



## **Barnsley Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2013-14**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1 This report sets out an annual update on the corporate parenting arrangement in Barnsley, particularly progress and outcomes of the Panel during 2013-14. It advises members on key legislation and guidance, which has seen a plethora of change in recent years. The report aims to strengthen the role and responsibilities of corporate parents in improving outcomes for children and young people.

### **2. Proposals and reasons: Corporate Parenting – our responsibilities Legal Framework**

- 2.1 The Children Act 1989 and the Leaving Care Act 2000 place clear statutory duties upon the Council to protect children from suffering significant harm and to provide continued financial and transition support to care leavers aged up to 21 (or 25 if in full time education). Underpinning corporate parenting is a wide range of national policies, guidance, regulations and legislation, which are subject to change by High Court rulings, such as the Southwark ruling in 2009.
- 2.2 The Munro review has significantly impacted on the work we do with children and young people looked after. The Final Report of the Munro Review of Child Protection Services published in May 2011 includes Professor Munro's 15 recommendations which have significant implications for the way that child protection services will be run at a local level. In relation to children looked after, key reforms to be taken forward include building the capacity of social workers and strengthening their professional practice; a reduction in the amount of central prescription; increased evaluation of the effectiveness of the help provided to children and families; and greater recognition that safeguarding is a multi-agency responsibility.
- 2.3 The revised care planning regulations and guidance, including The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers and the Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children March 2010, place increased emphasis on effective care planning with a focus on the child, and are designed to improve the quality and consistency of care planning, placement and case review for looked after children. They also aim to improve the care and support provided to care leavers.
- 2.4 The UK Government has made significant reforms to the youth remand framework with the implementation of the LASPO Act in December 2012. The Act implicitly attributes further responsibility to Local Authorities by means of children and young people being remanded to youth detention accommodation, being treated as children looked after and being eligible for leaving care services if they are looked after beyond 13 weeks.

- 2.5 There will be a new guidance on improving permanence for children in care following the government consultation published in October 2014. This will include more rigorous arrangements for children in long term foster care and children returning to their families from care.

### **3. Corporate Parenting – the role and responsibility of Councillors**

- 3.1 Effective corporate parenting requires knowledge and awareness of the needs of children and young people looked after and the services they receive. This is a shared responsibility by the Council as a whole. The role of the corporate parent is therefore:

- a) To receive and consider accurate and timely management information reports on the numbers, characteristics and needs of looked after children and care leavers;
- b) To receive and consider reports demonstrating how effectively Barnsley is serving its looked after population through the provision of services and targeted initiatives;
- c) To receive briefings on new national and local initiatives designed to improve children and young people's life chances;
- d) To gain knowledge of services based on direct involvement and opportunities to meet and gain the views of stakeholders, especially listening to the views of children and young people looked after and members of the Care 4 Us Council;
- e) To monitor and review progress on the delivery of Corporate Parenting 'Promise' to children looked after and care leavers;
- f) To ensure that decisive action is taken to address any shortcomings in the services provided to children and young people.

### **4. Corporate Parenting in Barnsley**

- 4.1 Children in Care are those children and young people aged 0 -18 years who cannot safely remain with their family and are cared for by the local authority. The local authority has continuing legal and financial responsibilities to many of these children until they are 21 (or 25 if in full time education). This includes all unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) and children with multiple disabilities. Children in Care and Care Leavers are one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our community.
- 4.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel is responsible for children in care, children at the edge of care and children and young people who have left care.

## **5. Corporate Parenting Panel Overview**

- 5.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Young People.
- 5.2 The Panel was meeting quarterly but the decision was made in January 2014 to make bi-monthly meetings.
- 5.3 There continues to be high attendance at meetings by the full range of members.

## **6. Corporate Parenting Progress throughout the year 2013-14**

- 6.1 Over the past year the Panel has considered reports on topics including:
  - Placement and sufficiency strategy
  - The educational achievements of looked after children
  - Access to education, training and employment for care leavers
  - Children in Care Performance Report

At each of its meetings the Corporate Parenting Panel receives an updated bespoke performance report which captures data, provides a commentary and performance rating against all key performance indicators of relevance to children in care. Panel members receive a cover report which highlights the areas of concern and invites and encourages member challenge. Any areas of concern may be referred to Cabinet which may refer for scrutiny committee consideration. Corporate Parenting Panel members have been encouraged to attend and a number have received training in comprehending and making use of the performance reports to support member challenge.

One of the key outcomes arising from the performance reports and from the Ofsted report, is that the Panel will challenge the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEP's).

