

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

AGENDA

Meeting to be held remotely on Monday 19 April 2021 at 5.30pm

The meeting will be livestreamed for the public to view on the Council's YouTube channel at: - <https://youtu.be/XG0wZJML4-w>

Part I

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Report to Sunderland City Council Cabinet attached.

ELAINE WAUGH
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

Civic Centre
SUNDERLAND

9 April 2021

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

**Minutes of the Meeting held remotely via MS Teams on Monday 18 January
2021 at 5.30pm**

Part I

Present:

Members of the Board

Councillor L Farthing (in the Chair)	Washington South Ward
Councillor S Foster	Castle Ward
Councillor J Heron	Houghton Ward
Councillor C Marshall	Doxford Ward
Councillor D McDonough	St Chad's Ward
Councillor J McKeith	St Peter's Ward
Councillor J Potts	Millfield Ward
Councillor P Smith	Silksworth Ward

All Supporting Officers

Councillor C Rowntree	Deputy Cabinet Member, Children, Learning and Skills
Jill Colbert	Chief Executive, TfC
Martin Birch	Director of Children's Social Care, TfC
Linda Mason	Headteacher, Virtual School
Wendy Coghlan	Participation and Engagement and Anti Bullying Team Manager
Nikki Donaldson	Participation and Engagement Officer
Sharon Willis	Strategic Service Manager, TfC
Gavin Taylor	Independent Reviewing Service
Keith Munro	Fostering Review and Reg
Dr Sarah Mills	Designated Doctor for Looked After Health
Claire Elwell	Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner
Jo Morgan	Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Kelly Haslem	CYPS, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Foundation Trust
Gillian Kelly	Governance Services

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

17. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Smith asked about the recruitment by 'A National Voice' of the 2020 - 2021 ambassadors and Nikki Donaldson advised that there had been applicants from the Change Council in Sunderland but unfortunately they had not been successful at this time.

Change Council Update

The Board had received a copy of the Change Council report and this was presented by Wendy Coghlan.

The Change Council had continued to meet face to face during the period October to December in Covid secure venues. There were young people who were keen to join the group and Nikki Donaldson was working to keep them in the loop until another group could be brought together. During the pandemic, senior managers had regularly visited the Change Council to ensure that they were listening and responding to need during these uncertain times.

The Change Council had been working on the 'Change the Language' campaign and Together for Children had agreed the following: -

- Young people would no longer to be referred to as a 'child in care' or 'looked after', they would be **cared for**;
- Rather than 'care leaver', young people would be **care experienced**;
- The term 'contact' would no longer be used, it would be **family time**; and
- Instead of saying 'placement' it would be **home**.

Senior leaders had pledged to support the campaign and partnerships and partner organisations would also be encouraged to change their language. The Chair noted that Board Members could also help to promote this change.

Dr Mills advised that she had raised the campaign with her directors and they were willing to adopt the language but unfortunately it may not be possible to change job and team titles at this stage.

National Care Experienced Week had taken place between 26 October to 1 November 2020 with the theme of Care Leavers with Careers and young people had been involved in sharing their stories. The Christmas Celebration event had not gone ahead as planned due to the pandemic ahead but each cared for and care experienced young person received a goody bag from the Change Council with the

support of CCG and Together for Children. Following the success of last year, luxury hampers were again provided by Hopespring for care experienced young people who may have been feeling isolated at Christmastime. The Chair recorded her appreciation to Hopespring for the work which they did to support cared for and care experienced young people.

The Change Council ended the year with a socially distanced Christmas meeting and the group were pleased to watch the Young Achievers awards where one of the care experienced young people received the Service in the Community Award. The Change Council also ran a quiz for professionals from across Together for Children.

Moving forward the Change Council would be focusing on launching the cookbook, recruiting a wider representation of young people, looking at the isolation of care experienced young people and the wellbeing of children and young people.

18. RESOLVED that the Change Council update be noted.

Health of Looked After Children

The Designated Doctor for Looked After Children submitted a report providing an update on health activity for looked after children.

The purpose of the report was to: -

- Demonstrate the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children looked after
- Assure the Corporate Parenting Board that support and health services to children looked after were provided without undue delay or geographical prejudice
- Demonstrate the aim of the Looked After Health team for sustained improvement in the health and wellbeing of children looked after and care leavers
- Assure that the child's voice around health was included wherever possible
- Report on compliance with statutory targets from the Looked After Health Team for South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Face to face appointments had continued during the second lockdown with reduced capacity due to minimal staffing; in the third lockdown period the team had offered telephone appointments.

