

**Corporate Parenting  
Panel  
4 June 2018**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Nicola Greene, Portfolio Holder for Education Children's Services - Chair; Councillor Bobbie Dove, Children's Services O&S Panel Member - Vice-Chair; Councillors Blair Crawford, Fostering Panel; Lynda Price, Fostering Panel; and Michael Weinhonig Community O&S Panel Member.

**NON-ELECTED MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Lisa Male                      Participation Worker, Children's Social Care  
Click Members

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Dave Crewe	Supported Lodgings, Separated Children Seeking Asylum, 16+ and Care Leaver Team Manager
Anne-Marie Davies	Advanced Social Worker Children's Social Care
Kayleigh Jones	16+ Care Leavers Team
Mike Felstead	Service Manager - Quality Assurance and Safeguarding
Sarah Langdale	Access to Resources Team Manager
Penny Lodwick	Service Manager - LAC and Care Leavers
Victoria Stone	Team Manager - Children's Social Care
Suzanne Tranter	Practice Manager - Children's Social Care
Penny Earney	Designated Nurse for Looked After Children

**FOR AGENDA ITEM 8:**

Simon Bower Commissioning Manager  
Supported Lodgings Carer  
Supported Lodgings Support Worker  
Supported lodgings resident  
SCSA resident

The meeting started at 5.10pm and finished at 6.50pm

Note: To see a copy of the public reports that were considered by the Panel at this meeting please visit:

<https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/councildemocratic/CouncilMeetings/CommitteeMeetings/CorporateParentingPanel/2018/06/04/agenda/combined-report.pdf>

Please note that the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel is scheduled to take place on 5 September 2018.

It is recommended that you check this information with Democratic Services closer to the scheduled date of the next meeting in case the arrangements have been changed.

Contact: Claire Johnston, Senior Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer

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Agenda Item	Minute No.	Matter Considered	Decisions / Actions
Item 1	7	<p><b>MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Rae Stollard.</p>	
Item 2	8	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests or other interest from members.</p>	
Item 3	9	<p><b>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN</b></p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Dove be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the 2018/19 municipal year. There were no further nominations.</p>	That Councillor Dove be appointed Vice-Chair of the Panel for the 2018/19 municipal year.
Item 4	10	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 28 FEBRUARY 2018</b></p> <p>There were no actions arising from the minutes.</p>	The minutes were agreed as a correct record.
Item 5	11	<p><b>ITEMS CIRCULATED TO PANEL MEMBERS FOR INFORMATION</b></p> <p>Performance data was circulated by the Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Head of Service. The data looked at key LAC statistics for Bournemouth Borough Council including the number of Looked After Children, the rate of LAC per 10,000 of the child population, placement type and the number of Separated Children Seeking Asylum.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the Officer for producing the statistical information which provided a very clear picture to the Panel and was useful to receive.</p>	

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Item 6	12	<p><b>A CHILD'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE CARE SYSTEM - CLICK PRESENTATION</b></p> <p>CLICK advised the Panel about the Family Justice Board which directed the family justice system and oversaw its performance. The Board was made up of social worker, barristers and solicitors, all involved in family justice. Judge Munby, who was president of the Family Division of the High Court, was also in attendance.</p> <p>It was explained that what happened in court proceedings was not ordinarily recorded on the file of a young person in care. The Panel noted that this would mean that a young person accessing their file may have no information at all about the decision to place them in care, which leaves a 'gap' in a child's journey.</p> <p>CLICK was shown a letter which Mr Justice Peter Jackson had decided to write to a young person called 'Sam' to explain to him the decision that the judge had made about him. The letter outlined the pros and cons of each case which had been brought before the courts by Sam's father. The letter concluded by explaining the reasons for the final judgement. Both the junior and senior CLICK groups had read through the letter. The junior CLICK felt that the letter was easy to read and well balanced. The senior CLICK identified more issues with the letter but both felt that this type of document would be helpful to young people in their journey and would aid them in understanding the reasons why they were not able to return home.</p> <p>The CLICK groups created a timeline for children in care, which was brought together in a story of a fictional young person named 'Willow'. A narrator was used to explain the story through an 'Underground' map. CLICK had presented this in a staff forum and it would be presented again to all staff in September. Members of the CPP would also be invited. The Participation Worker explained that there was also an intention to record the presentation so that it could be utilised in future.</p>	<p>Members and Officers were invited to attend this event (this was likely to take place on 11 September)</p>

