



Hampshire
County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

16 October 2020

The Role of the Corporate Parent and the Corporate Parenting Board

Children's Services in Hampshire are Outstanding (Ofsted 2019)

- Hampshire has been rated to be outstanding in all areas. One of only two authorities in England to achieve this.

Ofsted said;

- Children in Care benefit from high-quality support, which is making a real difference to their outcomes

- Children's lives consistently improve as a result of the help they receive

- Strong political and corporate support and well-targeted financial investment have helped the leadership team to implement an ambitious transformation programme. This has created the capacity, training and infrastructure to enable social workers to engage more purposefully with children and their families

What needs to improve?

The Corporate Parenting Board's rigour in holding partners, including health providers and district councils, to account to ensure that they prioritise services for children and young people more effectively

So...

In order to achieve this;

A little background about how children come into the care of the local authority and how they are supported and looked after and where you can support as Corporate Parents;

A Child in Care can be aged 0 – 18 years

Care Leavers are aged 18 years to 25 years of age who have been in care (there is a set criteria and eligibility as to what level of support they are offered)



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Children come into the care of the local authority by;



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- Consent of the parent - this is generally when the parent identifies that at that time, they can not care for their child, and no support will enable them to do this. (more commonly referred to as S20)
- Court Order - the Local Authority have applied to the Court seeking legal powers to remove a child from parental care due to significant risk of harm. (more commonly referred to as Interim or Care Order)
- Currently there are 1668 Hampshire children in care
- The average cost for each child in care is £60k per year



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Where do children in care live?



- With foster carers – approved carers offering to care for children in care
- With Connected Carers – family or close friends who are assessed as suitable to care for a specific child known to them, they need to comply with fostering regulations
- Within a residential children's home – small group living with generally no more than 4 young people living and cared for by staff
- Supported accommodation – young people 16+ living in supported accommodation, this could be lodging within a family home or supported in shared living / bed sit type accommodation
- With both fostering and residential care, providers can be “in-house” so carer's or homes that at managed by Children's Services or independent providers of fostering services or children's homes that are private of the Local Authority.



Where do Care Leavers live?

- Care Leavers can remain with their foster carers under Staying Put arrangements

- Care Leavers can live in supported accommodation

- Care Leavers can live with family or friends

- Care Leavers can live independently

- Care Leavers can be living in student accommodation whilst at university

How long to children remain in care?

- Essentially – as long as required to ensure the safety of children
- Mostly children enter the care system when there is no alternative support to keep them safely at home
- When a child is in care, support continues to be offered to their family to achieve reunification (return home) at the earliest opportunity. Or children are placed with extended family and no longer need the intervention from the local authority as children in care.
- Situations for children and families change and there is a focus to ensure that this continues to be reviewed through the child's journey in care and where it is safe, that reunification (return home) plans are supported. This is proving successful, but is a very carefully balanced decision to make and not one that would be appropriate for every child

A corporate parent: *to promote the best outcomes for our Children in Care and Care Leavers*

Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do and when a child, for whatever reason, can't safely stay at home, it is up to us as the local authority to step in and give them the care, support and stability that they deserve.

This isn't just up to the Lead Member or Director of Children's Services – we need everyone looking out for our most vulnerable children and young people, and every councillor has a role to play.

Being a corporate parent means doing everything we can for every child in the council's care – and every care leaver – to give them the opportunities that other children get. This covers everything from keeping an eye on their progress at school, to looking after their health and wellbeing, to preparing them for life as independent adults – and supporting them when they get there. We need to be ambitious for the children in our care, encouraging them to dream big and take chances even if they don't feel like that's been an option in the past. (LGA)

Role of the Corporate Parenting Board;

The role of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) is to ensure that all services to Children in Care (CIC) and Care Leavers are of a high standard and ensure that they are being well supported in all aspects of their life including;

- Support and encouragement to achieve in school
- Support and encouragement to look after their mental health and wellbeing
- Having opportunities for positive social integration
- Enabling the most vulnerable children and young people in society to flourish into the successful adults they can become

There will be a programme of business which will be reviewed and amended by the CPB as required – led by priorities identified by Children in Care and Care Leavers, these will;

- Reviewing the outcomes for children in care and care leavers
- Ensure that the voice of Children in Care and Care Leavers is listened to, acted upon and incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies for children in care and care leavers
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available for the Care Ambassadors to directly engage with all children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council
- Raise the profile of children in care and care leavers by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents with key responsibilities
- Hold partner agencies to account in respect of their responsibility as corporate parents

- Ensure that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents

- The CPB will meet with Children in Care and Care Leavers, frontline staff and foster carers / residential homes to enable them to inform the Board of the standards of care offered to our children and young people.