There had been an average of 623 children cared for in quarter 3 which was a slight increase from the previous quarter and represented 107 children per 10,000. This remained higher than the national average.

41 Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) had been carried out and there had been 93% compliance. Two health assessments had been done outside of timescale because of siblings having to self-isolate and one young person was seen out of timescale because they had other appointments which took priority.

79 Review Health Assessments had been carried out in the quarter to date and this was 95% compliance with timescales. Of these, 19 appointments had been missed but the majority were re-booked within timescale. Two children were out of time and two young people refused their health assessments and the refusal pathway was followed in these cases.

The compliance for out of area RHAs was 86%. It was noted that there were 34 children placed outside of the North East and the CCG quality assured all of the out of area health assessments for quality. When young people were placed out of the area, nursing staff now shared a 'medical summary' to ensure that all health needs could be met in the local area without delay.

Nine Health passports had been issued during the quarter which represented 100% compliance. The Next Steps team and the Named Nurse for Looked After Health were working together on how best to meet the health needs of care leavers and the passport process was under review and discussions were ongoing about how to make it more functional.

Jo Morgan had been appointed as the new Designated Nurse for Looked After Health and started in post on 5 January 2021. Claire Elwell, Named Nurse, was undertaking training to become an Advanced Clinical Practitioner within the team. This would mean that she could take up more of a clinical leadership role within the team and Claire was the first in the region to undertake this demanding and pioneering training for a role with cared for children.

Health Profile Data continued to be collected at each health assessment and this would be used to improve services for cared for young people. The Designated Doctor had joined the Best Start in Life group with Sunderland City Council and the Looked After Health team, Paediatric team, Sunderland CCG and the Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP) were continuing joint working could help tackle some of the issues caused by drug use in young people in the city.

Claire Elwell was in attendance to talk through the refusal pathway for young people who had not attended either an initial or review health assessment. Claire highlighted that best practice was to have a health assessment in person but for over 16s who refused then nurses would try to talk to the young person and offer alternatives and ask whether available information could be shared. Occasionally a young person might refuse to engage in any way and the Care Team would receive a letter to this effect.

Young people could opt back in to health assessments, their right to refuse was acknowledged but the team would continue to give them options to engage with health assessments.

For young people under the age of 16 who had refused health assessments, the team could often gather and share health information through the person with parental responsibility. This could still be overridden by the young person and backed up by the guardian. The flowchart enabled nurses to be secure in what they were doing and the guidelines they were operating under.

Councillor McDonough commented that, in the general population, mental health issues were being impacted by lockdowns and queried if this was being observed in cared for children. Dr Mills stated that cared for children had not presented any differently to other young people, however during the first lockdown CYPS had brought in a new looked after pathway which had transformed things and they had been able to reassure young people that they had the help and support which they needed.

Claire added that this was being touched on in face to face assessments and a number of foster carers had taken more advantage of the school provision this time around.

The Chair asked if oral health was being monitored and Dr Mills said that there was generally a good uptake for dental care, however the impact of Covid had meant that routine check ups had not been offered to some children for almost a year. It was noted that some dentists had been offering appointments so it was a mixed picture.

Having considered the report, it was: -

19. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

NTW Sunderland Looked After Children Data

The Board received a report from CNTW for the period September to December 2020. Kelly Haslem advised that there had been ten referrals in September, six in October and ten in November. Two young people were discharged unseen during the period, one declined to engage as they did not feel that they required a service and the other was signposted to Paediatrics as it was felt to be an inappropriate mental health referral.

The CYPS Intensive Community Treatment Service (ICTS) offered emergency or urgent contacts and appointments had been made for four young people in September, three in October and three in November. The ICTS would respond within one hour by telephone and would see all urgent cases before referring to CYPS.

Waiting times continued to reduce and the waiting time for treatment in October and November was four weeks. During Covid the service had continued to accept all referrals, complete assessments and interventions and face to face appointments were offered when clinically necessary.

The Pathway for cared for children was a multi-disciplinary team who had been specifically trained to deliver psychological therapies to meet the needs of young people and their carers.

There was a steady caseload within CYPS and children looked after represented around 5.5% of all referrals. There had been no change in referral rates during the pandemic.

20. RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher

Linda Mason, Headteacher of the Virtual School submitted a report providing information about cared for children highlighting performance and outcome trends over the last three-year reporting period 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. Due to the pandemic there was no formal national reporting of performance for 2019/2020.