The Panel also receives at each of its meetings a Children in care 'status report' by which members may examine the numbers, locations and types of placements of Barnsley's children and ask questions about trends and the implications for children's wellbeing.

The Corporate Parenting Panel has taken an active role in sourcing ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers.

Members have visited local authority children's homes and promoted suitable move on accommodation for care leavers and the Staying Put Scheme for care leavers who wish to remain living with their foster carers.

The Corporate Parenting Panel challenged the service around health and dental assessments. These have now made a significant improvement.

The chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel and another councillor from the Corporate Parenting Panel regularly attend the Care 4 Us Council to ensure that links between the two bodies remain strong, and to get direct customer feedback on whether children and young people feel cared for and safe, as well as to be able to deal with any other issues raised by Care 4 Us.

The Corporate Parenting Panel attends key participation events such as the annual celebration event.

Corporate parents asked for more information about children in care from other local authorities placed in Barnsley and requested officers to strengthen the response to these children

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel received training on the role and expectations of corporate parents. This led members to decide that their role is to act as 'pushy parents' for children in care on the edge of care and care leavers. The litmus test being "Would this be good enough for my child or me if I was a child?"

Having explored the areas covered by Corporate Parenting, the panel set a work programme for the year to ensure all aspects are covered.

## 6.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel has links with three key groups:

Children in Care Health Improvement Group – the Chair sits on the Corporate Parenting Panel and formally reports back each meeting. It was agreed to further strengthen this by having one of the Corporate Parenting Panel councillors also sitting on the group. Minutes of meetings of this group are considered by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Care 4 Us Children's Council - the lead member and chair of the Corporate Parenting board sits on this group plus another councillor plus minutes of this group are considered by the CP board

Children in Care Education Improvement Group – this is a newly formed group chaired by the Virtual School Headteacher. A Corporate Parenting Panel member has agreed to sit on this group and again minutes of this group will be considered by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

In addition:

- Corporate Parenting members attend children in care leaving events
- A member of the panel has been part of the Regulation 33 inspections of Barnsley's children's homes.

## **7. Governance arrangements**

- 7.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is established within the Council's Constitution and has strong links with the Member Safeguarding Children Panel, which has a similar challenge, advisory and oversight role. The Corporate Parenting Panel has specific Terms of Reference which emphasise the above responsibilities and its overarching responsibility to ensure that the Council, through elected members, officers and partner agencies, fulfils its corporate parenting role. Although the Corporate Parenting Panel does not possess Executive powers, the Panel is able to refer matters to the Council's Cabinet to consider any actions which the Panel recommends. The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee may, in turn, receive any of those issues which are referred to Cabinet and which the Cabinet feels would benefit from an in depth investigation in open session. It is proposed that the Corporate Parenting Panel annual report is considered by both the Cabinet and the full Council meeting.
- 7.2 Currently, meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel take place during the school and working day. In order to provide a more accessible forum for children and young people to attend the Panel it is proposed that future meetings take place in the late afternoon and that the agenda be constructed in two parts:-
- Business meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel;
  - Meeting of the virtual school governing body;

## **8. Children in Care Council**

- 8.1 The Children in Care Council directly supports the Corporate Parenting Panel to measure and monitor the effectiveness and quality of 'Corporate Parenting' to children and young people; according to the views and experiences of the children who are in care. The panel remains fully committed to listening to the voice of service users and the active involvement of children and young people within the decision-making processes.
- 8.2 A key recommendation of the 2014 Ofsted is to widen the council to include the voice of younger children and more children in care as well as the existing care leavers.
- 8.3 Work has started with younger children and it is expected that the membership of the Care 4 Us Council will change and be informed by wider group of younger children who may not want to sit on the council directly but will actively inform the council via direct work and activity sessions of their views wishes and feelings. It is intended that the links between the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Care4Us Council will be progressively strengthened so as to ensure the children's voice is directly heard by the Panel and that two way communication between both bodies will be enhanced.

## 9. Performance Information

Looked after Children data for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 including comparable data for the previous year 2012/13