- The CPB will identify work to be completed which will then be undertaken through Task and Finishing projects, enabling focused, time specific work.

- The focus of work will remain in line with the priorities of the Children in Care and Care Leavers Pledge and the Local Offer for Care Leavers which will be reviewed on an annual basis

- There will be a joint working protocol between the Corporate Parenting Board and Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership(HSCP) where an annual report on the CPB will be shared with HSCP.

- The CPB will make recommendations to the Executive Lead Member on matters relating to Children in Care and Care Leavers

Hampshire's Pledge to children in care and care leavers



Moving On

We will support you to

- Find somewhere to live
- Build necessary skills to maintain your accommodation
- Become the successful young adult that you can become
- This offer of support will be there until you are 25
- Access the services relevant to your needs as an older young person

Your Health and Wellbeing

We will support you to

- Access Health Services – this includes your mental and physical well-being
- Maintain healthy and happy relationships
- Identify and access positive activities, interests and hobbies



Your Voice

We will

- Actively involve you in your own care plans
- Make time for you to talk one to one with us
- Be contactable through a variety of ways and get back to you within 3 working days
- Involve you in different ways so that together we can improve what we do
- Let you know what you are entitled to as well as what you have responsibility for
- Make you aware of our compliments and complaints procedure and support you through this if needed

Your Education Training and Employment

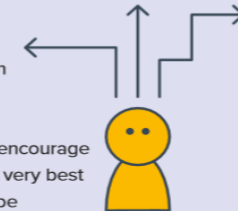
We will support you to

- Access academic and non-academic opportunities – not just school or college
- Be involved about decisions made about your education
- Access additional support for school or college if this is necessary
- Access college or university if you would like that help

Your Future

We will

- Help you plan your future
- Support and encourage you to be the very best that you can be



Where you live

We will

- Be open and honest about your care especially when changes are happening or where we can see that they are likely to happen for you
- Help you to move smoothly to a new place to live, should you need to
- Inform you about how you will keep in touch with your own family, if appropriate



To find out more, speak to your social worker, or search 'Hampshire Local Offer to Care Leavers'.



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www.hants.gov.uk



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Providing an outstanding service to children and families



Ofsted
Outstanding
Provider

Membership of the Board:

Nine County Councillors have been appointed by the County Council on a proportionate basis with substitute representation from each political group and includes a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

The Executive Lead Member will have a standing invitation to the Board

Regular Support and advice to the Board may be offered by;

Director of Children's Services and nominated officers

Care Ambassadors

CAMHS

Police

Virtual School

Designated GP / Names Nurse for Children in Care (also known as Looked After Children)

Public Health

District Councils

Things to think about to support the CPB in their ability to scrutinise and challenge the services provided for our children looked after

If you are to assess whether standards of care are good enough for your own children, you need good quality information on which to base your judgement;

There has been an increase in the number of children entering the care system, and a rise in the proportion who are removed through the intervention of the courts opposed to coming into care by agreement with parents

The CPB will benefit from the voices of the children in care being heard when considering the effectiveness and impact of the service.

1) How well does Hampshire do in commissioning or providing services?

You will require national performance data and county data to compare how well Hampshire is performing – data can not be taken in isolation, qualitative data will support your understanding with information about the experiences of the children and young people.

- What is the profile of children in care for Hampshire?
- What systems are in place to seek feedback from CIC and Care Leavers about the services they receive?
- Have you seen a copy of the annual report from the IRO service and is this used to identify gaps in service?
- Are services provided “value for money” e.g. cost of out of county placements appropriate?

2) Education – achievements both academically and other

As corporate parents, there must be high aspirations for children in care

- What results are achieved by CIC compared with other children within Hampshire
- How do our CIC compare with other CIC through the country?
- How effective are the arrangement with the virtual school head, designated teachers and designated school governors?
- How are children supported to achieve well – in and out of school?
- How are young people supported to continue in further and higher education?
- How does school admissions processes / policies treat CIC
- PEP's – are they of good quality? Audits?
- How many CIC are excluded – what alternative provision is provided?
- What do CIC say about their education and aspirations
- How is non academic achievement promoted and celebrated?

