

Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016





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1 Forewords

1.1 Councillor Clare Campion-Smith Cabinet Member for People and current Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel, and Councillor Brenda Massey former Assistant Mayor and Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2016

Bristol is an exciting and vibrant city to grow up in, offering opportunities for children and young people to play, learn, and develop. As consecutive Chairs of the Corporate Parenting Panel and Assistant Mayor's for the People Directorate, it has been our job to ensure that the same opportunities are available to children in care and care leavers as they are to other children in the city.

The term 'corporate parenting' emphasises the collective responsibility of the Council, both members and officers, to ensure good parenting and good outcomes for all children in their care, and care leavers. Alongside partners across the city, we are committed to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

This report provides an overview of corporate parenting and the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2016, a panel comprising a cross-party group of councillors supported by officers, partners, children in care and care leavers, all committed to ensuring robust leadership, management and governance of services to the children in and leaving our care. We have had oversight of the council's improvement work, have challenged and supported as well as provided a focus that reminds all councillors of their corporate parenting responsibilities to ensure that children in our care are well looked after and supported to achieve their potential. As well as setting out achievements and challenges, it sets priorities for the forthcoming year and offers an open invitation to councillors to join the Panel and support our work for children in care and care leavers.

Over the past year, the council has made progress in key areas:

- Our focus is always on doing everything we can to support children to be cared for within their birth family however, when this is not possible, most children do best if they live with a foster family. In 2016, a greater percentage of children in our care lived in a foster family and, for those children in our long term care a greater percentage lived in stable placements.
- Improving education, training and employment outcomes at all stages and more young people at university than ever before.
- For care leavers, improvements have had to be focussed and swift to address the difficulties highlighted by our Ofsted Inspection in 2014. We are pleased to report that the council is now regularly in touch with more care leavers than ever before, that the majority are suitably housed, with many staying put with their former carer and most engaged in education, employment or training.
- Children and young people's voices are central to our work and have been strengthened this year with the establishment of a care leaver group alongside the Children in Care Council and their attendance at Corporate Parenting Panel.

As corporate parents, we will continue to hold high aspirations and to be ambitious for our children and young people. We will continue to improve and will work with partners across the city to deliver on our vision for children in care and care leavers. In the forthcoming year we will focus on a number of priorities including:

- Closing the attainment gap between children in care and their peers at all key stages
- Improving performance in reported health and dental assessments
- Promoting fostering as a positive choice for adults who can care for children and young people
- Reducing offending rates of children in care and care leavers

Above all, we need the passion, compassion and commitment of members, officers and partners to delivering the best for children in and leaving our care. By working together, we will succeed.

1.2 Charece Anderson – Care Leaver and member of Care Leavers United Bristol

Charece displayed her work and sang at the Care Leavers' United Hear Us Out Exhibition, an exhibition that aimed to challenge some of the negative stereotypes that surround care leavers. She subsequently entered her words in a competition at the national Young People Leaving Care Benchmarking event in October 2016 and won. To remind us all that children in care and care leavers are a diverse and talented group, who should be celebrated, her words are reproduced below as the young person's foreword to this year's Corporate Parenting Report:

"I want to see more young people walking confidently in their identities. Unfortunately, we live in a society where everyone wants to fit into the same box so we tend to put up a front...

In reality life isn't perfect, we should acknowledge that our experiences in life are what shape us, they make us who we are.

It's ok to be you.

It's ok to not know what the next step is.

And its ok not to fit into the box that society tries soo hard to put you in!

WE ARE WHO WE ARE"

2 Overview of children in care and care leavers in Bristol¹

Bristol is the 7th largest city in England outside of London. It is a young, vibrant and diverse city with a median age of 33, over six years below that of England as a whole. It is also a rapidly growing city, most notably in the under 17 age group, which grew by 14.5% over the ten years to 2015, and within the child population those under 4 years grew even more rapidly, showing an increase of 29.9% over the same period.

Set against this context, Bristol's children in care population has remained relatively steady in terms of numbers and, in terms of rate per 10,000 of the under 18 population, it has reduced from 78 in 2012 to 73 in 2016. This brings Bristol's rate per 10,000 closer to the national average of 60 and below that of its statistical neighbours and the core cities, possibly reflecting the impact of prevention and early intervention work aimed at supporting more children to live successfully within their birth family. The Bristol picture differs from the national picture where the rate per 10,000 and number of children in care has grown in recent years. In terms of the number of children in care in Bristol, there were 675 children in care on 31st March 2016, five fewer than in March 2012. Other characteristics of the children in care and care leaver population include²:

- Bristol's children in care are slightly older than those across England with 69.8% aged 10 or above, compared with 62% across England. This is in line with an increase in 16-17 year olds and reduction in 1-4 year olds since 2013.
- There is an even gender split, which has been the case for the past five years and is different to the national picture where there are slightly more boys than girls in care.
- The legal status of children in care in Bristol is similar to the England figures, with 65% having a Care Order or Interim Care Order. Slightly more children are accommodated by voluntary agreement under the Children Act 1989 in Bristol (28.6%) and slightly fewer under a Placement Order (5.8%) than nationally.
- Like the city itself, Bristol's child in care population is growing in diversity and includes a small but growing number of unaccompanied children and young people who have sought sanctuary in the city.
- The number of children entering and leaving care has increased over the past five years and particularly in the last year, as more children move through care to permanent arrangements either returning to parents or to adoption and special guardianship.
- 12.85% of children exited care to Adoption and Special Guardianship compared with 13.43% nationally.
- 10.7% of children in care were subject to a caution or conviction during the year. This figure has grown since 2013/14 and is not in line with the percentage nationally which has fallen over the same time period.

¹ See also, Section 15 - Performance

² All statistics are for March 2016 unless stated otherwise

- More children in care in Bristol (82%) live in a foster family compared to 74% nationally and, more Bristol children continued to live with former carers in a staying put arrangement beyond the age of 18.
- For some children, living in a foster family is not the right option and Bristol makes use of its own children's homes as well as the independent sector to meet their needs. 6.8% of children live in a children's home or residential school compared with 8.6% nationally.
- 81% of children in care in Bristol live within 20 miles of their home address compared with 77% for all children in care in England. However, more children who started to be looked after in 2016 were placed more than twenty miles away as their first placement, reflecting some of the challenges locally and nationally in finding suitable foster carers.
- Bristol was in touch with more of its care leavers (97.1% of 19-21 year olds) than in previous years and more than the 2016 national figure (87.3%).
- More care leavers were in education, training or employment than in 2015, above the national figure of 52%, and more care leavers were considered to be suitably housed.

3 Bristol's Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers - performing on our promises

In the autumn of 2015 Bristol launched a refreshed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers, supported by a new Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Informed by children and young people, it set out an ambitious agenda for achieving our aspiration to be an excellent corporate parent and to engage the city in being the best extended family to children and young people in and leaving care. Using the headings from the Pledge, the next section sets out what's been achieved in the last year to deliver on our promises.