	2013	2014	Commentary
<b>Numbers of LAC</b>	235	228	Numbers at the end of September have risen slightly to 226 although this has now reduced to 222. The numbers who have ceased to be LAC exceeded the number of admissions largely as a result of a number of young people reaching the age of 18 years over the summer period. In addition, there have been a small number of adoption orders made in the summer period. We are still predicting a rise in numbers in response to work being undertaken around neglect however more intense focused work with adolescents on the edge of care may help to offset the pressure as the data tells us that most children admitted are in the under 5 and over 14 age range.
<b>LAC Health Assessments</b>	79.3%	96.9%	Considerable effort has been made to address the data inputting problems at a child level that resulted in under-reporting in relation to dental checks. The most recent performance is showing a considerable improvement to the point where we have now exceeded the target.
<b>LAC Dental Checks</b>	89.7%	97.6%	Considerable effort has been made to address the data inputting problems at a child level that resulted in under-reporting in relation to dental checks. The most recent performance is showing a considerable improvement to the point where we have now exceeded the target.
<b>LAC Education</b>			
<b>Completed PEPs</b>	no comparable data from last year due to system change	96.0%	PEPs are meeting statutory requirements, however, there were some criticisms from Ofsted in relation to our PEP completion and monitoring progress and this will be an area we will concentrate on in the coming weeks and months. An Education Steering Group is to be convened in September in order to drive forward the improvements that are required in relation to educational progress of our children.
<b>Exam results (Children in Care)</b>	7.1%	0% unvalidated	2013/14 cohort = 12. In 2014, no Children in Care in the eligible cohort achieved 'Gold Standard' or 5 A*-C grades overall. This is partly due to low prior attainment of the children with 83% being either school action plus or statemented and only two pupils achieving level 4 in English and Maths at KS2 and partly due to changes in qualifications valid for these

			performance measures. Data from schools had indicated one pupil was likely to achieve 'Gold Standard' and 3 to achieve 5A*-C. It is disappointing that despite targeted interventions, actual outcomes failed to achieve these levels. In 2014, the proportion of CiC making expected progress in English remains in line with national figures for children in care with a proportion of CiC making expected progress in maths improving from last year to be in line with national figures for children in care.
<b>Foster Carers</b>	80	77	BMBC is now part of the White Rose consortium with regard to independent fostering placements, residential and supported accommodation. The White Rose is made up of the majority of Yorkshire authorities and it enables Barnsley to take advantage of scale in terms of getting the best price and maintaining high quality in line with best procurement practise.
<b>Adoption (% adopted during the year ending)</b>	17	27	There is good performance in terms of the numbers of children being adopted. The challenge is around how quickly children are adopted. While new children coming into the system are being adopted more quickly now there are previous children who have waited too long that now they are being adopted are having a negative impact on the performance figures. Because the adoption score card measure this over 3 years performance will not come up for another 2 years.
<b>Commissioned Placements</b>	102	95	The sufficiency strategy is based around the reduction of external placements.
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	
<b>Care leavers in suitable accommodation</b>			The 19 year old cohort at the end of Q4 comprises 23 young people. Of these 23, there were 3 classed as being in 'unsuitable' accommodation. Of the three, one young person was in temporary hostel accommodation, which was unsuitable for his needs. The remaining two were young people in custody. These two young people are serving long sentences which are likely to last beyond their 21st birthday. The remaining 20 young people were all in 'suitable' accommodation. 20% remain in Staying Put provision with former foster carers, 15 young people, 5 of whom are at university.

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	
<b>Care leavers in employment, training or education</b>	45.2%	62%	As at Q2 2014 there has been an increase in terms of numbers of young people engaging in ETE. This has been a mixture of young people returning to college, gaining employment and participating in training schemes.
<b>Children Missing From Care or Home</b>			On missing from care incidents, it is important to remember that in the majority of cases where children are in the care of BMBC and reported as missing, their whereabouts are actually known and we are often in frequent contact with them. The AED is alerted immediately about any missing Barnsley LAC and informed when they return. Ofsted commented positively about this in their report.
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	
<b>Youth Offending (Children in Care)</b>	9 <5%	6 <5%	Overall the rate of offending by children in care is positive in comparison with our statistical neighbours.

**OFSTED Ratings for Children’s Residential Establishments (no commentary available)**

<b>Spring Lane</b>		<b>May 2013</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> inspection) Outstanding	<b>Feb 2014</b> Good progress (interim)
<b>Newsome Avenue</b>	<b>Oct 2012</b> Good	<b>Dec 2013</b> Good	<b>Mar 2014</b> Good progress (interim)



## 10. Ofsted Inspection 2 June 2014 – 25 June 2014

The Ofsted Inspection of the effectiveness for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers was undertaken between the 2 June 2014 – 25 June 2014 and the overall judgement is 'requires improvement'.

