

## INFORMATION ITEM

### **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL – TERMS OF REFERENCE (April 2016)**

The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) is a multi-agency forum made up of Kent County Council's elected councillors representing all parties as well as the multi-agency partners in Kent who are responsible for delivering good and effective corporate parenting for children and young people.

The Panel confirms the joint commitment to improving services and outcomes for children and care leavers for whom the Council is corporate parent. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel will be drawn from the Kent County Council's elected councillors.

The Panel's role is to lead on ensuring the corporate parenting responsibilities of the multi-agency partnership are being met, in line with the Children Act 1989. Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 sets out the general duty of the local authority in relation to children looked after by them; to safeguard and promote the welfare of these children, ensuring effective, individualised support and access to services. This duty is inclusive of both children and young people with care orders and those provided with accommodation.

Kent's Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2015-16 sets out what good and effective corporate parenting looks like, alongside our key strategic objectives. The Strategy's ambitions assist in the Council's overarching vision that "Children and Young People in Kent get the best start in life".

This commitment is one of three strategic outcomes which provide a simple and effective focus for everything the Council does; they are set out in Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020.

The Corporate Parenting Panel is accountable:

- To the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
- To looked after children, care leavers and their carers or guardians
- To each respective member on the Panel and the relevant senior management team of each agency that is represented.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel:

- To develop expertise about services for and issues affecting children and young people, both in care and leaving care; in doing so, elected councillors are enabled to fulfil their role as corporate parenting champions and advocates for Kent children who are looked after, and those leaving local authority care
- To provide the multi-agency strategic direction for services and projects working to achieve good outcomes for both children in local authority and leaving care
- To actively raise the awareness of other elected councillors, the Cabinet and the County Council to the whole Council's corporate parenting responsibilities towards Kent's looked after children and care leavers
- To oversee and challenge progress and performance against the objectives within Kent's Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy.

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The Strategy consists of four priority areas which represent the corporate parenting ambitions for children and young people both in care and leaving care. The four priority areas are:

1. Working together and learning;
  2. Developing into successful and responsible adults;
  3. Being emotionally, mentally and physically healthy; and
  4. Feeling safe and nurtured in a home setting.
- To consider any changes arising from relevant legislation, guidance or reviews
  - To lead on ensuring that the corporate parenting roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority are being met, including:
    - Local expectations and the promises made via Kent's Pledge to Looked after Children and Kent's Care Leavers Charter;
    - To be aware of national expectations regarding the services to looked after children (including unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)) and care leavers; including those contained in reports from the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the adoption reform agenda, changes to permanent planning and the commitment to 'staying put';
    - To creatively consider ways in which the Corporate Parenting Panel will hear and respond to the views of looked after children, care leavers, their parents and carers;
    - To have an understanding of the arrangements that need to be in place in order to be an effective corporate parent;
    - To undertake an in-depth analysis of the needs of the County Council's care population and all aspects of the service required to meet those needs, so there is clear evidence to inform future action;
    - To take action continually, in conjunction with officers and partner agencies, to improve services and ensure it is responsive and meeting changing needs; and
    - To report in a timely manner to the relevant local member(s) as and when such may be required
  - To support the chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Members for Children, Young People and Education in undertaking their specialist level 3 corporate parenting responsibilities (National Children's Bureau, Hart and Williams 2013)
  - To highlight the issues relevant for scrutiny
  - To act as the governing body to the Virtual School for Kent
  - To consider reports from the Kent Safeguarding Children's Board (KSCB), 0-25 Health and Wellbeing Board and Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee in relation to looked after children and care leavers
  - To consider statistical information about both looked after children and care leavers' health and wellbeing and attainment. To ensure that Corporate Parenting Panel members have enough background knowledge to understand and evaluate this information
  - To work alongside Our Children and Young People's Council in order to gather feedback from all those involved in and working with/on behalf of looked after children and care leavers. This will include ongoing engagement with foster carers and other user groups.

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The merger of the Kent Corporate Parenting Group and the Corporate Parenting Panel took effect from 1 April 2016, with the aim of bringing together elected councillors and multi-agency partners in a forum which would ensure the best interests of all looked after children in Kent's care are given the highest priority and would help to shape the Council's agenda.

**Membership of the Panel** includes foster carers and representatives of clinical commissioning groups, advocacy groups, Children in Care Councils and care leavers, as well as County Council officers. In addition, when the membership was last discussed by the Panel, in January 2017, it was agreed that representatives of the Police and the Council's Disabled Children's Services be invited to join.

The new elected councillor membership of the Panel had not been confirmed at the time of publishing this agenda but will be announced as soon as it is known.

Administrative Support to the Panel is provided by: Theresa Grayell, Democratic Services Officer, telephone 03000 416172, email [theresa.grayell@kent.gov.uk](mailto:theresa.grayell@kent.gov.uk)