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		<p>Members asked a number of questions about the story of a child and the impact of the missing information from court proceedings on their 'journeys' through care.</p> <p>Members asked if there was anything happening within the Local Authority to help if letters to children from the courts/ judges are not made mandatory. A Member suggested that perhaps someone within the LA could précis the judgement so that this can be included within a young person's file. At the Cafcass day it was noted that judges were willing to provide similar types of judgement letters.</p> <p>It had also been suggested that if a social worker was leaving, going on maternity leave or changing jobs then it would be good for them to write a letter to the children and young people, which would help explain things at the time and also if looking back over the file. Social workers would support more detail being available in young people's files, for example a care leaver recently returned to look through his files but there were some big gaps and it wasn't possible for social workers to answer all the questions that he had.</p> <p>A Member of CLICK who had a young child starting school explained that there was a 'bridge' in most stages of childhood. Pre-school was sending information on to the primary school for her child starting in September and this is repeated as children move onto different schools but for children in care, for whom this 'bridge' was even more important, it was missing.</p> <p>A Member questioned what would need to be done to ensure that the letter happened in the case of every child. It was hoped that they would become mandatory. Judge Munby could take decisions regarding this issue and was very positive about the idea.</p> <p>The Chairman asked when the letter would be available to the child or young person. CLICK felt that the letter could be used immediately following the judgement but would also be something that a young person could come back to later in life. A Member of</p>	<p>It was agreed that the letter to 'Sam' should be circulated to the CPP.</p> <p>Officers undertook to look into providing additional information on court decisions for LAC files.</p>

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		<p>CLICK Junior had commented that they thought if they had something like it they would read it every day of their lives. Everyone agreed that the letter was written in a very accessible way. The information normally contained in a LAC file was often very factual and lacking emotion which a letter could help with.</p> <p>The Chair commented that the adoption service was very good at providing life story work for adoptees but questioned whether there was parity in this for children who remained in care. It was noted that life story work does take place with children in care but it is often more difficult than for those being adopted as there is normally a more challenging story to tell. Within Junior CLICK 3 young people were engaged with life story work.</p> <p>Kayleigh Jones as Chair of the Life Story Champions Group explained that they had been having lunchtime learning sessions with different groups of professionals to help build upon the number of care leavers who had life story work. CLICK confirmed that there had been some requests from young people for life story work. The Chair also asked about reunification. It was noted that there were specifically trained workers in the fostering service who were able to support this. It was also noted that foster carers do an excellent job of contributing towards life story work by collecting special mementoes or contributing to a really specific piece of work. The Service Manager commented that it was extremely important to ensure that things were kept on file as identity was so important.</p> <p>The Manager of the LAC team advised that she had some ideas to help improvement life story work but it was difficult because everyone wanted something different for both the format it was delivered in; book, video or letters and the content; whether this should be purely factual or include feelings and opinions. Some young people didn't want or were not ready to engage with life story work. It was acknowledged that it was important to help someone understand what has happened to them but also to provide emotional</p>	