"...mindful of living up to the promises of the Pledge in uncertain times"
Corporate Parenting Panel
November 2015

4 Physically and emotionally healthy so that you feel good about yourself

Bristol's health services specifically for children in care include Children Looked After Nurses (CLAN) and a Designated Doctor. There is also a dedicated team, Thinking Allowed, who work with children and carers to support the emotional and mental health of children in care and act as the gateway for referral to the full range of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the city. An annual health report is presented to Corporate Parenting Panel outlining the work of these services in meeting the health needs of children in care.

All children entering care have an initial in-depth health assessment within the first 28 days, with a follow up assessment every 6 months for those under 5 years old and annually for those over 5. Bristol's recorded figures for the percentage of dental checks and health assessments undertaken on time during the 2015/16 have fallen by 11.5 and 9.4 percentage points on the previous year respectively. 71% of children were recorded as having had a dental check and 82% as having had a health assessment. This takes Bristol's performance below the national figure for 2014/15 and is the subject of improvement work in 2016/17 which is overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board and which, as a strategic priority sits jointly under the Children and Families and Health and Well-Being Boards. The percentage of children recorded as having up-to-date immunisations, however, has risen by 10.1 percentage points to 93.5% over the same period.

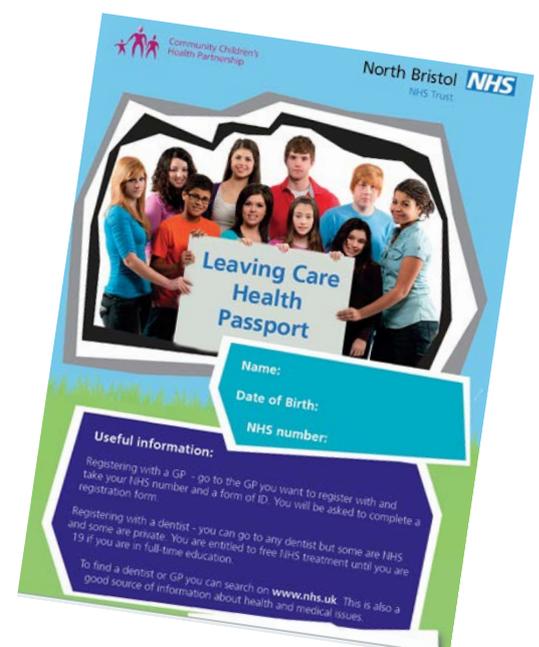
A strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) is used to assess children's emotional and behavioural health. The SDQ is a short behavioural screening questionnaire that cover details of emotional difficulties; conduct difficulties; hyperactivity or inattention; friendships and peer groups; positive behaviour; and impact. The SDQ is an internationally validated method of assessing children and young people's risk of experiencing emotional and mental health difficulties; it is completed by the child's carer on an annual basis and is scored on a scale from 0-40. Any score above 17 alerts the child's social worker to consider a referral to Thinking Allowed. In 2015/16, 76.3% of children had an SDQ completed and returned by their carer.

Whilst children in care are recognised nationally as a vulnerable group, paper based notes mean that there has been little aggregated information available regarding the physical and mental health status of children and young people in care in Bristol. In order to learn more, to set a health baseline and to consider the quality and quantity of information available in Bristol an audit of the health assessment notes of looked after children was carried out in 2016. The audit demonstrated that:

- Initial and review assessments are carried out regularly and comprehensively.
- The physical health of looked after children is well managed and as a group, they do not appear to have higher or unmet physical health needs.
- There was good evidence that children and young people understood how to keep themselves healthy.
- Fewer looked after children were overweight than the comparable general population.
- There was a higher rate of smoking
- Where appropriate, young people were asked about issues relating to sexual health with nearly all recorded as having a good understanding of how to keep safe.
- Main concerns relate to mental health, where children appear to be experiencing a disproportionate level of mental distress with nearly half of the children in the audit sample having concerns recorded about emotional health and wellbeing, including attachment disorders and behavioural concerns.
- Where young people had been in a consistent placement for longer term periods, there was often a resolution of or reduction in emotional and behavioural issues.

Additional funding has been allocated to build capacity in mental and emotional health services for children and young people. Training is also taking place to ensure that social workers, foster carers, GPs and others know about the range of services and how to access them as well as the delivery of enhanced training and development for social workers, foster carers and residential childcare workers focussed on sexual health and on suicide and self-harm.

For care leavers, access to health is generally through universal services, with the first point of contact being the young person's GP. For young people who have moved and whose history may be fragmented, information about family history and childhood illnesses and immunisations is essential. Over the past year, the Health Service has piloted and introduced the use of a health passport for all care leavers as part of a number of measures it has taken to improve the health of children and care leavers.



5 Safe from harm, valued and cared for and supported

One of the most important factors in keeping children safe is the quality and stability of the relationships they hold with others; whether that's with a carer, a social worker or personal adviser or with another trusted adult, relationships that last, that offer stability and unconditional regard, matter.

Having the same carers and a stable place to live throughout a child's time in care and until ready to leave are important indicators of future success. There are three key performance measures that help us to monitor how well we are doing in this regard. The first measures the number of moves a child experiences³, the second, considers the length of placement⁴ and the third considers the percentage of young people who are supported to continue to live with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 in Staying Put arrangements. This year, 11.6% of children had three or more placements and over 72.4% of children in long term care lived with the same carers for at least two of the last two and a half years. These figures show a slight downturn in short term placement stability but a continued upward trajectory of the percentage of children living in long term care.

Similarly, more young people stayed with their former carer beyond 18 than ever before. Staying Put offers young people leaving care the opportunity to leave home in a way that is more akin to the experience of their peers and is one of the best ways of enabling young people to lay down the foundations from which they can go on to achieve their full potential. Bristol's figure over 61.5% compared with 54% nationally. Bristol continues to support more young people in such arrangements at the ages of 19 and 20 with 41% of Bristol's 19 year olds staying put (compared with 30% nationally) and 19.5% of 20 year olds (compared with 16% nationally).

The number, range and quality of placements are important factors in being able to identify the right placement at the right time and in the right area for a child. In July 2016, after full consultation with a range of stakeholders, including children, young people and in-put from the Corporate Parenting Panel, the Children and Families Trust Board adopted Bristol's Sufficiency Plan 2016-19 which sets out how Bristol aims to deliver sufficient placements for children in care and care leavers.

5.1 Social work remodelling

In June 2016, the specialist long term services for children in care and care leavers remodelled into smaller through care teams comprising social workers, personal advisers, a support worker, administrator and practice lead. The new service was designed with staff and young people to support long term relationships with workers and to help deliver on the Pledge promise to minimise the disruption caused by changes of worker and team. Now, children and young people with the long term service will receive all their support from the team to which they are

³ NI62 PAF A1 measure: percentage of children who have experienced two or more moves in the previous twelve month period

⁴ NI63 PAFD78 measure: The percentage of children looked after aged under 16 at year end who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together last for at least 2 years.

allocated, thereby reducing handovers and enabling joint working that maximises the beneficial impact for children and carers of working with people who they know and trust.

