



**Report of the Director of Human Resources,
Performance & Communications,
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
on Tuesday 10th February 2015**

**Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (BMBC) Corporate Parenting Panel
Annual Report – Cover Report**

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The attached report 'Copy E' is an annual update of the work of the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP). The role of the CPP is to ensure that BMBC, through its elected members, officers and partner agencies fulfils its corporate parenting role. This means providing commitment and leadership to 'being there' for children in care and care leavers as well as monitoring performance in terms of improving outcomes.
- 1.2 As a number of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (CSSC) are members of the CPP, it has been agreed that this annual report will be an agenda item on the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that challenge can be provided by Members who are not directly involved with the CPP.
- 1.3 Within the membership of the CPP, as well as the Cabinet Spokesperson(s), a minimum of 7 Elected Members providing cross-party representation are assigned to the panel. However, it is noted that ALL Elected Members have a responsibility as Corporate Parents to ensure that all children at the edge of care, in care or who have left care are given opportunity to reach the best possible outcome they can.

2. Introduction and Summary

- 2.1 Children are brought into care for a variety of reasons. As noted by the Department for Education report on Children in Care (2014), despite improvements, children in care are more likely to experience poorer educational outcomes and life chances, also are more likely to come into contact with the criminal system and have physical and mental health problems. It is therefore essential that the quality of services for these children is monitored and challenged.
- 2.2 The attached CPP Annual Report (Copy E) outlines the responsibilities and statutory duties of the Council to protect children as well as the role and responsibilities of Councillors as Corporate Parents. The CPP is responsible for children in care, children at the edge of care as well as young people who have left care.

- 2.3 The CPP Annual Report acknowledges that there continues to be high attendance at meetings by the full range of members. At each meeting, a number of performance reports are provided to the CPP regarding children in care. This enables the panel to review and identify trends and implications for the wellbeing of children.
- 2.4 The panel has aided in improving services to children in care, some examples include challenging the service around health and dental assessments which have now been significantly improved. Also, the panel has taken an active role in sourcing ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers as well as ensuring suitable accommodation is provided for children in various circumstances.
- 2.5 The CPP has links with a number of different groups to undertake their work. Members of the CPP for example regularly attend the Care 4 Us Council which is a way that children and young people who are in foster care, residential care or are looked after by the Council can have their say about things that really matter to them and affect their lives. This helps to get direct customer feedback from children in care regarding the services provided to them.
- 2.6 The attached report highlights a number of areas of performance requiring attention. This includes specific recommendations made by Ofsted in their report from 02/06/14. As noted in the CPP Annual Report, there is significant work for the CPP to achieve over the next 12 months. The work programme needs to be adjusted to reflect the issues raised by Ofsted, the Jay report regarding child sexual exploitation (CSE) and forthcoming statutory guidance around permanence for children in care.

3. Invited witnesses

- 3.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting:
- Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families Directorate
 - Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Social Care and Safeguarding
 - Michelle Whiting, Interim Head of Children in Care
 - Cllr Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson - People (Safeguarding)
 - Councillor Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Member, People (Achieving Potential)

4. Possible areas for discussion

- 4.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:
- What impact has the CPP had on the outcomes for our children in care? How is this evidenced?
 - How do we ensure that the voice of our children in care is reflected in the design and improvement of services?

- Is there open sharing of data between stakeholders to enable work to be carried out effectively?
- What is done to ensure that Barnsley children in care placed out of the area receive high quality services?
- What should be prioritised by the CPP over the next 12 months?
- How is attending the Care 4 Us Council promoted to our children in care to encourage them to participate?
- How are the views of carers incorporated into the work of the CPP to help improve services?
- How do you ensure that the work of the CPP is not being duplicated elsewhere?
- What specific action has the CPP taken to address the findings of the 02/06/14 Ofsted report?
- How can Members not involved directly in the meetings support the work of the CPP and our children in care?

5. Background Papers and Links

- Copy E (attached) – Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2013/14
- DfE Report - Children in Care: Research priorities and questions 2014
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292032/Children_in_Care_Research_priorities_and_questions_FINAL_v1_1.pdf

6. Glossary

BMBC – Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
 CPP – Corporate Parenting Panel
 CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation
 CSSC - Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
 DfE – Department for Education
 Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

7. Officer Contact

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