. Challenge Card Update

- 6.1 Ms Carpenter introduced the report that detailed a challenge card for KCC from the Young Adult Council. The card asked for a review of young people's involvement in the recruitment and selection of staff.
- 6.2 The Panel heard from a young person who had completed the Interview Skills training but had not yet had the opportunity to take part in the selection process.
- 6.2 During consideration of the item the following points were noted:
- Young people wished to help shape the services they received.
 - Interviews normally took place during the school day which did not allow young people to be involvement.

- It would probably not be practical to schedule the entire interview process outside of school hours or during school holidays; however, Officers would look at how young people could be more included in the process.

6.3 RESOLVED to note the challenge card and the action arising from it.

7. Verbal Update by the Cabinet Member

7.1 Fostering

7.1.1 There was an urgent need for more foster carers in Kent. KCC had joined with other authorities to create the Country's largest foster care service. Local Authority Fostering South East was launched on 8 July and brought together the expertise of 20 councils.

7.1.2 There were 11,000 children in care across the South East, but only 3000 local authority approved foster carers. The new hub would ensure prospective foster carers had access to a centralised platform for their initial enquiries and would see local authorities work collaboratively to provide the best support throughout the process.

7.2 Virtual Schools Kent Post 16 Awards Celebration

7.2.1 The Virtual Schools Kent Post 16 Awards Celebration had been a great success. It was held on 16 July and Mrs Chandler presented some of the awards during the evening.

7.3 Recruitment of Social Workers

7.3.1 There were currently a number of active programmes to recruit social workers. Following the Spring Newly Qualified Social Worker campaign, 70 candidates were invited for interview leading to 49 offers of employment.

7.4 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

7.4.1 The number of UASC had continued to rise. The service did their best to ensure that the children were well supported upon arrival in Kent, before they continued their onward journey.

7.5 The Panel heard from a young person about her experiences as a young person coming to the UK. She spoke about the support and kindness that she had received. The Panel thanked the young person for sharing her experience.

7.6 RESOLVED to note the verbal update.

8. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service Annual Report

- 8.1 The Panel heard from two young people who described their IRO's and the important role that they played in their lives.
- 8.2 Ms Royle provided the Panel with a presentation that gave a summary of the 2023/24 Annual Report and ended with the action plan for 2024/25.
- 8.3 The following points were noted during consideration of the item:
- The response rate for feedback surveys following Child in Care Reviews, was between 25% and 30%.
 - The number of purposeful visits had increased, and workshops had taken place to share good visiting practices that made best use of the time.
 - The number of children in care had reduced over the year, however there were still more children in care than before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 8.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

9. Fostering Annual Report and Business Plan

- 9.1 The Panel heard from a young person who described how she was proud to be part of a family that fostered.
- 9.2 Ms C Smith and Ms Cordrey introduced the report that provided an overview of the Kent Fostering Service between April 2023 and March 2024.
- 9.3 The following points were noted during consideration of the item:
- There were 615 approved carers.
 - There had been 117 new approvals during the year, of which three quarters were kinship carers. The Service was realigning its focus in response to the high proportion of kinship carers.
 - The Kent Fostering website was rated as one of the top three fostering websites within the South East.
 - Virtual information events had proved to be an effective way to engage with people interesting in fostering.
- 9.4 RESOLVED to note the Kent Fostering Annual Report.

10. Virtual School Kent's (VSK) Annual Report

- 10.1 The Panel heard from a young person who spoke about how the VSK had supported her and provided her with opportunities to do things that would otherwise have been inaccessible.
- 10.2 Ms M Smith and Ms Howell introduced the report that reviewed the work of the VSK over the last academic year.
- 10.3 The following points were noted during consideration of the item:

- Key stage two results were below the national average, however, the progress of students during the year was higher than the South East and National averages.
- There had been an increase in the number of students achieving five GCSE's or more.
- There had been a reduction in the provision of key stage five services nationally, and the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) had increased by 13.8%, this was 5% less than the national average of 18.9%.
- The new Advisory Team that was becoming increasingly active, in 2022/23 the Team provided advice to more than 500 parents.
- The process around personal education plans had been made more robust and completion rates had reached 97%. This exceeded the 95% target.
- It had been a successful year for the Participation and Engagement Team. The Pre-16 and Post 16 awards ceremonies were both very successful events and had more nominations for awards than ever before.
- Young people in a specialist setting were more likely to achieve a lower outcome than young people not in a specialist setting.

10.4 RESOLVED to note the Annual Report and to receive additional information about the comparison of outcomes for young people in a specialist setting and young people not in a specialist setting, to be included as a post meeting note.

Post Meeting note:

2023 KS4 Results	Attainment 8 Score	Progress 8 Score
Kent CiC Young people WITH an EHCP & attending State Mainstream schools	16.5 (National CiC: 17.4)	-1.58 (National CiC: -1.26)
Kent CiC Young people WITH an EHCP & attending State Specialist schools	1.1 (National CiC: 2.7)	-1.88 (National CiC: -1.80)

In 2023, Kent CiC in Year 11 with an EHCP who attended a mainstream setting, attained higher results than those at a specialist setting. Progress was also better at state mainstream settings; however, progress for those attending state specialist settings was nearer to the national CiC average. Data for independent settings was unavailable.

The outcomes for 2024 would be available for comparison in Spring 2025.

11. SEND Showcase

- 11.1 Young people from Our Children and Young People's Council - Making A Great and Important Change (OCYPC MAGIC) gave a presentation to the Panel. It was the first anniversary of the group that was for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 11.2 The Panel received a film that OCYPC MAGIC had created. It explained about their experiences, the challenges they faced, the support they needed and their aspirations.
- 11.3 The Panel thanked the young people for the presentation of the Showcase.
- 11.4 RESOLVED to note the SEND Showcase.