5.2 Missing from care

Children and young people run away for a variety of reasons, with children in care running away more frequently than their peers. When children leave or don't return home as expected, they are considered missing and will be reported to the police as such. Often, there are both push and pull factors that influence a child who goes missing, with children in care more vulnerable to some factors than others. For example, children in care are more likely to go missing to be near birth family members. Children who go missing will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. It is important therefore, that adults listen carefully to children and young people in order to understand and take the right action to address the individual reasons for going missing.

All children in care who are reported missing are offered a return interview within 24 hours of return with the interview being undertaken by someone other than the child's main carer. Over the past year, work has been undertaken to improve systems to enable better recording of missing data and the outcomes of return interviews, with 93 being recorded as having a missing episode, that's 9.1% of the total number of children looked after during the year. The seven most common reasons given for running away in the past year are as follows:

- Running to friends
- Peer influences
- Family difficulties
- Running to family
- Suspected/victim to sexual exploitation
- Issues with education
- Placement problems

Following a return interview a plan or strategy will be developed aimed at reducing the risk of repeated periods of going missing, with partner agencies involved where appropriate. Additionally, all children in care have an independent review meeting at least every 6 months which is chaired by an independent reviewing officer. This meeting will review plans and actions taken to address any missing episodes; it will check that the child's care plan addresses the risk and will consider the impact of actions taken to reduce that risk.

It is also important that we don't stop at the individual child level and ensure that, by sharing information and looking for patterns in the data about children who go missing, we are better able to identify and take action to disrupt the formation of networks of adults who will harm children.

5.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Bristol works with Barnardo's Against Sexual Exploitation (BASE), the police and other agencies to tackle child sexual exploitation and support the children and young people affected. In the past year, much has been done to better understand the prevalence of CSE across agencies and,

through use of improved screening and predictive analysis, to better identify those most at risk. At the end of March 2016 31 children in care were understood by agencies to be the children most at risk of or victim to CSE.

5.4 Children in care and the youth justice system

The Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 established that children remanded to custody should become looked after children. This was followed by amendments to the Children Act Guidance and Regulations, recognising and responding to the vulnerability of children whose offending behaviour brings them into contact with the criminal justice system. Earlier this year, the Prison Reform Trust published *In Care, Out of Trouble*, its review into the overrepresentation of children in care throughout the criminal justice system chaired by Lord Laming. It made a number of recommendations for government, local authorities, the police, youth offending teams and other agencies as to how to better protect children in care and care leavers from unnecessary levels of criminalisation.

In Bristol, rates of offending by children in care decreased between 2010 and 2014. Since that time however, the rate has increased and in March 2016, 10.7% of children in care had been subject to a youth justice disposal in the previous twelve months. This trend differs from the trend across England which has continued to decrease. The figure for all Bristol 10-17 year olds will be available in January 2017 for further analysis.

To better understand the Bristol picture, an audit was undertaken of the offending patterns of children in care as well as an audit of Bristol's performance against the recommendations made by Lord Laming. Taking action to reduce the offending of children and young people in care will form one of the priority areas of work for the forthcoming year and will be overseen by the Children's Services improvement Board and Corporate Parenting Panel.

6 The best education possible

All children in care are students of the HOPE Virtual School which has both a head teacher and governing body. There are close links between the Virtual School Governing body and the Corporate Parenting Panel, with the former chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel now the Chair of Governors. Focussed on attendance, attainment and reducing exclusions, the HOPE promotes and supports the delivery of a quality education for all children in care for whom Bristol is the responsible authority and for those children placed and educated in Bristol by another local authority. Over the past year, the focus has been on educational attainment with good results at Key Stages 1 and 2, but worsening performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 (2015 results).

6.1 Messages from research

2015 saw the publication of the first major study in England to explore the relationship between educational outcomes, young people's care histories and individual characteristics⁵. It looked at the key factors influencing low educational outcomes for children in care at secondary school and how a better understanding might contribute to improving outcomes. The study found the following factors influence attainment:

- Time in care. Those who have been in longer-term care do better than those 'in need' but not in care, and better than those who have only been in short term care – so it appears that care may be a protective factor for children educationally.
- Placement changes. Each additional change of care placement after age 11 is associated with one-third of a grade less at GCSE.
- School changes. Young people in care who changed school in Years 10 or 11 scored over five grades less than those who did not.
- School absence. For every 5% of possible school sessions missed due to unauthorised school absences, young people in care scored over two grades less at GCSE.
- School exclusions. For every additional day of school missed due to fixed-term exclusions, young people in care scored one-sixth of a grade less at GCSE.
- Placement type. Young people living in residential or another form of care at age 16 scored over six grades less than those who were in kinship or foster care.
- School type. Young people who were in special schools at age 16 scored over 14 grades lower in their GCSEs compared to those with the same characteristics who were in mainstream schools. Those in pupil referral units with the same characteristics scored almost 14 grades lower.
- Educational support. Young people report that teachers provide the most significant educational support for them but teachers suggest that they need more training to do this effectively.

The HOPE and Children's Social Care are working with this knowledge to support and educate those working with children in care and to minimise disruption for children, particularly in Years 10 and 11 in order to deliver on the following practice and policy messages:

⁵ [The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data](#), 2015. Rees Centre. Oxford University.

- The progress of children in care shows much variation, which suggests that any interventions need to be tailored to the characteristics and experiences of the individual. Every child in care has a Personal Education Plan (PEP), detailing their individual needs, attainment targets and how the child will be supported to achieve.
- Education needs to be supported at a much younger age and while children are still living with their birth families, in order to reduce later difficulties relating to adolescence.
- Greater focus on progress over time is needed and recognition that some young people take longer to make significant progress.
- When placement moves are essential, school moves should be avoided especially in the final years of schooling.
- Children in care should be placed in mainstream schools with appropriate support wherever possible.
- We need to support young people in care to achieve high attendance at school and we need to support schools not to exclude them.
- Schools that benefit all children are likely to benefit those in care so prioritising their admission is justified.
- Teachers need better understanding of children's social, emotional and mental health problems; social workers need better understanding of the education system.
- Schools and local authorities should use extra help such as paired reading and one-to-one tuition that are supported by evidence.
- The Virtual Schools, schools, social workers and foster carers should work closely together and involve the young person in decisions affecting them.

6.2 HOPE Virtual School achievements

- Improved outcomes at KS4 (2016 - unvalidated) with those attaining maths GCSE up 8% on 2015 outcomes and those attaining both maths and English also up 8%. This is a real achievement as 43% of children taking GCSEs and measured in the cohort had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational Need. In part, the improved performance is as a result of the structured work of the HOPE in collaboration with schools, including support and challenge of visits from a dedicated Child in Care School Improvement Officer. Over 100 rigorous and diagnostic quality assurance visits were undertaken in school and other education settings in 2015/16.
- Improvements in the quality of Personal Education Planning (PEP) from Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) to Post 16 and complex SEN. Paper work now enables quality planning and includes the voice of the child or young person. Aspirational and rigorous targets are set with 95% of PEPs now assessed as good or better. A Clear flowchart for PEP roles and responsibilities has been established and is being followed by all professionals in the team around the child.
- More targeted use of Pupil Premium Plus is delivering measurable improvements in outcomes both in terms of children's engagement in learning and the percentage obtaining GCSE A* to C.