3) Health and Wellbeing



Evidence suggests that CIC are nearly five times more likely to have a mental health disorder than all children.



- How many CIC have a health and dental check formulating a health plan, completed within timescales – does this feed into the care plan
- Do all CIC have a strengths and difficulties questionnaire completed?
- Do CIC have priority access to CAMHS
- What access to CIC have to services for substance misuse / sexual health
- How are foster carers and young people supported to promote a health lifestyle?
- What do CIC say about their health needs
- Are outcomes and experiences used to inform the commissioning of services?



4) Placement Stability



Ensuring placements are stable and work well for children and young people is key to their wellbeing. Children need to feel happy in placement.



- How stable are placements – how many moves to CIC have within the year, how many CIC have been in their placement over two years?
- What is known about children who change placement – reasons
- Why are children placed out of county? What would be necessary to keep them in county?
- What choice do CIC have about placements – introductions?
- If there is a placement move – what is done to try to maintain the same school
- What do CIC say about their placements?



For some children, the best option for a long term stable family environment may be adoption. For other children, securing a permanent home within the care system may be appropriate or with family and friends. Securing a permanence plan is important.

- How many CIC have a permanence plan by their second review?
- What percentage of children are placed for adoption within 12 months? And subsequently adopted?
- How long does it take to make a decision to place a child for adoption?
- What is the profile of our children compared with the prospective adopters?
- Do siblings get placed together?
- What is the barrier to identifying permanent placements for CIC?
- How long does it take to be assessed as a prospective adopter?

6) Foster Care



Nationally the number of children placed with foster carers compared to children's homes is about two thirds.



Fostering is generally seen as the preferred option, enabling children to remain living within a family environment.



- Is there a sufficient supply of suitably skilled foster carers to meet the needs of children requiring placements? If not, what is being done?
- What support are foster carers offered?
- Do carers feel this support is right?
- What do CIC say about their experience of foster care?





7) Residential Care




For some children, a placement in a residential home may be more appropriate for a number of reasons.



- What is the profile of CIC placed in residential setting?
- What is the Ofsted rating of the residential settings being used?
- What are outcomes for children in residential homes compared with the rest of the CIC cohort.
- Are any children placed in secure accommodation?
- What is the experience of children placed in residential care?



For many young people, leaving care is daunting. Young people cease to be looked after at 18 years, but the Local Authority has a responsibility to support until at least 21 years of age

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- How many care leavers are still in contact at 19 years, 21 years?
 - What are the outcomes for care leavers – training, employment, education?
 - What support do care leavers receive with housing, tenancy support, employment, access to benefits, support with their mental health
 - What staying put arrangements are in place?
 - What do Care Leavers say about their experience of care leaving.

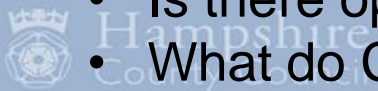
9) Effective workforce



It is essential that each child has an individualised care plan based on assessment of needs. This is the responsibility of the social worker. An effective workforce supports to improve the experiences of CIC and carers and improves the performance of the department.



- What are the current SW vacancy rates – what are the reasons
- What continuity of social work input do CIC experience?
- How much time do SW's spend with CIC?
- What does the annual IRO report say about the effectiveness of care planning?
- Is there opportunity for SW to improve their skills
- What do CIC and carers say about their experience of engaging with social workers and other professionals.



10) Corporate Parenting

- Is there an effective structure for the governance of corporate parenting?
- Do looked-after children know who their corporate parents are?
- What do they say about what they expect from councillors acting as their corporate parent?
- Do all members receive training on their roles and responsibilities?
- Is there an active Care Ambassadors group who meet with elected members?
- Are children and young people's complaints responded to and what is learnt from them?

- References –

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/15.74%20Corporate%20parenting_05_web.pdf

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/10-questions-ask-if-youre-ca4.pdf>

Revised Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board – October 2020

- Councillor Ann Briggs (Chairman)
- Councillor Fran Carpenter (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Roz Chadd
- Councillor Stephen Philpott
- Councillor Jackie Porter
- Councillor Patricia Stallard
- Councillor Elaine Still
- Councillor Robert Taylor
- Councillor Malcolm Wade

Glossary of useful terms

Advocacy - An advocate's role is to make sure that the child's views and experiences are considered when decisions are made about their future. Every child has the right to be supported by an advocate and councils must have a system in place to provide written, age appropriate information to each looked-after child about advocates and how to request one.

