

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY
PANEL
27 JUNE 2012
5.00 - 7.00 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs McCracken (Chairman), Mrs Barnard (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Birch, Ms Brown and Ms Hayes

Also Present:

Councillor Dr Barnard

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs McCracken be elected Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Barnard be appointed Vice Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

Further to Minute 42, Health of Looked After Children Annual Report, Sarah Roberts, Policy and Commissioning Officer, reported that there had been no response from the Health Commissioners to the Chairman's letter. It was agreed that the Chairman would write again, on behalf of the Panel, to express its concern and request a response.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Adoption Inspection Report

Sheila McKeand, Head of Service for Looked After Children, presented the Ofsted report on the Adoption Service. The inspection had adjudged many areas of the service provision as good or outstanding but the overall quality rating was satisfactory, mainly due to the length of time that a child had to wait for an adoption placement having a disproportionate impact on the small number of cases.

The Panel agreed that the priority should be finding the right placement for each child rather than seeking to meet artificial deadlines. However unnecessary delays needed to be avoided.

In response to a question about adoption arrangements, Sheila reported that the Service was part of an effective consortium with other Berkshire authorities. The usual process was to seek to find a placement within Berkshire and, after 3 months, to place the child on the national register.

6. **Adoption Statement of Purpose and Annual Report**

Sheila McKeand presented the Adoption Statement of Purpose and Annual Report.

In response to questions it was reported:

- That the principle that decisions taken about placing children should take full account of the individual child's cultural, racial and religious identities should not cause any delay in the adoption of black and minority ethnic children but simply recognised the importance of adoptive parents, whatever their race, being suitably aware of the child's identity.
- That there was a need to recruit more adoptive families across all ethnic groups.

7. **Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report**

Sheila McKeand presented the Fostering Statement of Purpose and Annual Report and highlighted both the increase in the number of children requiring foster care and the increased number and improved quality of foster carers.

In response to questions it was reported:

- That, since the ending of the tripartite arrangement with the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Familyplacement.com in February, the Bracknell Forest Panel was scheduled to meet nine times during 2012-2013 and was working well.
- That one of the aims of the Life Chances Team, consisting of twenty representatives from all the professional teams and services working with the Authority's Looked After Children, was to provide a robust network of support to enable children with complex needs and challenging behaviour to be successfully cared for within the borough, so reducing the need for external placements.
- That, should a foster carer decide to give up fostering for Bracknell Forest, then their approval would be terminated. Should they later wish to resume fostering then they would have to reapply.
- That if a child was placed with a foster carer for more than a year then the carer could apply to adopt. The decision would be based on the needs of the child.

8. **Participation: 2012 Annual Report and Action Plan**

Sarah Roberts, Policy and Commissioning Officer, presented the Children's Care Participation Strategy Annual Report and Action Plan 2012-13.

The Annual Report measured progress against the following action plan headings:

- Shared Values
- Strategies and Structures
- Systems

- Staff
- Skills and Knowledge
- Style of Leadership

With regard to the 2012-13 Action Plan, Sarah reported that Councillor Mrs McCracken had agreed to take on the role of Participation Advocate, alongside twelve members of staff from Children's Social Care. A pool of young service users had been identified and undertaken training to participate in staff recruitment and selection.

9. **Report from LILAC (Leading Improvements for Looked After Children) Assessors**

Sarah Roberts presented the report on LILAC's assessment of the Council in December 2011.

The Panel welcomed the positive nature of the report and the fact that the Council had been judged to have fully met all 7 LILAC standards and had been awarded the relevant LILAC mark and certificate.

10. **Performance Management Information**

The Director of Children, Young People and Learning presented information on:-

- The number of looked after children
- NI 63 – the stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement
- NI 62 – the stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements
- C23 – adoptions of looked after children
- NI 61 – Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following decision to place for adoption
- Ward data of originating home address of looked after children
- Number of children becoming and ceasing to be looked after
- After care services
- Annual health assessments
- Dental checks
- Emotional and behavioural health
- NI 147 – care leavers in suitable accommodation
- NI 148 – care leavers in education, employment or training

The Panel noted the considerable improvement in the stability of placements of looked after children.

11. **Care Proceedings: The Process**

Mairead Panetta, Head of Service, Safeguarding and Clare Owens, Team Manager, Under 11s, gave a presentation on care proceedings which set out:

- The increase in the number of all children's social care cases including those with child protection plans and those in care proceedings.
- The process.

Mairead and Clare also tabled a case study, illustrating the complex nature of care proceedings.

12. **Presentation from Fostering Association**

Wayne Bowditch, Chair of the Fostering Association, Corrie Sharpe, Deputy Chair and Jackie Martin, Foster Carer, gave a presentation on the work of the Association.

Wayne and Corrie reported that the Association had been running for about three years and outlined its programme of social and fundraising events. The Association provided a forum which enabled carers and looked after children to get to know each other and discuss concerns.

Jackie gave a brief account of her experiences as a foster carer and the support she received from the Association.

The Panel thanked the representatives for their presentation and congratulated the Association on its work for foster carers.

13. **Dates of Next Meetings and Forward Plan**

11 July 2012	CPAP Training
26 September 2012	Education of LAC and Care Leavers Exams Report on Life Chances Team
12 December 2012	SiLSiP Annual Report IRO Annual Report Adoption Half Yearly Report.

CHAIRMAN