- 1:1 support in core subjects happening more frequently and having a positive impact
- Better targeted support for Y11 students with a named advocate in HOPE to oversee intervention, support and educational pathway planning has resulted in improvements in securing Y12 destinations and take up of the National Citizen Service⁶ (NCS). In the summer of 2016, 20 Children in Care took part in NCS. Feedback has been positive, particularly from the young people themselves who have valued the opportunities such as outdoor pursuits, team working and community impact projects.
- Early indications of those in Y12 show 80% are in education, employment or training, an improvement on previous year's performance.
- Improved relationships and contact with Out of Authority Schools. Feedback from schools is that advice from the HOPE SENCO has been valuable.
- There continue to be no permanent school exclusions of children in care and in the past year there has also been a reduction in numbers not receiving full time education and classified as pupils missing education from 52 to 39. Procedures for pupils being on part time timetables and absence in term time have been tightened by the HOPE working collaboratively with schools, education settings and children's social care.
- Over 440 professionals participated in HOPE education training with some schools receiving whole school training on attachment.
- Protocol developed with Social Care for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children entering education.

6.3 Challenges

- Continual improvement to raise achievement of children in care in all sectors.
- Reduce fixed term exclusions and persistent absence
- Promoting innovation that further embeds aspiration and achievement at the heart of corporate parenting responsibilities for schools, carers and social care colleagues.
- Developing the role of the HOPE in relation to adoption and the development of a regional adoption agency.
- Ensuring unaccompanied children and young people are welcomed and supported in school without drift or delay.
- Restructure the HOPE and sustain improvement.
- Implement the comprehensive HOPE development plan approved by Governing Body in October 2016.

Over the past year, Bristol's offer to care leavers entering higher education was reviewed and re-launched. More care leavers are in higher education than ever before, with 12% (44) of care leavers aged over 18 currently studying a course of higher education. This compares with 8% (31) in 2015 and 6% in 2014. Bristol has worked closely with its local colleges and universities to ensure that courses and the support needed to progress to and maintain a course of higher education (including financial support) is as accessible as possible. This has included delivering

⁶ The [National Citizen Service](#) (NCS) is a British voluntary personal and social development programme for 15–17 year olds in England and Northern Ireland.

training to foster carers and others in order to raise awareness and build the knowledge of those who will be supporting young people to consider higher education as a viable option.

7 Have a voice and take part

“As a member of the CICC I feel my views are always heard. You get to find out about new things and learn from different members of different organisations who come in and meet with us. I feel like anything I say is listened to and followed up as when we meet up later on things have changed.

Any child in care who is interested in joining the council should definitely join as you get to learn new techniques, meet new people and you get to socialise with other people your own age and eat lots of nice food.” Kiki, member of CICC.

The voice of children and young people is central to our Pledge and Corporate Parenting Strategy. Children and young people influence all aspects of their care plan and are supported to play a full and positive role in their community, the city and nationally. Over the past year, the voice of children and young people in service development and delivery has been strengthened in the following ways:

- Children in Care Council (CICC) meet regularly and have worked on a number of priority areas which they have then presented to councillors and senior managers at Corporate Parenting Panel. Currently, the CICC is working on a project to improve understanding and challenge stereotypes around body image and self-esteem.
- A CICC representative and Care Leavers’ representative sit on Corporate Parenting Panel and have a standing slot on the agenda in order to discuss their work and priorities.
- Children in care and care leavers have presented to Corporate Parenting Panel on a number of important issues over the past year ranging from the importance of financial support and preparation for independence to the promises that should be included in the new Pledge
- CICC worked with the young people’s magazine Rife to stage the successful creative intervention, ‘Lost and Found’, at the Watershed in autumn 2015. The exhibition that resulted allowed members of the public to respond to the items, poems, stories and art work of children in care who had written their own stories exploring things they had lost and found as a result of being in care.
- In partnership with Barnardo’s, Care Leavers United Bristol (CLUB) has been established and meets regularly at the Station. CLUB is a participation group for care leavers and as such has forged links with CICC. The group has delivered a number of fun activities, offering different opportunities to different groups of young people, including unaccompanied children. In addition to this, CLUB members have helped develop

Bristol's offer to care leavers which is now published on the RVoice web-site, and produced the 'Hear Us Out' multi-media exhibition at Paper Arts Gallery aimed at challenging some of the negative stereotypes of care leavers.

- Bristol joined New Belongings⁷ in May 2015 and undertook a survey of care leavers' views in order to better understand what actions would have the greatest impact on improving the lives of care leavers. Young people's responses informed the actions identified in Bristol's Children's Services Improvement Plan 2015/16 and a specific Care Leavers' Improvement Plan that was also developed.
- Young people are involved in recruitment and selection of staff members with whom they will work or who will hold senior positions.
- Young people are involved throughout the commissioning cycle for services relating to them. This means young people have been involved from consultation through to tender evaluation, contract monitoring and quality assurance of commissioned services such as Youth Links and care placements such as independent fostering and children's homes.

Poem from Lost and Found
Sometimes in life things get left behind
Our best jeans, love letters, our old peace of
mind
But does this make room for dear new
things to find?
Or just leave us dreaming life had a rewind?



Pictures from Lost and Found exhibition 2015.

⁷ DfE funded initiative with the Care Leavers Foundation Apr 2015-Mar 2016, aimed at improving local authorities' support for care leavers by developing a more integrated, accessible service model, embedded within local communities and focused on making a tangible difference to the lives of care leavers.

- Bristol's R-Voice web-site is developed by and for children in care and care leavers was redesigned in 2015/16 following feedback from children and young people. The new version was launched earlier this year. It is more accessible for smart phone and mobile technology users and now includes a gallery for children to display their art work. The site is managed by Reconstruct who deliver Bristol's participation, advocacy and independent visiting service for children in care.
- Bristol's commitment to improving care leavers' participation and education, employment and training outcomes, saw the development of a Care Leaver Ambassador post within the Through Care Service. An apprenticeship, it involved promotion and participation work as well as business skills development and qualification.
- Councillors and Senior Managers meet with children in care and care leavers at a variety of events including summer fun days and care Fun Days and the Care Leavers Celebration of Achievement.



Kyla and Charece (centre left and centre right) receiving their awards from Councillor Clare Hiscott, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills (left) and John Readman, Strategic Director for People (right) at this year's Care Leavers' Celebration of Achievement event.

8 Know who you will live with

As with any child, children in care require a happy, stable home life if they are to achieve their potential. Those children who cannot live with their parents do best if they can live with a family member or other person connected to their family and for all children in care, a stable, well-matched placement where the child can live until prepared and ready to leave, is the single most influential factor in improving children's outcomes and creating the conditions from which they can go on to live successful adult lives.

Bristol City Council commissions foster care, residential care and post-16 supported accommodation placements from a mixed market of internal and external providers. Such placements are costly and it is important that Bristol manages the market to ensure that placements are cost effective and of the highest quality. Effective commissioning will improve placement choice, reduce placement breakdown, support integration between children in care services, universal and specialist services and may reduce numbers of children coming into care whilst delivering value for money.

