

Corporate Parenting Panel Proposal

Overview

The aim of this document is to outline a proposal for the forward operation of the Corporate Parenting Panel with particular regard to the participation of care experienced children and young people. It is envisaged that there will be eight meetings of the panel over the course of 2022 with an alternation between more formal committee based meetings and meetings which are young person led. These young person led meetings will be staged at different venues across the district to ensure inclusivity across the area as a whole.

In structuring the business of Corporate Parenting Panel in this way it is hoped that a level of flexibility can be achieved that allows for panel members to have oversight of key statutory reports whilst allowing for a thematic focus on specific issues with the use of co-opted champions where appropriate. The role of the governing body for the virtual school will also need to be integrated into the matrix of accountabilities.

A forward plan will be put in place that tracks the year ahead and identifies the points in the year where Corporate Parenting Panel will receive statutory reports such as the annual report of the virtual school, and the annual reports of the fostering and adoption services. This more formal element of agenda planning will be intertwined with the young person led agenda setting that will arise from the meetings that are led by them. The intention is to develop a dynamic dialogue between the operations of the panel and panel members and our children in care and care leavers with a co-production approach to the programme of work undertaken.

The young person led meetings will not be restricted to members of the children in care council but will be open forums to encourage a broad breadth of engagement across age bands.

The involvement of care experienced children and young people

Rationale

As noted in the Ofsted 'Monitoring visit to Bradford children's services' report dated 22/10/2021 "Corporate parenting is underdeveloped and has lacked a proactive approach to advocacy and challenge on behalf of children and young people. Young people told inspectors that their involvement with, and influence on, their corporate parents has been limited, as they have not felt able to fully engage on an equal basis with adults in formal meetings."

This has resulted in the disenfranchisement of children and young people in care. They are left feeling their input is ineffectual and "at the bottom of the chain".

Aim

To increase the safe and effective participation of children and young people in the Corporate Parenting Panels and to create a sustainable means of dialogue between young people and their corporate parents.

Briefly this will be achieved by a remodelling of the corporate parenting panels as outlined below.

- Corporate parenting panels will be held regularly throughout the year with at least four being designed and led by children and young people.
- The aim will be to host each of these four meetings in a different locality within the Bradford district.
- Each meeting will address 2-3 topics / themes. Consideration will be given to age and developmental stage suitability.
- A process for deciding upon the agendas for these meetings will be developed, so that all participants are aware of the topics to be discussed in advance. For example, Entitlements, criminalisation of young people, family time and access to further and higher education.
- Corporate parenting panels will be run informally and a range of refreshments will be provided which are more suitable to the palettes of young people – they will decide this.
- Feedback on the sessions will be provided in a timely manner. Issues raised may be addressed in a 'you said, we did' format, with attached timescales for completion.
- It is envisioned that any revision to the children in care council and care leavers council will be made with an eye to more effectively feeding into the corporate parenting panels.
- Formats of the individual panel meetings will be dependent on age range of children and young people, themes and the location. For example; some may be discussion based others may be more physical and arts and crafts.
- To have an effective and sustainable means of dialogue, the CPP members will join these Children in Care and Care Leaver led sessions. Members will be actively encouraged to get to know the children and young people.
- Annual celebration events for children and young people will be supported practically by the council and elected members.
- Annual report of a 'you said, we did' to be presented to the children and young people who access the Children in Care and Care Leavers sessions, so they can evaluate progress and commitment to corporate parenting

Areas for consideration

- Many of the children and young people who will be involved in facilitating these corporate parenting panels will have experienced trauma which may affect their interactions and ability to form trusting relationships. Key themes of trauma informed practice will be shared with elected members as part of the corporate parenting training that is being developed.
- We need to put mechanisms in place to ensure that outcomes and decisions from Corporate Parenting Panel are made available in an accessible format for children and young people. As an example, the minutes from the four Corporate Parenting Panel

Minutes where the children and young people take the lead, could be published in a newsletter and sent out quarterly. The newsletter could form part of the 'you said, we did' offer. Giving an opportunity for the children and young people to have their say through a designated email address to reply.