Under the inspection framework the following judgements were made:

Children who need help and protection	Requires Improvement
Children looked after and achieving permanence	Requires Improvement
Adoption performance	Requires Improvement
Experience and progress of care leavers	Good
Leadership, management and governance	Requires Improvement
The separate review of Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board	Requires Improvement

### Key points from the Ofsted Report 02/06/14 for Corporate Parenting Panel

**“Children’s Services in Barnsley require improvement because:**

6. **Services to prevent children needing to come into care are not effective for teenagers with complex problems.**
7. **The educational achievement for children in care in Barnsley is not good. The plans to help children in care achieve better at school need to be improved to make sure that everyone working with the children understands their progress and needs.**
8. **Some permanency plans are not made as quickly as they should be, and some children wait too long for an adoptive family to be identified.**
9. **Managers and political leaders (the corporate parent) could do more to support the needs of children in care and care leavers to help them feel secure and to succeed in life.**

#### Areas for Improvement

16. **Processes to reduce risk for children at risk of sexual exploitation need to be more effective.**
19. **Services to prevent the need for teenagers to become looked after need to be enhanced.**
20. **The use of special guardianship orders should be promoted for those children with a permanence plan who no longer need to be looked after by the local authority**

22. The response to access to records requests by young people in care and care leavers needs to be improved and the provision of information about children's and young people's life history should be developed in a way that makes it clear and more easily understand.
23. Personal education plans should contain accurate and detailed achievement data and personal development information which is updated at every review to ensure that attainment for individual children looked after improves.
24. The virtual school should track and challenge the attainment, progress and personal development of all children in care from babies to care leavers to ensure the gap between educational outcomes for children looked after and all children is narrowed.
25. Membership of the Care 4 Us Council should be increased to ensure that it reflects a broader age-range of children looked after and care leavers.
26. The role of corporate parenting within the Borough needs to be strengthened to provide effective challenge to managers and to improve outcomes for children looked after. “

**Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley Council**  
**Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers**  
**Inspection date: 2 June 2014 – 25 June 2014**  
**Report published: 8 August 2014**

## **11. The Corporate Parenting Panel Work Plan for 2014- 15**

- 11.1 The proposed work plan needs to be revised in light of the Ofsted Inspection findings and in terms of developing some smart objectives for the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 11.2 Professor Alexis Jay's Report on the Scrutiny and monitoring of Looked after Children who are missing and vulnerable to CSE.
- 11.3 The Corporate Parenting Panel is in the process of revising the terms of reference which are being taken to the December meeting.

### **Corporate Parenting Panel Meetings – 2014/2015**

<b>17 Mar 2014</b>	<b>28 Apr 2014</b>	<b>9 June 2014</b>	<b>8 Sept 2014</b>	<b>20 Oct 2014</b>	<b>15 Dec 2014 TBC</b>	<b>26 Jan 2015 TBC</b>	<b>9 Mar 2015 TBC</b>
Update on Imp Board	From A Distance – Looked After Children living away from home	Children in Care Placement Information Report	Ofsted Single Inspection of Services for Children and Care Leavers	Feedback from Health Steering group	Be an active citizen – (Participation and Inclusion Strategy)  TOR	Healthy Children in Care	Safety of Children in Care

Children in Care Strategy	Participation and Involvement Strategy Refresh	Overview of Children in Care and Care Leavers	Barnsley Placement and Sufficiency Strategy for CiC	Feedback from Education of CiC Steering group			
	Forward Planning – report themes to consider over the next year	Fostering and Adoption Recruitment		Children in Care attainment			
		Work Programme for Corporate Parenting Panel		Enjoy and Achieve (Barnsley Virtual School for CiC development Plan/ Self Evaluation Report for FD)/Employment and Training			

Standard Agenda Items:

Children in Care Status report

Children in Care Performance Report

Minutes of the Education of Children in Care Steering Group

Minutes of the Health of Children in Care Steering Group

Minutes of the Care 4 Us Council

**12. Conclusion**

- 12.1 Corporate Parenting Panel is where the responsibility and accountability for the wellbeing and future prospects for Barnsley children in care ultimately rest.
- 12.2 A good corporate parent must offer everything that a good parent would, including stability. It must address both the difficulties which children who are looked after experience and the challenges of parenting within a complex system of different services.
- 12.3 The Ofsted report has outlined a number of different areas where the Corporate Parenting Panel needs to challenge and support the development of services to ensure that Barnsley’s children in care have good outcomes.
- 12.4 The challenge for Barnsley is to become the ‘PUSHY PARENT’ 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 outcomes they can.

- 12.5 Being a pushy parent means not offering good enough care, but outstanding care to children that have had a difficult start in life so that they become positive citizens.
- 12.6 There is significant work for the Corporate Parenting Panel 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 and forthcoming statutory guidance around permanence for children in care.
- 12.7 It is felt that the new structure and tighter governance mechanisms should enable the Corporate Parenting Panel to exert its influence to achieve these improvements.