In July 2016 Bristol published its placement [Sufficiency Plan 2016-19](#) setting out its commissioning intentions to deliver placements for children in care and homes for care leavers.

8.1 Placement types

8.1.1 Foster care

The percentage of Bristol children in care in foster placements (including relative and friends placements) has risen between 31 March 2012 and 31 March 2016, from 79% to 82%. This is higher than the 2016 figure across England of 74%. Of these children, the percentage placed with relatives or friends has grown slightly, as has the percentage placed outside of Bristol.

This year Bristol City Council was one of the few councils in the UK to be awarded Fostering Friendly status by the Fostering Network. This award recognised the value the council places on supporting its foster carers with a revised career structure together with its fostering friendly employment practices. This, together with a number of other recruitment campaigns has resulted in a positive year for fostering in Bristol with increased numbers of carer enquiries and approvals. We also celebrated the achievements of our existing group of dedicated carers with an awards ceremony in October. Members of Corporate Parenting Panel have supported all our activity and have helped value and promote fostering over the past year. The Panel's priorities for 2017 include a commitment to continue to support and raise awareness of the need for carers.

Bristol's fostering service has maintained its capacity with 424 children placed across 240 carer households in March 2016. A further 164 children were placed with independent fostering agencies.

Recruitment of foster carers has targeted carers for those children where demand is greatest. Bristol is ambitious, setting targets aimed at growing the foster carer population. By building

capacity we aim to be able to offer greater choice and therefore the best opportunity to match carers to child/ren. Progress is monitored by the Children's Services Improvement Board.

Priorities for recruitment and recruitment activity have included:

- Carers for sibling groups. Bristol ran a 'better together' campaign on radio and social media to encourage prospective carers who felt they could offer to care for siblings.
- Work with BME and faith communities in Bristol to encourage people in these communities to consider fostering. We have worked with community and faith leaders, to produce a specific leaflet for the BME community, have used radio and attended cultural, faith and community events to promote Bristol as a fostering city.
- We will continue to work with all community groups in an endeavour to reach the city's population, particularly as we try to build capacity for children in the city and those seeking refuge upon arrival in the city.
- Older children feature too, with 69% of children in care aged over the age of 10, and our campaign Teenager Rock involved an open event, social media and wider press coverage. We used the campaign to focus on the positives of looking after older children and heard from carers who wouldn't do anything else!
- More recently, our focus has extended to seek carers for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and we have had a tremendous response from the people of Bristol. An information session will take place in November that will also include information about supported lodgings and mentoring options.

8.1.2 Children's homes and residential special school placements

At March 2016, 46 children and young people lived in a Children's home or residential special school. There has been little change in the number of children living in Bristol's children's homes with 21-24 children resident at the end of each quarter in 2015/16 and about the same number living in an independent children's home, often at distance. There has been an increase over the past two years in the number of children living in an independent children's home or residential provision. Such provision is generally specialist and often includes integrated education and therapy. Bristol's growing use of such provision, whilst still below the level of use for all England reflects the growing complexity of the child in care population.

Very few children are placed in residential special school with a high percentage of independent children's homes providing education and therapy or other health services. In 2013 the council closed a five bed children's home for 11–14 year olds and invested in a treatment fostering scheme with the intention that fostering should work for more children and young people in our care. Since that time, five children's homes have remained, each with a capacity of five beds.

In the second half of 2016, Ofsted inspections have highlighted the need to modernise and improve our homes to ensure they are able to deliver a high quality service in the future.

8.1.3 Short breaks for disabled children

In addition to full-time placements, Bristol also provides a range of short breaks for disabled children including short break fostering and residential care. From 2015, Bristol reduced its residential short break provision from 15 to 10 beds across two homes, and invested in an increased number and range of alternative short breaks for disabled children and their families. In Quarters 1 and 2 of 2016 Bristol had:

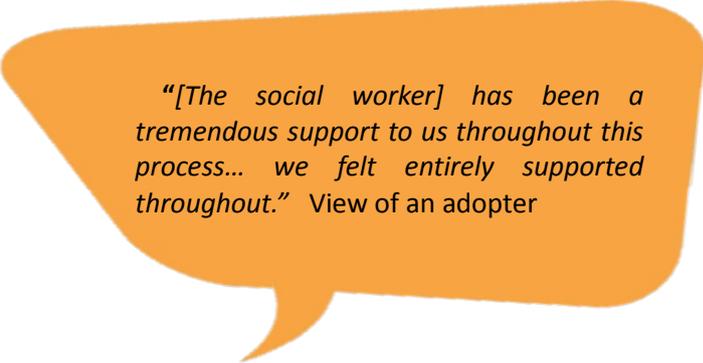
- 32 foster carers approved to provide short breaks for disabled children.
- 8 Buddies provided care and support children (not overnight)
- 35 children and young people received a regular fostering or buddying short break
- 258 short break sessions were delivered in Quarter 1 of 2016/17 and a similar number in Quarter 2
- At the end of September 2016 a further 5 carers were progressing through the fostering assessment with the aim of becoming short break carers
- 51 children and young people accessed a regular short break at one of Bristol's two residential short break homes

8.2 Adoption and achieving permanence

All children should grow up in a permanent, safe and loving home. Where this cannot be provided by a child's parents or wider family and friends (often through a Special Guardianship Order), adoption may be considered as a possible route to permanency. Bristol's Adoption Service recruits, assesses and approves adopters with the aim of ensuring that every child who needs an adoptive family is found one. The adoption service also provides on-going support for children and their adoptive families, through applications made to the Adoption Support Fund. Support is available to children who have experienced a difficult early life and their adoptive family until the child is aged 21 (or 25 with an EHCP).

In addition to this, Bristol provides independent support to birth families and supports contact between birth families and adoptive families through provision of Letterbox⁸ and supervision of direct contact arrangements where this has been agreed.

Prospective adopters have spoken positively about their experiences of assessment and training in Bristol this year, and those being matched with children have reported that meetings with the adoption medical advisor were helpful, particularly where the adopted child had identified health needs.



"[The social worker] has been a tremendous support to us throughout this process... we felt entirely supported throughout." View of an adopter

⁸ Letterbox is a scheme that enables birth relatives and adoptive parents to stay in contact by exchanging letters and photographs.

Feedback from the Chair of Bristol's Adoption Panel has also been positive. She has commended the overall quality of reports and has highlighted those occasions where additional information is required in the Child's Permanence Report. Over the coming year, the adoption team and Panel will collect and assess the quality of adoption practice and reporting, taking action to address any deficits noted.

Over the past two years, Bristol has developed its use of Fostering for Adoption placements as well as a number of foster carers being approved to adopt children in their care. Both options have provided children with greater stability and minimised any delay in achieving permanence for the child.

Over the past five years, there has been a decrease (excluding a spike in 2015) in the percentage of children placed for adoption (from 6% to 1%), bringing Bristol below the England average of 4.2%. In 2015-16:

- 46 adoption orders were granted
- 18 adoptive families were approved
- 40 children were approved for adoption
- 28 children were placed with adoptive families.

