

Full Council

17 January 2017



Report of: John Readman- Strategic Director People

Title: Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016

Ward: Citywide

Member presenting report: Cllr Clare Campion-Smith, Cabinet member for People and Chair – Corporate Parenting Panel

Recommendations

1. That the Mayor and all Bristol City Councillors, as Corporate Parents, support the actions identified to further promote good outcomes for children in care and care leavers in 2017.
2. That progress and challenges are noted.
3. That the Mayor and Councillors, in exercising the responsibilities of office, take action to provide opportunities that support children in care and care leavers and promote the achievement of good outcomes.

Summary

The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016 sets out progress against delivering the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the renewed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers. The report describes key areas of work aimed at delivering the promises made in the Pledge and the impact on improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers. It also sets out the Corporate Parenting Panel priorities for the year ahead.

The significant issues in the report are:

The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016 is provided at Appendix A.

The Council has made good progress in 2016 against the promises made in the Pledge.

Challenges remain, specifically, the need to improve health and educational outcomes for children in care, to continue to improve the percentage of care leavers in education, training and employment, to reduce offending, and to improve completion of life story work by reducing social work caseloads.



Policy

1. The Corporate Parenting Strategy and renewed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in November 2015. To strengthen city leadership of outcomes for children in care and care leavers, the following multi-agency boards ensure that Corporate Parenting is a priority, and are responsible for ensuring that the relevant Corporate Parenting Strategy objectives are achieved:

Board	Area of Responsibility	Strategic Objectives
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
		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

Consultation

2. **Internal**
 Corporate Parenting Panel
 Directorate, Extended and Senior Leadership Teams.

3. External
People Scrutiny Commission.

Context

4. The Council acts as corporate parent to 675 children in care and 365 young people who have left care.
5. Bristol’s Corporate Parenting Panel ensures that the City Council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent of children in care. The Panel is a group of cross-party elected members, Bristol City Council officers and other partners. The Chair is the Cabinet Member for People. The group includes representatives of looked after children, their carers, and other stakeholders.
6. The Corporate Parenting Panel acts as a hub of engagement, leadership and scrutiny of all work associated with meeting the needs of children in care and care leavers.

Proposal

7. The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016 is provided at Appendix A.
8. Over the past year, the Council has made progress in key areas:
 - Whilst we do everything we can to support children to live within their birth families, for those children who need our care, a foster family is the preferred placement type for most children. In 2016, a greater percentage of children 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 with more young people at university than ever before.
 - For care leavers, improvements have had to be focussed and swift to address weaknesses identified by the Ofsted Inspection in 2014. The Council is now regularly in touch with more care leavers than ever before, the majority are suitably housed, with many staying put with their former carer.
 - The views and influence of children and young people have been strengthened, most notably by the establishment of a partnership with Barnardo’s to deliver a care leavers participation group and strategy
9. As corporate parents, officers and members continue to hold high aspirations and to be ambitious for our children and young people. Work will continue with Council services and with partners across the city to deliver on our vision for children in care and care leavers. Improvement priorities for the forthcoming year include:
 - 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

10. Key improvement activity is included in the Year 2 Children’s Services Improvement Plan, approved by Cabinet in November 2016, which is overseen by the Children’s Services Improvement Board. This provides continued support and challenge to ensure delivery of improvement targets.

Risk Assessment

11. The Year 2 Children’s Services Improvement Plan ensures that risks around delivering required improvements and meeting inspection framework requirements are mitigated.

Public Sector Equality Duties

12. Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

The nature of this work does not require an equality impact assessment. A full equality impact assessment will be produced and used for any material changes to services for children, young people, their families, and carers.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

The term “corporate parent” is an informal term used to describe the relationship between a local authority and a child who is “looked after” within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or between a local authority and a child or young person who was looked after by them and in respect of which the local authority has ongoing duties and powers under sections 23A to 24D of the 1989 Act. This latter group of children and young people are informally known as “care leavers”. It also describes the collective responsibility of the Council, members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care for looked after children.

The Children and Social Work Bill, due to be enacted in 2017 places corporate parenting principles on a statutory footing.

The annual report sets out in detail how the Council is meeting its duties and future plans so that members can review progress, service priorities and outcomes for the children they have corporate parenting responsibility for.

(Legal advice provided by Nancy Rollason, Service Manager – Legal Services)

Financial

The direct costs of delivering the Corporate Parenting Panel are contained within the current Care & Support – Children budget envelope and the recommendations in the report will not change the budget requirement in the short or medium term.

(Financial advice provided by Michael Pilcher, Finance Business Partner)

Land

Not applicable

Personnel

Not applicable

Appendices:

Appendix A - The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None