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) - Services that work with children and young people experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

Care Order - A court order approving the case for a child to be taken into care, this is the legal auspice and falls under S31 of the Children Act 1989.

Care plan - A care plan should be developed for every child and young person when they come into care. This should identify how the child will be accommodated, how long it is anticipated that the care episode will last, and formulate planned outcomes for the child with associated actions. The plan should be reviewed at least every six months. This has recently been updated and could be referred to a My Life, My Future (MLMF) plan.

Clinical commissioning group (CCG) - These commission most hospital and community NHS services in their area, including mental health and learning disability services.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

County lines - A term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operation to smaller towns and exploiting children and young people to sell drugs.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) – A term used when usually drug gangs exploited children through criminal activity

Children's home - A residential facility where groups of children are cared for by qualified workers.

Former relevant child - A care leaver aged 18-21 who was a relevant child or was in care until the age of 18. Young people who are still getting help with education or training remain 'former relevant' until their training has finished.

Foster care - Foster care is a way for children to be cared for within a family setting when their own family is unable to care for them. It is considered temporary in that there is no legal split from the family (as with adoption), but can be long term where this is in the best interests of the child.

Independent fostering agency (IFA) -IFAs provide fostering services to local authorities. They recruit, train and support their own foster carers who the council can then place a child with on payment of a fee. IFAs can be charities, not-for-profit or profit-making.

Independent reviewing officer - (An IRO chairs a looked-after child's review(s) and monitors the child's case on an ongoing basis. They ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects their current needs, wishes and feelings, and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority's legal responsibilities towards the child.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) -JSNAs identifies the current and future health needs of the local population to inform and guide commissioning of health, wellbeing and social care services within local authority areas.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) -The JHWS outlines how local partners will work to improve health in the local population and reduce health inequalities.

Kinship care – Better known as Connected Carers - Kinship care is where a child is looked-after by a relative or friend. This can be an informal arrangement, through a Special Guardianship Order, or through friends and family foster care, where the local authority still has legal responsibility for the child.

Modern slavery - Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. A person is trafficked if they are brought to (or moved around) a country by others who threaten, frighten, hurt and force them to do work or other things they don't want to do.

Pathway plan - A pathway plan is developed by the local authority with a young person in care as they approach their 16th birthday to help them effectively make the transition from care to living independently. It includes areas such as accommodation, education, life skills and health.

Personal Education Plan (PEP) -The PEP is a statutory part of a child's care plan, making sure that all relevant partners are engaged in a child's education, tracking their progress and giving them the support they need to achieve and be aspirational in their education.

Private arrangement - An informal arrangement where a child or young person is looked-after by a close relative such as grand-parents, aunts or uncles.

Private fostering -An informal arrangement where a child or young person is looked-after by someone who is not their parent or close relative. The local authority should be informed of the arrangement, but is not responsible for the child and is therefore not the corporate parent.

Secure children's home - Secure children's homes offer specialist care and intensive support in a secure setting to young people sentenced by the courts and to young people detained for their own welfare (for example, where children are at risk of child sexual exploitation, and likely to place themselves in risky situations). These are referred to as youth justice beds, and welfare beds respectively.

Special guardianship - Special guardianship means that a child lives with carers who have parental responsibility for them until they turn 18, but legal ties with the parents are not cut as with adoption. The child is no longer the responsibility of the local authority.

Staying Put - An arrangement whereby a looked-after child can stay with their foster carer after the age of 18, as long as both the young person and the foster parent is happy with this arrangement, and it is in the young person's best interests. The council has a duty to support the arrangement up to young person's 21st birthday.

Sufficiency duty -The duty for a council to take steps that secure, as far as possible, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of children that it is looking after.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) -The definition of an unaccompanied asylum seeking child is set out in the Immigration Rules as someone who:

- is under 18 years of age when the claim is submitted;
- is claiming in their own right; and
- is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so.

Virtual school head - All local authorities must have a virtual school head (VSH) in charge of promoting the educational achievement of the children looked-after by that authority and previously looked-after children. Their role is to know how the looked-after children are doing, and help school staff and social workers to find out about the extra needs of these children and any additional support available to them. VSHs also work with the children's services department and all schools in the area on initiatives to promote the education of children in care