The most recent Adoption Scorecard published by the Department for Education measured data from the years 2012-2015 and showed that:

- Bristol placed 12% of children who left care with adopters, compared to a national average of 16%. This is partly balanced by the higher percentage of children in Bristol placed with Special Guardians making a total of 25% of children in Bristol who exited care to a placement with a permanent family compared to 27% nationally.
- The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 471 days compared to a national average of 593 days; making Bristol the 11th most timely of 152 local authorities across the country.
- The average time between court authority to place a child with adopters and a match being made with an adoptive family was 148 days in Bristol compared to a national average of 223 days, making Bristol the 21st most timely local authority on this measure.
- 68% of children were placed with their adoptive family within 16 months of the child entering care, compared to a national average of 47%, placing Bristol 8th best performing local authority on this measure.

9 Becoming independent – a good standard of living

In October 2014, Ofsted found that Bristol's performance for care leavers was inadequate with caseloads for leaving care workers too high, too many young people not engaged in education, training and employment and too few recorded as being in regular contact with services. Since that time, Bristol has implemented a cross cutting improvement plan, overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board and reported on at Corporate Parenting Panel, aimed at building capacity and improving outcomes.

In 2016, reported performance improved significantly on figures reported in 2015. Bristol's performance is now in line with or above UK figures for 19-21 year olds. The table below, provides a comparison between the two years and with the national picture for 2016.

	Bristol 2015	Bristol 2016	National 2016
In touch	86%	97%	87%
Not in education employment or training	45%	42%	40%
In suitable accommodation	76%	91%	83%

Moreover, Bristol has implemented a number of measures to improve the quality of the service available to care leavers and to ensure their voice is heard. Bristol's improvement work was considered by the Department for Education in January 2016 and subsequently commended by Edward Timpson, then Minister of State for Children and Families.

Improvement work has centred on the following outcome areas:

- The Local Authority as an active, strong and committed corporate parent
- Access to education, employment and training
- Care Leavers are positive about themselves
- Young people leaving care receive help and support

Strong Governance arrangements have assisted the delivery of improvement work, strengthening a shared accountability across the council to improve outcomes for care leavers. Improved data quality and monthly reporting of key performance information has also engendered a sharper focus on delivering improvements for care leavers.

Bristol joined the New Belongings Programme⁹ in April 2015, undertaking a survey of care leavers and establishing a care leaver participation group in partnership with Barnardo's which helped set the priorities for the focus of our improvement work as well as providing

⁹ DfE funded initiative with the Care Leavers Foundation Apr 2015-Mar 2016, aimed at improving local authorities' support for care leavers by developing a more integrated, accessible service model, embedded within local communities and focused on making a tangible difference to the lives of care leavers.

opportunities to share our learning and learn from other local authorities. The programme is now at an end with its impact positively evaluated¹⁰ and its legacy in Bristol and the South West being an established care leaver and local authority group that will continue to work on care leavers' priorities.

Working with young people to articulate plans and aspirations and outline the support needed to achieve those aspirations is an important part of helping children and young people to achieve. For care leavers, this is called Pathway Planning. Over 90% of Bristol's care leavers now have a Pathway Plan, with Personal Advisers trained in their completion and recent audits evidencing an improvement in their quality. In addition to this, and in response to the New Belongings Care Leaver survey, Bristol worked with ASDAN to develop an accredited independence training programme that was piloted over the summer and that will be launched in the New Year. It offers young people opportunities to practice independence skills and to gain a qualification at the same time.

9.1 Education, Employment and Training

Supporting children to achieve their potential and become successful members of society must start early and, through restructure and additional capacity, The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care and School Improvement Team have provided much greater challenge and support to schools, education and training providers to ensure year 11 and post 16 pupils are tracked and supported. This lays strong foundations for provision beyond age 18 and supporting young people's chosen progression route. Improved support is available from an Education Training and Employment worker and an enhanced careers education, information, advice and guidance service for care leavers who change from their original path.

As detailed previously, there has been a continued focus on widening participation and supporting care leavers into Higher Education with 31 (8%) care leavers in higher education in 2015/16, compared to 24 (6%) 2014/15.

9.2 Suitable Accommodation

The proportion of care leavers judged to be in suitable accommodation has increased since March 2015 and is now above the national figure (see previous table) with more young people than ever before benefitting from a staying put arrangement with their former foster carer beyond the age of 18. There is more work to do to ensure the pathway from care to suitable supported accommodation is a smooth one that moves at the young person's pace and secures accommodation of a high quality at the end of it. To that end, children's social care are working closely with strategic commissioning and housing services on the accommodation pathways project to deliver a unified pathway to accommodation for young people in 2017.

¹⁰ [New Belongings: an evaluation. Research report. October 2016. Jo Dixon and Claire Baker. DfE.](#)

9.3 Bristol's Care Leaver Offer and celebrating achievement

Over the past year, Bristol has worked with young people to revise its offer to care leavers, including a revised offer for young people progressing to higher education. That offer is now published on the [R Voice](#)¹¹ web-site. It has also held a number of events over the course of the last year which provided opportunities for young people to come together and have fun such as the summer fun day and meal, through to a series of activities and an evening celebration of achievement event that took place in National Care Leavers' week 2016.

¹¹ Bristol's web-site for children and young people in and leaving care and contributed to by young people and officers.

10 Leadership, management and governance

Bristol’s [Corporate Parenting Strategy](#) was developed as part of Bristol’s response to the Ofsted Inspection of Bristol’s services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in 2014, which considered that “The corporate parenting plan does not provide the focus and drive needed to improve services for looked after children and care leavers” and recommended that Bristol City Council “publish and implement an updated corporate parenting plan to drive improvement in the quality and coordination of services to address the current poor outcomes for looked after children and care leavers”. It was launched in November 2015 alongside [Bristol’s Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers](#) and outlines our vision, aims, and the actions we will take as a council and a city to improve outcomes for children in our care and those making the transition to adulthood.

In addition to delivery on the objectives outlined in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, a Children’s Services Improvement Plan targets areas where more focussed improvement work is required. This plan is overseen by the Children’s Services Improvement Board, chaired by the Strategic Director for People with the Corporate Parenting Panel ensuring that the City Council effectively discharges its role as a corporate parent. To strengthen the city leadership of outcomes for children in care and care leavers, the following multi-agency boards take responsibility for ensuring corporate parenting is a priority and that the relevant Corporate Parenting Strategy objectives are achieved:

Board	Area of Responsibility	Corporate Parenting Strategic Objective
Children and Families Board	Early Help	Objective 1 - Support more children to live safely with their family and reduce the need to be cared for by intervening early.
Safeguarding Children Board	Safeguarding	Objective 2 - If children cannot remain in their parents’ care, look to their extended family for support first.
		Objective 3 - Ensure that children receive the right services and only remain in care for as long as they need to. Make sure that this is informed by an assessment and plan which they and their family understand and which they have been able to contribute to.
		Objective 4 - Ensure that being in care is an enriching experience for children and that we equip them for a successful and fulfilling future.
		Objective 5 - Ensure enough good quality placements for children by recruiting, retaining and commissioning sufficient foster carers to offer children placement choice, to keep children placed locally and to achieve high levels of placement stability.

