
	Report of the Children's Corporate Parenting Board	
Chair Councillor Ruth Buttery	Municipal Year 2022 - 2023	Vice-Chair Councillor Sue Ridney

Purpose of the Children's Corporate Parenting Board

All elected members, employees, and partner agencies have a collective responsibility as Corporate Parent' to provide the best possible care and safeguard for the children who are looked after by Dudley council, as well as our care experienced young adults. The Children's Corporate Parenting Board meets on a regular basis to consider matters which affect children and young people in care. This includes satisfying themselves that arrangements for the investigation of concerns about safety and welfare of children and young people in the care of the local authority are good.

Membership

Chair – Cllr Ruth Buttery, cabinet member for children and young people
 Vice Chair - Cllr Sue Ridney, shadow cabinet member for children and young people.

Cllr Daniel Bevan - Belle Vale Ward

Cllr Hilary Bills - Halesowen North ward

Cllr Paul Bradley - Amblecote Ward

Cllr Adrian Hughes – Upper Gornal & Woodsetton

Cllr Luke Johnson – Kingswinford South Ward

Cllr Pete Lee – Amblecote Ward

Cllr Anne Millward – Gornal Ward

Cllr Natalie Neale – Cradley & Wollescote ward

Cllr David Stanley – Gornal Ward

Cllr Elaine Taylor – Netherton, Woodside and Saint Andrews Ward

Summary:

This municipal report sets out the work of the board over the past year, and highlights the impact of the actions undertaken across three key areas:

1. Impact of the involvement of children, young people and care experienced
2. Impact in supporting service development
3. Impact in setting a test of assurance across corporate parent responsibilities

The report then proposes a plan for the forthcoming year, 2023-24.

In conclusion, the report details as required the recommendations and notifications received through the working group, alongside the relevant action tracker

Impact over the past year of the involvement of children, young people in care and care leavers.

Children in care and care experienced young adults are actively involved in influencing the work of the Dudley's Children Corporate Parenting (CCPB) Board and the services they receive throughout the municipal year.

During the Board meeting in July 2022, two members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) welcomed the newly appointed Children's Corporate Parenting Board. Board members took part in a fact-based quiz and a Total Respect Training exercise.

Members described the Total Respect Training as impactful as it raised awareness of the feelings that a child may experience when entering care. The CCPB recommended that all Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) receive this training to improve their practice when working with children in care and care experienced young adults.

The training was delivered on the 1st February 2023 to the IRO's and child protection conference chairs, at their service away day by a care experienced young people. Feedback from the Service Manager indicated that all the IRO's found it thought provoking and said it would influence their practice as it reinforced the need to practice in a restorative way. The

young people also reported that they felt that they had made a difference for other young people entering care.

In the past year the Safeguarding and Review Service has involved the CiCC, in the development of a range of materials to encourage children and young people to engage with their Children Looked After Reviews either by attending or chairing their reviews.

Two IRO's were interviewed by a care experienced young person for a Podcast. In this they talk about their role as an IRO and explain what Child Protection Conferences and Child Looked After Reviews are. They are also joined by one of our care experienced young adult, who shares his own experiences of Child Looked After Reviews.

This podcast was produced to help children/young people, parents and carers gain a greater understanding of what an IRO does, what Child Protection Conferences and Child Looked After Reviews are for, and how children and families can work together with their IRO's to get their voices heard. It was acknowledged by Board members that co-chairing with a young person is an important part of reviews. It was recognised that when children and young people chair their reviews builds a new skill set which they can adapt to any environment or meetings.

Children and young people said that they want to know more about their social workers and their IRO's i.e., their interests, likes and dislikes. Profiles cards were developed by children and young people for their social workers and independent reviewing officers. This initiative was welcomed by Board members in September 2022.

For the first time in February 2023, the yearly reports for the children in care service and leaving care service were co-produced by the Service Manager, children in care and care experienced young adults. The young people involved, supported the Service Manager to present the reports via power point to members and input their experiences of being in care or leaving care. Those who participated in this activity had input into developing the PowerPoint and interpreting the data and want to be involved in other similar activities.

