
Governance Committee: Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference

Background and Context

- 1 The County Council has a Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) that meets four times per year, consisting of seven members of the County Council along with one non-voting health representative (the Designated Nurse for Children Looked After). It meets regularly with the Children in Care Council and care leavers in order to ensure their views are represented. However there is no formal role for young people or their families and carers within the process.
- 2 There is a drive to ensure that the CPP is more outwardly focused, and that the voice of the child is central to its work, by proactively seeking to have that view represented more strongly. Evidence from other local authorities shows that successful panels have a wider membership, including young people and foster carers. Many also have clearer lines of reporting to, and influence with, decision makers and are more public-facing, with meetings held in public and agenda/papers publicly available. In addition, many other CPPs hold meetings and activities at times that will enable children and young people to take an active role in the work of the Panel without taking time out of school.

Proposal

- 3 It is recommended that the changes summarised below, and **set out in Appendix 1**, are made to the CPP terms of reference to deliver a more outcomes and outward focused Panel, and to ensure the voice of the child is central to its work. The key change is the proposal to widen the membership to become a multi-agency advisory panel, with members including a representative of Independent Reviewing Officers, a Foster Carer, Chairman or Vice Chairman of the West Sussex Foster Carer Association, a member of the Children in Care Council and a Care Leaver. It is proposed that the Panel will continue to meet in private for the time being, but it is asked to consult with the Children in Care Council to consider whether meetings should be held in public and at different times. This consultation should include other potential mechanisms for enabling children looked after and care leavers engage in and with the Panel's work.
 - (a) **Membership:** That in addition to health colleagues, membership should be widened to make this a multi-agency forum. Representatives from foster carers, children in care, care leavers and any relevant advocacy groups should be included as non-voting members of the Panel. This will ensure that the voice of the child is central to all work of the Panel, and that a more holistic approach can be developed when considering items on the agenda. In addition, members of the Panel may be given specific lead roles (care leavers, residential homes), giving greater ownership of key areas of the Panel's work.
 - (b) **Chairmanship:** That the Chairman of the CPP should be the relevant Senior Advisor to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People. This will ensure a direct link to the Cabinet Member's work and policy direction.

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- (c) **Work Programme:** A new work programme will be developed to ensure that the work of the Panel is more outcomes-focused. Reporting to County Council on a regular basis, and at least twice per year, will continue to ensure the wider membership of the County Council understand the work of the Panel, and are reminded of their responsibilities as a corporate parent.
- (d) **Training:** As well as health training which is currently given, other opportunities will be developed for the members of the CPP, such as training in specific areas affecting children in care. All members of the County Council will receive training on Corporate Parenting as part of their induction.
- 4 It is recommended that the revised terms of reference be reviewed in six months, when further changes may be proposed following engagement with the Children in Care Council.

Recommended

That the new terms of reference and membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel, as set out at Appendix 1, be approved.

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Background Papers

None