Board	Area of Responsibility	Corporate Parenting Strategic Objective
Safeguarding Children Board	Safeguarding	Objective 6 - Ensure that all young people are in safe and secure accommodation by offering appropriate accommodation to 16-18 year olds who meet the threshold for care.
Learning City Board	Education	Objective 7 - Close the attainment gap for children in care by ensuring that they receive good quality education and that we support them to have high aspirations
		Objective 8 - Improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers, including increasing the percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training.
Health and Wellbeing Board	Health	Objective 9 – Improve the health and wellbeing of children in care and care leavers, and provide services of a high standard to support their needs.

11 Challenge and quality assurance

11.1 Independent Reviewing Service

All children in care have an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) whose primary focus is to quality assure the care planning and review process for the child and to ensure that their wishes and feelings are given full consideration. The role is an important one as it should enable the local authority to achieve improved outcomes for children. An annual report is written by the Senior Reviewing Officer and presented at Corporate Parenting Panel.

Over 95% of children take part in their review in Bristol, contributing in a variety of ways, with some taking charge and chairing their meeting. This year's annual report highlighted the following strengths:

- The IROs have developed their relationships with children enabling IROs to be confident they know the child's wishes and feelings.
- Longevity of IROs involvement in reviewing individual children.
- IROs with a more reasonable case load of 70 have been able to maintain greater oversight and be more involved in cases.
- Being involved in extra meetings for children has aided the on-going oversight of the child's case.
- Evidence of challenge and scrutiny has improved through the use of the audit and case notes.
- Audits of the IRO service have been mostly positive and issues raised are generally issues the service is aware of and addressing.
- The introduction of audit has allowed managers to quickly see any concerns and to recognise areas of good practice.
- The relationship between IROs and the local authority is respectful. There is a greater understanding of the role of the IRO.

- The courts have become more aware of the role of the IRO and now request their input.
- More parents have been involved, at varying levels, in their children's reviews.
- Improved knowledge of the use of S20 Children Act – voluntary agreement to accommodate a child in care.
- Feedback forms

The service also identified the following concerns and priorities for future work:

- Life story work, life storybooks and later life letters is not always undertaken and completed in a timely way. IROs now keep cases open following adoption when life story and later life letters have not been completed for children. An audit of children's reviews showed that 32 of 126 (25%) children needed life story work. The reason recognised by the local authority is that higher caseloads mean social workers cannot always carry this work out in a timely way. This remains very concerning.
- 1.5 IRO posts will be lost in January 2017 when temporary funding ends. This will result in caseload increases to 80 per IRO which will adversely impact on service delivery.
- Ensure consistent use of the IRO case note by IROs.
- Children who are studying for their GCSEs and A levels not having access to a computer at home.
- Some children need more support to maintain relationships with significant people when they move.

12 Developing Professional Practice

In 2016, Bristol's services to children in care and care leavers were unified under a single Head of Service and the long-term social work teams remodelled into through care teams better equipped to know and support children and young people from the point at which they join the service through to their entry into adult life. Building on the learning from Bristol's Social Work Practice pilot, the structure of these teams aims to enable social workers and leaving care personal advisers to be more available to children and young people and to reduce unnecessary changes of worker, by providing dedicated admin support and a Practice Lead, whose focus is just that.

Social Workers now have a career structure that supports progression and together with Personal Advisers the additional development needs identified by them are being met in a number of ways:

- Specific training in leaving care for personal advisers and social workers
- Education, Employment and Training information and awareness raising session at whole service day
- Development of Signs of... methodology, an adaptation of the use of Signs of Safety (strengths based approach to managing risk with families) for children in and leaving care

- New service structure is supporting managers and practitioners to become more confident and competent with the use of Signs Of Safety methodology (strengths based approach to managing risk with families) to support practitioners develop skills and understanding
- Training for all in working with children and young people around suicide and self-harm, and on-going group sessions for those becoming workplace champions

13 Legislation and policy development

13.1 The Children and Social Work Bill

In May 2016 the Government published the [Children and Social Work Bill](#), closely followed by the publication of a new care leaver strategy in July 2016, [Keep on Caring, Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#) in July 2016. The Bill, expected to become law in 2017, introduces a number of changes in relation to children in care, care leavers and adoption to strengthen the corporate parenting responsibilities of councils and other government agencies:

- A set of standards, seven Corporate Parenting Principles will apply to all local authorities aimed at ensuring children in care are supported through to adulthood.
- Local authorities will be required to publish a local offer to care leavers setting out the services to which they are entitled
- An extension to the right to a Leaving Care Personal Adviser to make sure care leavers receive the support they need to 25 for all care leavers who want one.
- An appointed individual in every school with responsibility for care leavers, adopted children and children on Special Guardianship Orders to achieve positive outcomes
- The requirement to better evidence that a child's care plan takes account of a child's need for stability and support with recovery from trauma.
- A new duty on courts to have regard to a child's existing relationship with his or her prospective adopters when considering appeals to a Placement Order or challenges to the making of an Adoption Order.
- The ability to allow government to dispense with primary child welfare legislation or regulations at the request of a local authority.

13.2 The regionalisation of adoption¹² – Adoption West

In line with Government policy, Bristol is one of six local authorities working together with voluntary aided adoption agencies to form a single adoption agency for the northern region of the South West to form 'Adoption West'. The five other local authorities are: South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Gloucester and Wiltshire and the voluntary adoption organisations and support agencies are CCS, Action for Children, Barnardo's, After Adoption, PAC and Adoption UK. The service being developed is one for permanence service for permanence and will include both adoption and Special Guardianship. The provisional start date for Adoption West is April 2018, although it is possible that this may alter. It is also possible that some parts of the service may begin at different times.

¹² [Regionalising Adoption](#). DfE. June 2015.

[Adoption: A vision for change](#). DfE. March 2016.

14 Corporate Parenting Panel

14.1 Membership of the panel

All Bristol City Councillors and the elected Mayor are corporate parents and as such are invited to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Panel is chaired by the lead member for People who, in the first half of 2016 was Councillor Brenda Massey and in the second half of the year has been Councillor Clare Campion-Smith.

The core membership of the panel in 2015-2016 has included the following councillors:

- Councillor Clare Campion-Smith (chair June 2016 to present)
- Councillor Brenda Massey (chair to June 2016, continues as Panel member)
- Councillor Harriet Clough (present)
- Councillor Eleanor Combley (present)
- Councillor Gill Kirk (present)
- Councillor Celia Phipps (present)
- Councillor Harriet Bradley (present)
- Councillor Tony Carey (present)
- Councillor Anna Keen (present)
- Councillor Carole Johnson (present)
- Councillor Glenise Morgan (to May 2016)
- Councillor Sam Mongon (to May 2016)
- Councillor Helen Holland (to May 2016)
- Councillor Tim Malnick (to May 2016)

Partners and officers:

- Professor David Berridge - Bristol University – external challenge and expert advice
- Inge Sheppard – Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group
- Rachael Pryor – Head Teacher, HOPE Virtual School
- Suzanne Davies – Reconstruct for Children in Care Council
- Rosie Fortune – Care Leaver Ambassador
- Hilary Brooks – Interim Service Director, Care and Support, Children and Families
- Ann James – Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Karen Gazzard / James Beardall – Manager Placement Services
- Avon Foster Carers Association Member

14.2 Role and work of the Panel

Established in 2007 the Corporate Parenting Panel operates as a Panel of Full Council to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent of children in care and care leavers. It meets five times each year and is an effective cross party working group of elected members, senior officers, partner agencies and children in care, care leavers and foster carer representatives.