Two young people volunteered to be interviewed to share their views on their Personal Educational Plans and Reviews with Board members. Members also heard of the wide range of activities that children in care are involved in, in their communities. Members thanked the young people for their comments, honesty and praised their commitment to improving

services for all young people and children in care as well as care experienced young adults.

Details of a variety of podcasts, co-produced with children and young people were shared with members throughout the municipal year. In preparation for the podcasts, children and young people who participated were taught how to use the podcast equipment, production and recording of podcasts and how to present to an audience.

Members of the four working groups of the Board have all welcomed the input of our care experienced apprentices who are part of working groups. They attended the working groups meetings and took the opportunity to influence and challenge where appropriate. The chairs of the working groups have expressed that this has been added value as it increased their understanding of the experiences of care experienced young adults.

In the past year, members from the CiCC were trained to participate in the recruitment and selection process of staff within the children's social care service. Staff at every level meet with a young persons panel after a formal interview.

Impact over the past year in supporting service development

In September 2022, Members addressed the current Options Plus One leisure offer for children, young people in care and foster carers. Members proposed free access to Leisure services for care leavers a friend. It was accepted that there would be a cost to the Authority, however the offer was intended to support a healthy lifestyle for those care leavers. It was agreed that this was also an opportunity this to review the leisure offer as not all care leavers resided in the Dudley Borough.

It was recognised that there was a corporate responsibility to provide access to leisure services and it would be helpful to conduct a piece of work on the leisure options available for care experienced young adults. The Board recommended that The Head of Leisure Services in liaison with the Service Director Children's Social Care, the Head of Service Children in Care, Care Leavers and Resources and a representative from public health be to submit a report to a future meeting of the Working Group on the Leisure Options for Care experienced and consider whether the membership allowed them to bring one friend when they attend leisure

centres. The outcome of this recommendation has resulted in a Leisure Offer that allows free access to activities of their choice for children and young people from 0-25 years old. This offer has widened the choice of leisure opportunities that children in care and care experienced young adults can access. The Leisure service and Children in care and care leavers Service will work in partnership to promote the offer.

In July 2022 CCPB Members wanted to ensure that all 72 members of the council were aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities and requested that the Corporate Parenting Handbook was made available to all members. In addition to this Members committed to making a podcast to raise awareness of both the role of the CCPB and the corporate parenting responsibilities of members. The podcast, already recorded, will be available to all members in the near future.

In August 2022 CCPB members also attended a mandatory corporate parenting training, to enhance their understanding of the role and increase the Board's effectiveness.

To ensure accessibility, the CCPB's most recent Strategy, Annual Report, and Corporate Parenting Handbook have been added to the Centre for Professional Practice (CPP) website at the request of members.

Impact over the past year of the corporate parenting test of assurance.

Achieving Early Permanency

The CCPB received Annual reports from both Dudley's Fostering Service and Adoption@Heart Regional Adoption Agency to scrutinise that children and young people are placed in a stable home at the earliest possible stage. Members are aware that achieving early permanency supports children have a secure, stable, and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond and to give them a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging.

It is very positive that 32 children (across the Regional Adoption Agency) have been placed via Foster for Adopt and that 85 percent of these were placed with in house adopters across the Black Country, 3 of these were Dudley Council's children

Members welcomed that the spread of children matched and matched across the four partners is closer in consistency than in previous years, albeit numbers are higher for Wolverhampton and lower in Walsall. There has been a significant increase in children placed for Dudley, 22 children, 12 were in house placements and 10 interagency.

The Fostering Service annual report offered similar reassurance to members, with an increased focus on achieving permanence for children this has resulted to increased numbers of children achieving permanence through Special Guardianship Orders and Long-Term Matching. The Fostering Service's improved interface with the Regional Adoption Agency ensures a better understanding of the progress of our children achieving permanence through adoption

One member of the Board shared concerns about placement stability i.e., children with 3 or more placement moves. In responding, the Service Director of Children's Social Care acknowledged that approximately 8% of children were placed in a number of placements each year, but assured Members that the Local Authority continued to monitor stability as well as identify strategies to reduce placement instability.

