

Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: Tuesday 25 October 2022 (commencing at 2:30pm)

**Membership:**

Persons absent are marked with an 'Ap' (apologies given) or 'Ab' (where apologies have not been sent). Substitute members are marked with a 'S'.

**County Councillors**

Sinead Anderson (Chair)  
Anne Callaghan BEM  
Ap Debbie Darby  
Sam Smith  
S John Wilmott

**County Council Officers**

	Amanda Collinson	-	Service Director for Care, Help and Protection
	Laurence Jones	-	Service Director for Commissioning and Resources
	Devon Allen	-	Group Manager for Regulated Services
Ap	Sophie Eadsforth	-	Group Manager for Looked After Children
	Claire Sampson	-	Group Manager for Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement
Ap	Jon Hawketts	-	Group Manager for Commissioning
Ap	Charles Savage	-	Head of the Virtual School
S	Stephanie McGill	-	Assistant Head of the Virtual School

**Substitute Members**

John Wilmott for Debbie Darby  
Stephanie McGill for Charles Savage

**Officers and colleagues in attendance:**

Adrian Mann	-	Democratic Services Officer
Philippa Milbourne	-	Business Support Administrator

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Debbie Darby  
Sophie Eadsforth  
Jon Hawketts  
Charles Savage

## **2. Declarations of Interests**

No declarations of interests were made.

## **3. Terms of Reference**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented a report on the Corporate Parenting Panel's proposed Terms of Reference. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel has a wide remit to support the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and to ensure that the Council and its partner agencies act as effective corporate parents. The Panel does need to be aware of any potential crossover of its business with that of the Children and Young People's Select Committee, to avoid any duplication of work. As the Panel was granted authority by full Council to establish its own Terms of Reference, it does have the discretion to review and amend them as appropriate in light of progress and learning.
- b) The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) recommended that elected members acting as corporate parents should be made aware of allegations of abuse raised by looked-after children, so that they can be assured that the appropriate investigations are being carried out and that these are being brought to a final conclusion via a proper process.
- c) To achieve the IICSA recommendations, Panel members will meet as the Looked After Children's Safeguarding Group following each Panel meeting to discuss any new allegations of physical, emotional or sexual abuse involving children in the care of the Council, foster carers or residential care staff. The progress of investigations already underway will also be reported, including which service or organisation is carrying out the inspection and the stage that the investigation has reached. The final outcome of any allegations made will be set out, including what measures have been put in place to ensure that the looked-after children affected are being kept safe both during and following the investigation.
- d) Although the reports to the Safeguarding Group will be anonymised, it will nevertheless be necessary for it to meet in private, for the confidentiality and protection of all of the people involved. The ultimate accountability for the safeguarding of children in the Council's care remains with the Chief Executive, so the previously established corporate scrutiny procedures will still remain in operation.
- e) A pro-forma for Panel members visiting children's homes is in place and officers will ensure that the correct provision has been established so that members are able to engage effectively with all looked-after children as part of their visit, particularly with those who experience deafness, blindness, or other potential barriers to communication.

- f) An independent inspector carries out monthly 'Regulation 44' visits to all 7 of the Council's children's homes – which will be increasing to 9 in number, shortly. Ofsted also carries out regular inspections of each home (at a minimum of once per year) and its reports will be submitted to the Panel, for review.
- g) The Panel requested that, in addition to any reports from Ofsted, the latest Regulation 44 visit report for each of the Council's children's homes should also be submitted to its quarterly meetings, for review.

**Resolved (2022/001):**

- 1) To approve the proposed Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

**4. Work Programme**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, presented a report on the Corporate Parenting Panel's proposed programme of work. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Panel's standing agenda items will include: regular reporting from the Foster Carers' Liaison Group and the Children in Care Council ('No Labels'); visit schedules and observations from visits; and the appropriate Regulation 44 and Ofsted reports and performance dashboards relating to Council-run homes and homes commissioned solely for Council use.
- b) A programme of reporting on issues affecting children in care has been developed for the next 12 months and engagement will be carried out with the Children and Young People's Select Committee to ensure a joined-up approach. The reports coming to the Panel are intended to be suitable for publication and discussion in public, in the interests of promoting full transparency.

**Resolved (2022/002):**

- 1) To note the proposed Work Programme for the Corporate Parenting Panel, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

**5. Corporate Parenting for Councillors – E-Learning Resource**

Laurence Jones, Service Director for Commissioning and Resources, provided an update on the e-learning available to members on Corporate Parenting. The following points were discussed:

- a) A module on Corporate Parenting, developed by the East Midlands Councils, is available through the Local Government Association's Councillor e-learning platform (<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/leadership-workforce-and-communications/councillor-development/councillor-e-learning>). All Panel members are encouraged to make use of this resource to inform them in the effective carrying out of their role.

**Resolved (2022/003):**

- 1) To note the e-learning available on Corporate Parenting from the Local Government Association.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 2:55pm.

**Chair:**