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		support for this and it was noted that children may want different things at different times.	
Item 7	13	<p><b>CONSISTENCY OF SOCIAL WORK ALLOCATION FOR CHILDREN IN CARE</b></p> <p>The Service Manager for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding reminded the Panel that it had previously looked at this issue approximately one year ago and had requested an update. It was a difficult matter to present a clear picture of because of the way it was recorded. The data showed every LAC who received a statutory visit from a social worker. By looking at the number of different social workers undertaking these visit some indication could be given of the number of social workers allocated to each LAC.</p> <p>However, there were a number of reasons why this was difficult to monitor including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• young people may request a change of social worker;</li> <li>• social workers may cover for each other during extended periods of leave;</li> <li>• the allocation of social workers was not recorded in a way that could be measured over time;</li> <li>• the cohort of children in care was constantly changing.</li> </ul> <p>On average a LAC experiences a different social worker visiting them approximately every 219 days. It was noted that this may sound like a short period of time but it was believed that this would compare positively with other authorities if there was data available. It was noted that the number of social workers was a fairly linear journey and changes in social worker happened fairly frequently even over some time in care. In total 64% of LAC had either 1, 2 or 3 social workers.</p> <p>Members asked about the stability in teams now that the new POD system had been fully introduced and functioning for some time. Stability in the LAC team was good, with very few changes in social worker. Although only 114 of the 214 children in care were covered</p>	

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		<p>by the team.</p> <p>It was also noted that there were times when it was appropriate for young people to change to a different social worker but that it was important to make this transition work for young people and be as flexible as possible with the 16+ transition process.</p> <p>There was an aim to look sooner at permanence for babies coming into care, to avoid multiple changes of social worker. The teams had an overall retention strategy for social workers in place. The Service Manager noted that staff liked to work in Bournemouth, they were given good training opportunities and realistic caseloads. A Member asked CLICK about their experiences of having to change social worker and retell their stories.</p> <p>Members asked how many young people requested to have their social worker changed. It was noted that it did happen but not very often and it was a request which would be considered very carefully. A CLICK member explained that they had requested this previously but that this had been denied. The Team Manager advised that since she had been in the post she could only recollect two occasions on which social workers had been changed at the young person's request. The Participation worker confirmed that the LAC team was the most stable that it had ever been in the last ten years and that the transitions service had also greatly improved.</p> <p>A Member asked about how many transitions through different teams there were for a child in care. It was confirmed that a child would normally start off with a social worker from the Child In Need and Child Protection teams and may then move through to the Court Team and then to the LAC Team. If the child remained in care this would transfer to the 16+ team. In some instances, it had been possible to bypass the Court Team if it was known that the child would remain in care. In response to a question the Panel was advised that there were twelve 16 year olds in the LAC Team for various reasons, some were experiencing difficulties and it did not feel like the right time to change, some did</p>	

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		<p>not want to change and some were sitting GCSEs. A Member asked about the 16+ policy for changing teams and it was suggested that 17 may be a better age for young people but at present with the move toward Local Government Reorganisation it wouldn't be appropriate to move to a new structure which may need to change again. It was also noted that some 16 year olds were very motivated to move on to more independence.</p> <p>In response to a question the POD system was explained in greater detail. It was noted that there were two PODs in the LAC Team, each with 4-5 social workers and a family support practitioner. There was one team leader to support each POD. There was the ability within the pods to pick up different caseloads and provide support, as generally each of the children in care were known quite well to the social workers. The Practice Managers were also in close proximity to support social workers.</p> <p>Members asked CLICK about their experiences of changes of social worker which were not always positive. However, the PODs system was fairly new and those LAC who had more recently come into care would have a different experience. The Chair commented that previously the CPP was advised that there was a good balance of more experienced and newer social workers and asked whether this continued to be the case. This was confirmed and it was explained that there was support for newer social workers with career progression in the hope of retaining them. The Participation Worker advised that Junior CLICK Members didn't appear to have as much of an issue with changes of social worker.</p> <p>A CLICK Member questioned how long the 64% of LAC with only 1,2 or 3 social workers had been in care. It was noted that this was probably skewed towards those children who had only been in care for a short period of time but these figures were difficult to break down due to the numbers of children becoming looked after each moth which completely change the picture.</p>	<p>The Chair asked if there was anything that the Panel could look into further on the changes of social worker on a child's journey into care - The Service Manager for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding undertook to look into</p>