To increase the number of foster carers in Dudley members were pleased with plans to appoint a marketing manager. One Member commented on a promotional video that had previously been produced and suggested that similar marketing tools could be explored further. An increase in foster cares will complement the achieving early permanency strategy. Board members offered the support of Corporate Parents in areas including meeting the fostering service managers and practitioners.

Gold Standard for Health care for children and young people in care.

The designated nurse for children and young people in care invited members of the working group to contribute to the newly devised Gold Standard of health interventions from the very beginning of the child's journey when they first enter care up to the age of 18 years as. The Children in Care Health Team and Designated Nurse will offer support and guidance up to the age of 25 years as well as signposting to adult health providers.

The process will aim to improve the interface between professionals so that the child's health journey into care is seamless and their health needs

are identified at an early stage. It is envisaged that this will also address the board members' concern regarding Initial Health Assessments performance as in September 2022. Performance reduced to 65% during 2021/22.

The Gold Standard sets out that for any child who becomes looked after, the core health assessments of children and young people, must be undertaken as a matter of priority.

Members were satisfied that Review Health Assessments for children in care at the end of March 2022, who had an up-to-date health plan was **95.8%**.

Members inquired to the reasons why this is not 100%, the designated nurse stated

- cancelled by the carer,
- Covid,
- late information from LA (part A),
- child missing,
- refusal
- child was not brought.

A care experienced apprentice contributed to the initiative by working alongside the designated nurse to ensure that the document was user friendly and easily understood.

Embedding the voice of the child in practice.

In September 2022 the Working Group considered a report on the outcomes of the latest Regulation 44 Independent visits by an independent person, in respect of the Children Homes Regulations (2015) and updates on the continued developments within the Tipton Road residential home in Dudley.

Members praised the staff of Tipton Road Children's Home as Ofsted inspectors reported that it was evident children's views, wishes and feelings remained paramount and encouraged and managed through key-worker sessions and catch-up meetings. Inspectors recognised the home's partnership working with education providers and virtual school. During the inspection of the children's home, inspectors recognised that

this partnership working with education providers has resulted in individual needs of the children being met, including encouraging parents to join, in events such as Parent's Evening. Tipton Children's home was graded Good.

Educational Achievements

The Ofsted inspection in October / November 2022 identified that a particular strength was the Virtual School, which was deemed to provide good and effective service to children and young people. Particular highlights for board members in 2022- 2023 were

- Key Stage 2 primary outcomes identified an increase in achieving greater depth in reading in Year 1 and it was noted that Dudley 's children in care achieved better outcomes in phonics compared nationally.
- Following a successful trial, Lexia software will be implemented in early 2023 for children in Years 5 and 6 including a minimum of three 30-minute
- No young people or children in care had been permanently excluded from their academic settings. The Deputy Head Teacher (Virtual School for CiC), Rosemary Jones, confirmed that 224 young people had received tutoring as part of the School Tutoring Grant and made particular reference to the improved quality of Personal Education Plans (PEP).
- Key Stage 4 outcomes continued to be an upward trend for young people securing strong passes in English and Maths. The Deputy Head Teacher (Virtual School for CiC) referred to training sessions she had provided to local colleges to ensure that all staff, tutors, and support staff were aware of the needs of young people in care, and that they were supported across the Board.
- All Year 11 PEPs were attended by both the Virtual School, and Connexions Personal Advisor for Post 16's with a transition document completed for every young person moving from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5.
- Further work will be undertaken in relation to career aspirations for young people with the Gatsby Benchmark for Year 7 being considered and noted in plans with relevant information included.
- Members were advised that all Year 13s that successfully completed their chosen pathway received a memento and congratulatory card from Virtual School recognising their development.

Members recognised the partnership working of the Care leavers Service (EET YPA), Dudley Virtual School, and the Alliance to support our young people to reach their potential by keeping them in education, employment, and training.