At the current time there were 633 cared for children in the city and of those who were of school age, 66% were currently attending school and 33% were undertaking remote learning. The highest population of cared for children were in the pre-school cohort. Within the total population, 227 (46%) had an identified SEND, with 140 receiving SEND support in school, and 18% of the total had an EHCP. Of those children, 70% attended a specialist education provision. National data suggested that Sunderland did not have as many cared for children with EHCPs as similar authorities but had a higher figure receiving SEND support and this was something which the Virtual School was working to understand.

Linda Mason advised that she was part of the SEND Panel for EHCP assessments and emphasised the need for early identification of needs. It was apparent that boys were more like to have SEND and this increased towards the end of Key Stage 2. For cared for children, the identified SEND was most likely to be in relation to Social, Emotional and Mental Health; this was not seen as a discrete SEND and would sit alongside other learning disabilities.

Councillor Smith asked what was known about the level of speech and language needs in Sunderland at the current time. Linda explained that there was a significant interrelationship between this and social, emotional and mental health needs and it could be difficult to separate these. This was an area for the Virtual School to scrutinise; schools were good at responding to behaviours but not always what was underpinning them.

The report set out the progress and attainment for the last three years for each of the Key Stages comparing the Virtual School with national cared for children and all Sunderland schools. There was a caveat around all data as cohorts could have very different group dynamics which could have a significant impact on the results. Key Stage 1 had an improving picture with positive narrowing of gaps; Key Stage 2 had some positive trends and narrowing of the gap.

For Key Stage 4, there had been a significant improvement in the number of cared for children obtaining a A* - C or grade 5 – 9 in English and Maths in 2019 and this had improved again in 2020 to 17.4%, although this had not been formally reported due to Covid. Performance had also improved in relation to young people achieving five GCSEs A* - C or grade 4 – 9 to 34.7%.

Attainment 8 was also showing a strong and improving performance when compared to national rates, however Progress 8, measures of progress from Year 6 to Year 11, were all negative. There were a number of factors which may have impacted on this including the period of care and prior attainment before entering care, length of time

being cared for, placement stability and whether young people were placed in Sunderland or outside of the area.

The school attendance of cared for children had been better than the national performance in 2017 and 2018 but dipped below this in 2019. The Virtual School monitored attendance daily through Welfare Call and generally levels were good.

In relation to exclusions, this had shown an improving three-year trend and there had been no permanent exclusions in the period. Linda highlighted that the DfE were changing terminology from exclusion and were reverting to 'suspension' and 'expulsion'.

Cared for children who had been in education, employment and training had been an improving picture but this had dipped in 2019. In 2020, 66% of the cohort were in education, employment or training and 34% were not. There was now a full-time post-16 Co-ordinator in place and a post-16 ePEP. It was ensured that every young person moving from Year 11 to Year 12 had a robust plan in place and if these had stalled, they were quickly picked up.

79% of cared for young people were in good or outstanding schools. The Board had previously been advised that children would not automatically be removed from a school if it was judged to Require Improvement or was Inadequate, there were many factors which would be considered in relation to whether it would be in the young persons best interests to remove them from the school.

Linda stated that 97% of PEPS had been completed in the autumn term and were still in compliance. During this term, Early Years Foundation Stage ePEPs would be rolled out.

Upon consideration of the information, it was: -

21. RESOLVED that the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher be noted.

Regulation 44 Visits – May to October 2020

The Board received a report providing an update on the findings of Regulation 44 visits. Gavin Taylor advised that during the period there had been robust risk assessments and the Regulation 44 visits had been completed in various different ways using new technology and available data with a limited number of direct visits to homes. Since the onset of the pandemic, Ofsted had not carried out any inspections unless there were serious concerns.

It was highlighted that Nook Lodge had now been registered as a three-bed home which would provide targeted and focused work for young people placed there.

Keith Munro explained that all Regulation 44 visits were unannounced visits and there was a themed audit for each month. Colombo Road was currently judged to be 'Outstanding' and the latest visit had found that missing incidents had reduced from

36 to one and critical incidents had also reduced from six to four. Three recommendations from the visits were accepted and implemented within the given timescales.

The Chair noted that there seemed to have been a number of accidents experienced by young people at the home and queried if this was a concern. Keith said that it was not and these were all random incidents; the home had experienced no accidents at all for the rest of the year.

Monument View was rated 'Good' and had also seen a reduction in missing incidents, however there were five critical incidents reported to Ofsted where there had been none in the previous period.

Staff were committed to improving the home and driving it up to Outstanding. Jill Colbert noted that an Ofsted judgment of 'Good' was still very good and it was more important to ensure that things were being done in the right way, rather than chasing Ofsted ratings.