The Panel undertakes its work by championing children in care and care leavers across the council and evaluating how well the corporate parenting responsibility is discharged. It will act to hold all parts of the City Council to account for the delivery of improved outcomes in every area of a child or young person's life by:

- Overseeing the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the development of integrated services for children in care and care leavers
- Progressing the implementation of national and local policy for children in care and care leavers, including maintaining a focus on prevention and services supporting children in their birth families and particularly those on children on the edge of care.
- Scrutinising performance reports on the City Council and partners' key performance indicators for children in care and care leavers, taking action where necessary to drive improvement.
- Producing the Annual Corporate Parenting Report to Full Council, including an analysis of city council and partner's performance in respect of corporate parenting and developing an action plan for the following year.
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring effective participation arrangements for children in care and care leavers in City Council and partnership work.
- Considering regular reports on the way in which the Local Authority discharges its parental responsibility in practice through residential, family placement, adoption and case holding services provided or procured by the Local Authority.
- Taking an active role in ensuring effective quality assurance arrangements are in place for children in care and care leaver services, including a robust representation, compliments, complaints and independent reviewing arrangements.
- Identifying specific areas for exploration in order to engage in areas of specific interest and improvement.

14.3 Progress on Priorities 2015

In 2015, the following priorities were set by the Corporate Parenting Panel, next to it is the update detailing progress to date:

- Review corporate parenting arrangements and refresh the Corporate Parenting strategy and Pledge. Achieved with new Pledge and Strategy launched in October 2015.
- Keep children and young people's voices at the heart of developing services, including representation at Panel. Achieved and continuing (see section 'Have a voice and take part').
- Continue to take an outcome focussed approach. Achieved with Panel taking a themed approach across the outcome areas and interrogating the impact of activity – asking, "what difference does this make to a child's life?"
- The panel will provide challenge and support to the whole council as corporate parent. Achieved and ongoing; examples of which include the work of the Panel to request care leavers be prioritised in the Social Value Clause of council awarded contracts and in

championing apprenticeship and work experience opportunities for children in care and care leavers.

- Continue to encourage more councillors to become involved in the corporate parenting agenda. Achieved and ongoing; the Panel comprises a strong and committed group of councillors who, together with colleagues evidence their commitment to improving the lives of children in and leaving care. Examples include the commitment to developing work experience opportunities for children in care and care leavers, of supporting foster carers in the city and of supporting community and faith groups in the city to provide care and support to unaccompanied children seeking refuge in Bristol.
- Continue to oversee the important strategic and operational work of the council as corporate parents with a focus on employment and training of care leavers, attainment and progression of children in care, recruitment and retention of foster carers. Achieved and on-going as detailed in this report to Full Council.

14.4 Priorities 2016-17

Building on work to date, the priorities of the Panel will be to:

- Helping to protect children by:
 - Supporting children and young people with another chance when they make a mistake and working to reduce the offending of children in care and care leavers
- Keep children and young people's voices at the heart of developing services by:
 - Continuing to include young people at Corporate Parenting Panel
 - Meeting regularly with children and young people at CICC and CLUB as well as at Fun Days and other events –listening carefully and acting on key messages
 - Support an annual survey of young people's views
- Focus on improving health outcomes including emotional and mental health and well-being by supporting improvement work
- Supporting children and care leavers to always have 'somewhere to come home to, to someone who will listen and be an advocate' by:
 - Supporting the recruitment and retention of foster carers and supported lodgings providers as VIPs in the city
 - 7 Supporting 'Good' quality provision - providing a stable, safe environment that allows children and young people to be the best they can be
 - 5 Hearing from foster carers about what good placement support looks like
- Hold high aspirations and promote the education of children in care and care leavers by:
 - Tracking progress at all levels
 - Ensuring our children get a 'good' education at the best schools
 - Monitoring absence rates and targeting a reduction in authorised absences

15 Performance¹³

Children in care – Bristol	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Bristol target 2015/16	Latest England Average
Rate per 10,000 of children looked after aged under 18 years (as at 31 March)	78	80	77	76	73	-	60
No. of children in care (as at 31 March)	680	715	695	700	675	-	
No. of children looked after continuously for at least 12 months as at 31 March	480	490	495	485	455	-	48,490
No. of children who ceased to be looked after, yr ending 31 March	285	275	325	310	380	-	31,710
%Looked after children with SEN Without Statement/Support	34.9	34.5	31.8	31.9	-	-	32.9
%Looked after children with SEN With Statement/EHC Plan	32.1	32.2	33.2	31.9	-	-	27.6
Stability of Placements - % with 3 or more placements in year 2015 Onwards **	-	-	-	8.0	11.6	8.5	10.0
Stability of Placements - % looked after for at least 2.5 yrs and in same placement for at least 2 yrs 2015 Onwards**	-	-	-	68.0	72.4	72.0	68.0

¹³ Taken from [Local Authority Interactive Tool](#), Bristol's 903 return/Government [Statistical First Release for looked after children](#) and Corporate Parenting Scorecard

Stability of Placements - % with 3 or more placements in year Pre 2015**	13.0	10.0	10.0	-	-	-	11.0
Stability of Placements - % looked after for at least 2.5 yrs and in same placement for at least 2 yrs Pre 2015**	69.0	72.0	72.0	-	-	-	67.0
% of children looked after at 31 March, placed more than 20 miles from their homes, outside LA boundary	10.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	14.0	10.0	14.0
Crime - % of children looked after (aged 10+) convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year	10.6	7.0	6.3	10.0	10.7	-	5.0
% Looked after Children Missing from Care	-	-	-	9.0	9.1	-	8.6
Persistent Absence (PA) - % children looked after for at least 12 months classed as persistent absentees (6 terms from 2013)	6.9	5.6	6.9	7.8	-	-	4.9
Exclusion - % of children looked after for at least twelve months with at least one fixed term exclusion	17.2	15.2	15.0	-	-	-	10.3
PE219b Health assessment				91.2	81.8	88.0	90.0
PE219a Dental checks				82.3	70.8	82.0	84.1
PE258 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire completion				80.0	78.0	75.0	74.9

PE142a Care Leavers in suitable accommodation					90.5	75.0	83.9
PE036a Care Leavers in Education, Training and Employment					57.5	48.0	52.3
PE202 School aged children in care for 6 months or more with a Personal Education Plan					65.2	90.0	