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		<p>The Chair asked about out of borough placements and how many sit within the LAC teams. Specific figures were not available but it was noted that approximately 43 were classified as out of borough and these were fairly evenly split between practitioners. A number of these were in family and friends placements or in specialist residential care. However, distance could be a challenge, for example one visit may take two days and the statutory visits remain the same, which could be particularly challenging for unannounced visits.</p>	<p>this issue.</p>
Item 8	14	<p><b>CARE LEAVERS - HOUSING PROVISION FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS</b></p> <p>The Team Manager for the Service introduced the report and circulated a document to the Panel which provided a guide to professionals on Post-16 accommodation options for looked after children and care leavers. The service reported that it was doing well in terms of the range of provision options open to care leavers and LAC at 16+.</p> <p>A number of referrals were being received for supported lodgings which provided a family based approach. Breakdown rates for these placements were very low and it was highly unusual to receive short notice breakdowns. However, it was noted that all providers were operating very close to capacity. The service also offered rent deposits and tenancy schemes to ensure stable offers of housing for young people. this has included on occasion, signing a tenancy agreement for under 18s. Staying put in placement was also very high on the agenda which extended the family based solution for LAC who could remain in their foster care placements. There was a housing allocations panel which sought to ensure that any young people leaving care could maintain their tenancy.</p> <p>The Access to Resources Team would also spot purchase beds for Semi-independent living. There were currently about 7 at the moment. This was very similar to supported</p>	

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		<p>accommodation through housing but they also commissioned independence work with the young people of approximately 8-10 hours per week. The training flat was currently being refurbished and young people could experience a longer period in the flat whilst working towards independence. This was a great resource which was not offered by many Councils.</p> <p>In response to a question it was noted that some young people may choose to stay out of the area and therefore some accommodation was being provided outside of the borough. It was noted that it was for professionals to establish what the most appropriate accommodation options were.</p> <p>A Member asked if we had the right mix of stock and whether there was anyone waiting for more appropriate accommodation who shouldn't be. It was noted that there was not a surplus of accommodation but that the nature of accommodation meant that things move quickly and consequently any waiting lists tended to also move quickly. Young people would continue to receive the support of pathways workers. A new scheme was being developed which was similar to the training flat but would allow young people to take over the tenancy when they are ready.</p> <p>The Supported Lodgings Provider explained that she had previously taken in students but felt that she wanted to do something more and saw the advert for supported lodgings of SCSA. She explained that she had first met a few times with the care leaver before she moved in and they had now been living together for 9 weeks. The care leaver reported that she was receiving support with working towards independence. and that so far the experience had been good. The Chair responded that it was difficult for young people to appreciate what they didn't know and this was a useful way for them to receive assistance with budgeting and understanding bills and cooking and washing and not feel as if they have to struggle on their own.</p>	

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		<p>The SCSA advised the CPP that he had learnt to cook and wash clothes and how to clean and be more independent whilst in his current placement. He had been able to seek support with different things from his social worker who had provided assistance with things such as helping him to be safe, stick to a schedule and homework.</p> <p>Members asked about the recruitment and training process for SCSA and supported lodging providers. It was explained that there were three strands to the process. Including an eight-week training course to become professional supported lodgings providers. There were currently 19 supported lodging carers with three vacancies and a waiting list of about eight young people.</p> <p>The Council received a Home Office grant to support SCSA. There were 20 solid leads in the recruitment process and it was hoped that at least half of these could be converted into carers. It was known that there had been 2 requests from SCSA currently living in London to move to Bournemouth through the national transfer scheme.</p> <p>A Member asked if the SCSA mixed with other LAC. Officers advised that there had been several different events such as a Pizza Night and Barbecue. There was also a drive to get SCSA more involved with CLICK. There had been a shift towards young people being able to access appropriate accommodation. The Designated Nurse for LAC explained that they were advertising for two nurses to specifically work with care leavers and were considering whether they should specifically have an emotional health background. Although this would be a challenge as there weren't available people with the required skills and experience.</p> <p>It was reported that young people tended not to like the word 'placement'. However, there wasn't a straightforward alternative as some young people would be happy to refer to it as home whereas others would reject this.</p>	<p>The Participation worker agreed to look at how placements had been referred to in 'The</p>

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		The young people in supported lodgings were asked for their comments and overall the feedback received was very positive.	Promise'.
Item 9	15	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There was none to report for this meeting.</p>	