Grasswell House was most recently judged to be 'Good with improved effectiveness'. There had been three recommendations made and there had been an increase in missing episodes in this period from 21 to 25. There had also been an increase in critical incidents, however it was important to note that during the period four young people had moved out and four had moved in who were a younger age group with different care needs reflecting their ages and stages of development.

Councillor Smith referred to one of the critical incidents where a young person had received inappropriate attention on public transport and asked if this was a regular problem. Keith advised that this was a one-off report and he was not aware of any other incidents.

Revelstoke Road home was another rated as 'Good' and there had been five recommendations within the period. The number of missing incidents had increased slightly and there had been ten critical incidents. It was noted that relationships were strong within the home and good progress was being made.

Overall, all of the homes continued to show their commitment to providing the best possible care for vulnerable children and young people. Learning and recommendations were shared with individual homes and managers and staff teams use the recommendations to provide the standards of care which will support young people in achieving their full potential.

Gavin Taylor said that the report was about the lived experience of children but equally important was the passion which the residential staff had and the resilience they had shown during these challenging times.

Having thanked Gavin and Keith for the report it was: -

22. RESOLVED that the Regulation 44 Visits report be noted.

Adoption Annual Report 2019/2020

The Annual Adoption Report for the period April 2019 to March 2020 was submitted to the Board for information.

Councillor Potts referred to the forthcoming partnership with Cumbria and Durham adoption services and asked whether, going forward, joint reports would be produced or if there would continue to be Sunderland only data.

Jill Colbert stated that presentation of performance data and outcomes was a very important part of the work of the adoption agency and although Sunderland was entering into a partnership agreement it would not stop having its own adoption service. Data would continue to be presented on a Sunderland basis but this would be done by the joint Head of Service.

The Chair commended the work of the Chief Executive in achieving a 'hub and spoke' model for the new joint arrangements. It had been of huge importance that Sunderland was able to retain the very good team and personalisation which it currently had rather than having staff transferred out of the service.

23. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Fostering Annual Report 2019/2020

The Annual Fostering Report for the period April 2019 to March 2020 was submitted to the Board for information.

24. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Provisional Work Programme 2020/2021

The Board received a report setting out the proposed work programme for the municipal year and were asked to consider any additional topics for discussion at a future meeting.

The Chair requested that Members advise her of any comments or additions to the work programme.

25. RESOLVED that the work programme be noted and the suggested new items added.

(Signed) L FARTHING
Chair



REPORT AUTHOR:	Nikki Donaldson, Participation and Engagement Officer
SUBJECT:	Together for Children Change Council Report for Corporate Parenting Board 19th April 2021
PURPOSE:	To report on the activity of both Change Council 10-15 group and Change Council 16+ group (Jan-Mar 2021)

Change Council

Change Council have continued to meet regularly face to face throughout January – March 2021. Change Council are meeting in a Covid secure venue, both Change Council's 10-15 and 16+ group are meeting fortnightly.

Senior Managers including the Manager of the IRO Service, Director of Children's Social Care and Corporate and Commercial have been regular visitors at Change Council to ensure they are listening and responding to what young people are saying.

Independent Review of Children's Social Care

Four young people from Change Council submitted expressions of interest to be part of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care with one young person being successful and is now part of the national EbE board. Rhiannon has attended virtual meetings to get to know other members of the EbE board.



International Women's Day

Members of Change Council took part in International Women's Day by sharing quotes about Women that inspire them.



Social Work Week

To celebrate Social Work Week members of Change Council wanted to recognise and share what Social Care professionals including Social Workers, PA's and Children's Home workers have meant to them and what qualities those professionals have shown which are important to young people.

'This person took the time to know and understand me'

'Donna makes me feel safe'

'Kirsty – she is really easy to talk to, she understands me, is always nice, always reliable and on time'

'Julie Burnett my princess my rock my sidekick. She is my world and more, does anything she can to help puts 100% effort into me and my future. Awesome to rely on and also I would not be where I am if it wasn't for this woman'

Care Day 2021

On 19th February we supported National Care Day 2021 virtually, children and young people shared with us what Care means to them through creative activities including baking, drawing and quotes.



Regional Meetings

Change Council have met virtually with our Regional Children in Care Council, following discussions with young people from across the region six themes were identified which include;

- Reduced or free council tax for all care experienced young people no matter what are you live in.
- More apprenticeships for care experienced young people and work training opportunities.
- Reduced travel costs

- More work done around isolation and trusted key adults for care experienced children and young people.
- Children and young people designed and delivered training for front line staff both in and out of councils.
- More changes in the language used within the care system.