Highlights from the partnership working were:

- Eight young people had been identified with outstanding achievements at university levels and a ceremony would be held in recognition.
- The number of young people gaining employment had increased by 12%, with the number of apprenticeships increased by 7%.
- figures in relation to admittance in Young Offenders Institution had fallen by 7%,
- 13% increase by young people moving from Year 13 to 14 to continue studying in higher education.

Members praised the aspirational work for children in primary school education in helping children in care to attain outcomes than in previous years. Members also praised the new 'Aspire to Uni' Programme being developed which aimed at our young people that aspire for higher education, with the intention to promote as many different professions as possible going forward.

Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments:

The total number of statutory and corporate complaints received during the period of was 271 of this 57 were related to children in care and care leavers services which equates to 21%

During the period 1st April 2021 to the 31st March 2022 the Children in Care and Care Leavers services received a total of **35** compliments. This represents **27%** of all compliments received in respect of Children's Services during this period.

Planning for 2023 -2024

Items for inclusion in the Annual Childrens Corporate Parenting Board Committee Programme for 2023/2024 are listed below

1. Verbal Updates Reports from the Corporate Parenting Board Working Groups.

2. Children's Services Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
3. Dudley's Virtual School Annual Report 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
4. Fostering and Permanency Service Annual Report 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2023
5. Yearly report from regional adoption agency Adoption @Heart
6. Review Report of Dudley Lighthouse Link Service
7. Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
8. Annual Health Report for children and young people in care
9. Report on the outcomes of the Ofsted inspections, the Regulation Independent Visitor inspections and Regulation 45 quality of care reviews in respect of the Children Home (England) Regulations 2015.
10. Care experienced young adults update report.
11. Children in Care update report.
12. Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report April 2022 – March 2023.
13. Report on the outcomes of children transitioning from Tipton Road.
14. Report on Young people and care experienced young adults who are NEET (not in employment, education, or training).

Recommendations / notifications :

The Children's Corporate Parenting Board is a committee of Dudley Council, it has two public meetings, and up to four children's corporate parenting board working groups per annum.

At the final meeting of the municipal year all the recommendations are considered and approved/rejected

Recommendations for 2022 – 2023

- The Head of Children in Care, Care Leavers, and Resources, be requested to arrange for the young people to deliver the Total Respect training/exercise to all Independent Reviewing Officers and relevant staff.
- The Corporate Parenting Board Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the Children in Care Council, be requested to arrange a date for the Board to attend a future meeting of the Children in Care Council.

- The information contained in the report and presented at the meeting on the Adoption Service Annual Report for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, be received and noted.
- The Service Director Children's Social Care was requested to report the views and concerns raised by Board Members in relation to the Adoption Panels continuing to be held virtually, at a future meeting of the Adoption@Heart Management Board
- The Children's Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021/2022, be received and noted.
- The Children's Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021/2022, be received and noted.
- That the information contained in the report submitted on Children's Services Complaints, Comment, and Compliments for the period 1st April 2021 to March 2022 be noted.
- The information contained in the report submitted on the summary of the Children in Care Annual report for 2021 to 2022 and an overview of the activities of the Children in Care Council, be noted.
- The information contained in the report submitted on the update on the Dudley Lighthouse Links Service, be note
- The information contained in Performance Report PowerPoint presentation and as reported on at the meeting be noted. The suggestion that information regarding Performance in the future form part of a scorecard, be supported
- That the information contained in the presentation on leisure passes and the leisure offer to children in care and care leavers as reported on that the meeting be noted.
- The Head of Leisure Services in conjunction with the Director Children's Social Care, the Head of Children in Care, Care Leavers and Resources and a representative from public health be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Working Group on the Leisure Options for Care Leavers and one friend.
- The Leisure Services Manager be requested to promote the current leisure offer and explore the possibility of liaising with Connexions in relation to delivering courses to those wishing to become swimming instructors.
- The information contained in the report submitted and as presented at the meeting on the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual Report 2021 to 2022, be noted.
- The views of children and young people and the comments made from the Independent Visitor be noted.

