

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CHILDREN'S SERVICES) TO CABINET ON 16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021

#### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BARNSELY CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL (2020/21)**

##### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present for Cabinet's consideration the latest Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel (*Please see Appendix*).

##### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That Cabinet notes the progress and achievements made by the Panel in supporting children and young people in care, together with care leavers, during this period.**

##### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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. As part of this, the publication of a 'Local Offer' to young people leaving care, including provision of a personal advisor, was considered and approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

##### **4.0 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

- 4.1 Please see Paragraph 5.1 of this report.

##### **5.1 PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION**

- 5.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel's latest annual report, attached as Appendix 1, demonstrates its continuing compliance with the responsibilities indicated in Paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 above 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 care leavers in the Borough.

5.2 Notably, Section 3.0 of the Annual Report outlines the role and responsibilities of the elected member as a corporate parent. It is envisaged that an All-Member Information Briefing on the role of the councillor as a corporate parent and in safeguarding children from harm will be scheduled during 2021. Moreover, Section 7.0 together with the Annex to the Appendix detail the progress and achievements made by the Corporate Parenting Panel, firstly, towards improving the range of outcomes for children in care and care leavers, including on the following, during 2019/20:

- Safeguarding and protection.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Achieving their potential through education.
- Permanence, quality of placements and placement stability.
- Promoting engagement, participation and inclusion.

and, secondly, the Panel's priorities looking forward into 2021/22:

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE AND SERVICE USERS**

6.1 The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel includes ensuring that all children in need of care in any part of the Borough, 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.

6.2 During a period in which social distancing, self-isolation and restrictions upon the public's movement could, potentially, have seriously impacted upon provision, the Council and its partners have continued to ensure that the full range of our statutory responsibilities, as noted in Paragraph 3.2 of this report, are fully met and that no children in care or care leavers are exposed to a greater risk of harm as a result of any lockdown

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this annual report. Financial performance, namely resources, budget and spend in relation to discharging the Panel's responsibilities is regularly reported through the Council's budgetary procedures. The Quarter 4 corporate finance report outlines the increased cost pressures in 2020/21 in safeguarding vulnerable children and young people and meeting the placement needs of children in care and care leavers.

## **8.0 EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Other than its statutory responsibilities as outlined in Section 3.0 of this report, there are no additional legal implications arising through consideration of the Annual Report.

## **10.0 CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Similarly, the Annual Report has no adverse implications for young people or their carers' in being able to access relevant services through various channels.

## **11.0 COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The Annual Report will be published and promoted via the Council's Web Site in order to make stakeholders aware of the importance of the Panel's work and the value it adds to supporting vulnerable children and young people in the Borough.

11.2 This is the third annual report of the Panel to have been published following Ofsted's standard inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in the Borough (2018) which awarded 'Good' judgements in every key area of the inspection, including services for children in care and care leavers. Moreover, in a follow-up visit to the local Test of Assurance undertaken by the Government's National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers in 2018, Barnsley was cited as an exemplar for good corporate parenting in their first annual report.

11.3 These outcomes have provided assurance, to our communities, of the Council's continuing commitment towards fulfilling our 'Pledge' for children in care and in delivering our 'local offer' to care leavers, particularly as we pursue our ambitions for the Borough approaching 2030.

## **12.0 CONSULTATIONS**

12.1 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.

## **13.0 THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

13.1 The role and responsibilities discharged by the Corporate Parenting Panel support numerous Strategic Priorities of the Borough's Children and Young People's Plan (2019-22) relating to children in care and care leavers. These strategic priorities are as follows:

- Keeping Children and Young People Safe.
- Improving Education, Achievement and Employability.
- Tackling Child Poverty and Developing Stronger, Resilient Families.
- Supporting All Children, Young People and Families To Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices.
- Encouraging Positive Relationships and Strengthening Emotional Health.

13.2 In addition, the Panel's work supports one of the Council's existing Corporate Priorities, notably by ensuring children and young people in care are kept safe from harm and are enabled to have their say in overseeing the quality and effectiveness of local services, as part of improving their potential and life chances.

13.3 Performance relating to the data set of relevant, local indicators, including the outturn data for Quarter 4 (2020/21) and direction of travel from 2017/18, is noted in

Section 8 of the Annual Report (Appendix 1). Whilst inevitably the impact of the Covid- 19 Pandemic has uncovered an increase in the number of children entering care in the Borough and negatively affected school attendance, measures have been adopted to address these issues and in comparing performance during Quarter 4 with the corresponding Quarter each year over the last 3 years, performance continues to improve on many of the local indicators and in many instances, is better than the National Average and the average among statistically comparable local authorities..

#### **14.0 PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

14.1 A crucial element of the Council's 'Pledge' to children in our care, together with care leavers, is to promote, support and respect their identity. Therefore, it will be an ongoing responsibility for the Panel to ensure the specific needs of any children in care and care leavers belonging to groups with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (2010) are met in a way which respects and promotes their identity.

#### **15.0 TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY**

15.1 Please see Paragraphs 13.1 and 13.2 of this report.

#### **16.0 TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES**

16.1 A key responsibility of the Panel is helping ensure improvements take place in the health of children and young people in care. According to the latest published data on the timeliness of both health and dental assessments, our performance has remained stable and is above the National Average. Children in care and care leavers continue to receive good support in meeting their health and wellbeing needs. A continuing priority during 2021/22 will be enabling enhanced access to timely therapeutic treatment for children and young people experiencing mental ill health.

#### **17.0 REDUCTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER**

17.1 The Panel's role in supporting the Council's 'Pledge' includes overseeing and challenging the effectiveness of local services which are responsible for keeping them safe from harm (including abuse, exploitation and neglect) as well as preventing them from adopting risky behaviour which can harm their wellbeing as well as the safety of local communities.

17.2 Through listening to children and young people's experiences of being in care and ensuring this perspective informs improvement, the approach of the Panel has nurtured esteem among young people and minimised the risk of alienation which can contribute to them going missing from care and the risks this exposes them to.

#### **18.0 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

18.1 There are no direct risks emerging through consideration of the Annual Report.

## **19.0 HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESILIENCE ISSUES**

19.1 Please see Paragraph 6.2 of this report.

## **20.0 COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

20.1 The Panel's Annual Report is compatible with the Articles and Protocols of the EU Convention, particularly in supporting the rights of all children to be safeguarded from serious harm.

## **21.0 CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY**

21.1 There are no implications for the local environment or the conservation of biodiversity arising from the report.

## **22.0 GLOSSARY**

22.1 None, applicable.

## **23.0 LIST OF APPENDICES**

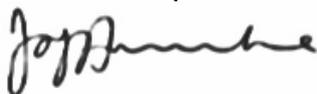
23.1 Appendix 1: Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel (2020/21)

## **24.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

24.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email [governance@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:governance@barnsley.gov.uk) so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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Financial Implications/Consultation



Joshua Amahwe (18/05/2021)

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*(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer  
where there are no financial implications)*