

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

TITLE: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL (2022/2023)

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	26 th JULY 2023
Cabinet Member Portfolio	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Key Decision	No
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

To present, for Cabinet's consideration, the latest Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel which sets out the progress made in supporting children in care to achieve the best range of outcomes, together with ensuring young people leaving care make a successful transition into adulthood and independence, during this period (*Please see Appendix*).

Council Plan priority

The terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel, together with the role of elected members as corporate parent to children in care, as well as young people leaving care, support the following Council priorities:

- **Healthy Barnsley** – By ensuring this group of children and young people are protected from harm and are enabled to live independently and maintain their wellbeing, thereby reducing inequality in both health and income
- **Learning Barnsley** – Children and young people are enabled to achieve the best range of outcomes through improved educational achievement.

Recommendations

That Cabinet notes the progress and achievements made by the Panel in supporting children in care, together with young people leaving care, in accordance with our statutory responsibilities, during this period.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Both the Children Act (2004) and the Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000) continue to place a statutory duty upon the Council to protect children from suffering significant harm and to provide continued financial and transitional support for care leavers aged up to 25.
- 1.2 More recently, Part 1 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017) and the publication of subsequent statutory guidance, requires the Council to give due regard to act in the best interests of and to secure the best outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet consider the Corporate Parenting Panel's latest annual report, firstly, through noting how the Panel demonstrates its continuing compliance with the responsibilities indicated in Paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 of this report and the added value which it brings to the experience of children and young people both in and leaving care, particularly in helping them stay safe and healthy; improve their aspirations and prospects as well as enjoy enriching lives in accordance with the Council's 'Pledge' to children in care and the Local 'Offer' to young people leaving care in the Borough.
- 2.2 Secondly, Sections 2.0 and 3.0 of the enclosed Annual Report outline the role and responsibilities, firstly of the Panel itself and, secondly, of elected members as a corporate parent. Moreover, Section 8 of the Annual Report indicates the progress and achievements made by the Corporate Parenting Panel towards improving the range of outcomes for children in care and care leavers during 2022/23, including on the following:
 - Safeguarding and protection.
 - Health and wellbeing.
 - Achieving their potential through education.
 - Permanence, quality of placements and placement stability.
 - Promoting engagement, participation and inclusion.
 - Ensuring an effective transition to adulthood and independence

In addition, Section 9, together with the Annex to the Annual Report outlines the Panel's priorities looking forward into 2023/24: The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel has ensured that all children in need of care in any part of Barnsley, together with those from other areas who are placed in the Borough, receive the help and support which they require in order to stay safe and healthy, gain a good education and to lead rewarding lives.

- 2.3 As Cabinet will be aware, improving and enriching the lives of these groups of vulnerable young people is important for 'levelling-up' opportunity in our Borough, closing the gap in inequality particularly in health and educational attainment as well as improving social mobility and life chances.

3.1 IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

3.2 There are no direct financial implications arising through consideration of the Panel's latest Annual Report for 2022/23.

3.3 As highlighted in the report, increased investment was approved by the Council to improve and strengthen Barnsley's children's services. The investment has underpinned the implementation of an ambitious development plan to improve quality of practice, service delivery and outcomes for vulnerable children in care and care leavers for whom the Council is the corporate parent. A total of £3.5M was invested in 2022/23, with a further £6.8M investment planned for 2023/24, which includes additional resources in care leavers financial offer and advocacy support.

3.3 Legal

3.4 The Corporate Parenting Panel continues to comply with the statutory responsibilities indicated in Paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 of this report. During 2023/24 the Panel will consider the Government's proposals concerning the role of a corporate parent which have recently been the subject of consultation as part of the broader reform of children's social care. Cabinet will be kept informed of the emerging implications of these reforms, including upon the terms of reference of the Panel.

3.5 There are no other legal implications emerging through consideration of this report.

3.8 Equality

3.9 Assessments for children in need of help or protection in the Borough include provision for meeting any specific needs as part of promoting equality. In addition, one of the specific proposals being considered as part of the recent central government consultation on children's social care reform is whether to recommend that young people who experience and then leave care to live independent lives, should be designated as having a protected characteristic under Equality legislation.

3.10 Sustainability

3.11 There are no implications for sustainability in the Borough emerging through this report

3.12 Employee

3.13 There are no direct employee implications emerging through consideration of the Panel's latest Annual Report

3.14 Communications

- 3.15 The Annual Report will be published and promoted through the Council's Web site and to make stakeholders aware of the importance of the Panel's work together with the value it adds to supporting vulnerable children and young people in the Borough.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Annual Report has been drafted with the valuable help and input of children in care and care leavers, including representatives from the Barnsley Care4Us Council. The Council's Senior Management Team has also been consulted and has endorsed the annual report.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The exclusive purpose of this report is to present the latest annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel and its continued compliance with the statutory responsibilities indicated in Paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 earlier.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Please see Paragraphs 1.1, 1.2 and 3.4 of this report. The annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Panel's forward programme, provide Cabinet with an insight into the challenges faced by these vulnerable groups of young people and how the Council, through its unwavering commitment continues to invest resources in enabling looked after children and young people leaving care are supported to experience inclusive enriching lives

7.0 GLOSSARY

- 7.1 None, applicable.

8.0 LIST OF APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix: Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel (2022/23)
Annex to Appendix: Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme (2023/24)

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date <i>Joshua Amahwe (05/07/2023)</i>
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date <i>M P Farrell (Team Leader, Social Care Team)</i> <i>7th July 2023</i>

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