- The Interim Service Manager be requested to share photographs of the activities and events undertaken by the children with the Board, if appropriate.
- A report be provided to a future meeting on outcomes of children transitioning from the residential home
- The information contained in the report submitted on the progress made within the Fostering Service for the period of 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, be noted.
- The Interim Service Manager be requested to provide further information in relation to foster carer payments to the Board for information
- The information contained in the report submitted on how children in care and care leavers were progressing in education, employment and training and development and outcomes that contribute, be noted.
- A summary of developments and outcomes delivered by the Virtual School, be noted.
- The arrangements for continued improvements towards sustainable positive outcomes for Care experienced young adults in accessing employment, education, and training, be noted.
- A breakdown of children and care experienced young adults who are NEET (not in employment, education, or training) figures as at the end of the academic year with comparative data from the previous two years, be presented to Childrens Corporate Parenting Board Working Group

Tracker of actions

Municipal Year 2022-2023

Action	Date of Action	What do we need to do	When	Status RAG Rate	Who	Progress update
Identify a drop in property for care experienced young people	Nov 2021	Discussions to begin with Corporate Colleagues to identify a property	As soon as possible		Corporate Landlords / Head of service /Service Manager for CL	The Director Children's Social Care confirmed that all available options are being explored including encouraging care experienced young people to

						make good use of community resources so that they were fully integrated into the community long-term.
Leisure services to improve leisure offer to cic and cep	January 2022	Leisure services to provide a report detailing a leisure offer	As soon as possible		Steve Gay	Resolved
The Head of Children in Care, Care Leavers, and Resources, be requested to arrange for the young people to deliver the Total Respect training/exercise to all Independent Reviewing Officers and relevant staff	July 2022	Arrange for the exercise to take place	As soon as possible		Head of Service	Resolved
The Corporate Parenting Board Co-Ordinator, in conjunction with the Children in Care Council, look at an alternative date for the 'Meet your Corporate Parent Event' during October half-term.	July 2022	Liaise with the participation officer	As soon as possible		Corporate Parenting Board Coordinator	Resolved Date arranged for 21 st March 2023. Email sent to Members
The Director Children's Social Care be requested to report the views and concerns	July 22	Director of Children's social care to express the views and	September 2022		Director Children's Social care	Resolved

<p>raised by Board Members in relation to Adoption Panel's continuing to be held virtually to a future meeting of the Adoption@Heart Management Board.</p>		<p>concerns of the members at the next management Board</p>			
<p>The Corporate Parenting Board Co-ordinator be requested to circulate the list of Working Groups to Members of the Board, for Members to advise directly as to which Group they wished to attend</p>	<p>July 2022</p>	<p>Email sent to all Members of the CPB on 18th July 2022</p>			<p>Corporate parenting Board Coordinator</p> <p>Resolved</p>
<p>Councillor P Bradley referred to the publication of the new Corporate Parenting Handbook, which had been emailed to all Councillors and suggested that this also be made available to all Council Officers</p>	<p>July 2022</p>	<p>Email sent 18th July 2023</p>			<p>Corporate parenting Board Coordinator</p> <p>Resolved</p>
<p>The Corporate Parenting Board Co-Ordinator be requested to explore the options for the Children's Corporate Parenting Board to produce a podcast to raise awareness</p>	<p>July 2022</p>	<p>Podcast set up on 19th January 2023</p>			<p>Corporate parenting Board Coordinator</p> <p>Resolved</p>

The Service Manager be requested to provide further information in relation to foster carer payments to the Board for information	December 2022	Interim Service Manager to provide information regarding foster carers payments			Interim Service Manager	Resolved
CiCC have Request from the Cicc for a pocket money review	December 2022	Head of Service to undertake a review and report back to the CiCC			Head of Service for Cic, CI, and Resources	Resolved. To be presented to the next Board
A verbal update in relation to children's savings to be provided by Head of Service / Service manager for Cic and CIs	December 2022	Head of Service to provide Verbal update in March 2023 Board meeting			Head of Service for Cic, CI, and Resources	To be presented to the next board

Catherine Driscoll

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Catherine Driscoll**

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