

# **CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT**

## **Council – 8 December 2021**

### **1.0 Corporate Parenting Introduction**

- 1.1 The Children & Social Work Act 2017 states when a child comes into the care of the Local Authority, or is under 25 and was previously looked-after by the Local Authority, the Local Authority becomes their 'Corporate Parent'.
- 1.2 The responsibility of a Corporate Parent is to make sure the decision making, planning and provision for care experienced children and young people affords them the opportunities and outcomes that other children have. This routinely includes being concerned about their care, health, education and preparation for adulthood. Under the Children Act 2004, the Local Authority also has a duty to promote cooperation with 'relevant partners', which includes Health, Police and Schools.
- 1.3 All County Councillors are Corporate Parents. The Gloucestershire Corporate Parenting Group is made up of a number of key representatives, including elected members with targeted responsibilities. Cllr Stephen Davies, (Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years), is the chair person for the group and accountable politically for Children's Services. This includes a specialist responsibility to communicate and engage partners and communities to meet the needs of children, particularly in respect of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Cllr Davies chaired his first Corporate Parenting Group Meeting on 14 July 2021.
- 1.4 There are four Corporate Parenting Group Meetings that take place each year. The remaining 2021/22 Corporate Parenting Group Meetings are scheduled for 9 December 2021 and 24 March 2022

### **2.0 Corporate Parenting Group Activity**

2.1 The Corporate Parenting Group Meeting convened on 30 September 2021 and focused on the following key themes and issues :

#### **a) Re-Launch of the One Page Profile**

Cllr Davies previously pledged to promote the One Page Profile with elected members. The number of completed profiles has increased to 16 now. On Page Profiles set out how elected members, as a corporate parent, can make a meaningful and purposeful contribution by sharing something about themselves and offering to provide opportunities for/with care experienced young people. Mark Bone, Head of Service 11-25 Permanence Service ([Mark.Bone@Gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Bone@Gloucestershire.gov.uk)) has been identified as a single point of contact to provide support and developments are underway to develop a single space

platform for storage of the profiles which will provide authorised access to relevant individuals not the general public.

## **b) Employment Support**

The impact of the CV19 pandemic on young people has been considerable and this includes care experienced young people in the employment market. The Corporate Parenting Group received a presentation about a number of local programmes providing targeted employment support for/with care experienced young people, including Step Forwards, AIM, Works for Me, Kickstart and Gloucester GEM Project. Step Forwards has established an overarching Steering Group, with support of Young Ambassadors, and this is currently working to develop an improved communications strategy to raise awareness about the overall offer and streamline the pathway for young people to be supported into employment.

## **c) Child in Care Annual Health Report 2020 – 2021**

The Child in Care Annual Health Report for 2020/21 was presented to the Corporate Parenting Group by the Named Nurse for Children in Care. Key features from the past year have been the rise in the number and complexity of children in care and the impact of the pandemic on the delivery of health provision to children in care, including the use of virtual technology and the commitment to maintain face to face consultation, as well as the importance of supporting care experienced young people's emotional and mental health needs. A key focus remains the timeliness of initial and review health assessments of children in care and improvements in documentation and clarification of consent have been identified. Four specially trained GPs now provide this service and are able to manage the current demand for initial health assessments (within 20 days) although capacity for some review health assessments is a challenge, especially in respect of engaging older young people.

In terms of future developments, Health are developing an integrated care system and in respect of the two main specialist NHS providers, Hadwen Health and Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, this will provide a more streamlined and coordinated pathway. The appointment campaign to appoint a new Named Doctor, including responsibility for the Adoption Medical Advisor role, is underway. The staffing capacity of specialist and statutory health roles is also subject to a commissioning review as these are currently below national guidelines.

As well as overseeing the health needs of Gloucestershire's children in care, the Children in Care Health Team also has responsibility for children in care placed in Gloucestershire by other local authorities. The Child in Care Health Team also quality assures the health assessments provided for Gloucestershire's children in care placed out of county.

### **3.0 Next Corporate Parenting Group**

3.1 The next Corporate Parenting Group due to be convened on 9 December 2021 will discuss the following:

- Ambassadors Peer Mentoring one year on
- Fostering Service Transformation Programme
- 'Out there' fostering recruitment campaign film
- Private Fostering Annual Report 2020/21
- New charter for care experienced young parents (see attached)

### **4.0 Children in Care and Care Leaver Data**

4.1 During 2020, with the development of the COVID-19 global pandemic, referrals for statutory children's social work services initially dropped. The much anticipated and predicted latent demand is now very evident in the children's social care system with demand reaching 30 – 40% above pre-pandemic levels. There are considerable workforce pressures and action is being taken to stabilise the turnover in the workforce.

4.2 The previous Corporate Parenting report to Cabinet stated that as of 1 September 2021, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) had 832 children in care and 464 care leavers. As of 26 November 2021, GCC has 845 children in care plus 462 care leavers. This includes 25 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and 54 former UASC care leavers.

**Cllr Stephen Davies**

**Cabinet Member – Children's Safeguarding & Early Years**