Further consultation will be had to prioritise which theme cared for and care experienced young people feel should be the regional campaign focus this year.

Blue Cabin – Compass Project

A team of researchers from South Tyneside Council and Blue Cabin funded by the DfE met with members of Change Council and young people from Durham, South Tyneside and Northumberland.

The aim is focused on working with Children in Care Councils to understand what has happened during the COVID pandemic. The meeting was held virtually, young people discussed what has been different, what has worked well and not so well through this time.



Ofsted Focused Visit

A focused visit took place in March 2021 and Ofsted asked if they could speak with Change Council. Change Council decided that they would like to deliver a presentation to the inspectors with all the things they had been doing over the last few months. Young people from the older group met with inspectors virtually to deliver the presentation.

Moving forward

- Cook-Book Launch
- Change the Language Campaign
- Takeover Challenge
- Key Applications
- Recruitment of a wider representation of young people
- Isolation of Care Experienced Young People
- Edge of Care
- Involvement in NAAS
- SSCP website

Social Media

As a reminder if you would like to see what Change Council is up to regularly and the other participation groups follow Youth Voice on:

: @tfcyouthvoice

: @tfcyouthvoice

: @tfcyouthvoice



CCG Sunderland update
Report to Corporate Parenting Board
19th April 2021

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. The purpose of this report is to:

- Demonstrate our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in care
- To assure the corporate parenting board that health services to children in care are provided without undue delay or geographical prejudice
- To demonstrate the aim of the Looked After Health team is for sustained improvement in the health and wellbeing of children in care and those leaving care
- To assure the child's voice around health issues are included wherever possible
- Report on compliance to statutory targets from the Looked After Health Team for South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Please note that data reported within this report is Q3 data (October, November, December). This is due to the time of this meeting.

1.2. COVID-19

- 1.2.1 Isolating Carers and young people impacted on appointments – with significant numbers having to be cancelled and rearranged.
- 1.2.2 Following the further lockdown restrictions implemented late December the Health Team made the decision to provide telephone health assessments, this was based on risk; distance carers were having to travel, the use of public transport and individual health risks.
- 1.2.3 Virtual platforms have been introduced as an alternative option for young people.
- 1.2.4 Plan to reintroduce face to face assessments in April 21.

2.0 Compliance data for health assessments - Quarter 3

In Quarter 3 there were, on average, 623 cared for children, this is a slight increase (13) from the previous quarter. Current rate in Sunderland is 107 per 10,000 Children Looked After¹. This remains higher than the national average.

¹ Children's services analysis tool, ChAT, April 2019

2.1 Initial Health Assessments (IHA)

- 2.1.1 Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring a health assessment of physical, emotional and mental health needs is completed for every child within 20 working days of becoming looked after.

Table 1 - Initial Health Assessments

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
Number	47	60	61
Compliance (target 100%)	96%	96%	95% (58)

*2 health assessments were out of timescale because of siblings self-isolating. 1 Young person was seen out of timescale because other appointments had priority over health.

2.2 Review Health Assessments (RHA)

- 2.2.1 The RHA must happen at least every six months before a child's 5th birthday and at least once every 12 months after the child's 5th birthday within the month they became looked after.

Table 2 - Review Health Assessments

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3 <i>to date</i>
Number	135	177	126
Compliance (target 100%)	100%	94%	98%

*19 health appointments were missed; the majority were then rebooked within timescale. 1 child was out of time and 6 young people refused their health assessment, so the refusal pathway was followed.

2.2 Out of Area Health Assessments

- 2.3.1 There are 37 cared for children placed outside of the North East. 1 is in a secure unit.
- 2.3.2 A pathway is now in place for the quality assurance of health assessments.
- 2.3.2 The Designated Nurse (LAC) Sunderland CCG are quality assuring all IHA and RHA for children placed out of area.
- 2.3.3 An audit is currently been completed to provide assurance that our cared for young people placed outside of the area of Sunderland receive timely, quality health assessments and that unmet needs identified on health action plans are met within timeframes.

Table 3 – Health assessments performed on behalf of Sunderland for children and young people placed outside of area

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3 <i>to date</i>
Total number	10	7	14
Total Compliance (target 100%)	100%	100%	96%
Number IHA	0	0	2
Compliance IHA (target 100%)	-	-	100%
Number RHA	10	7	12
Compliance RHA (target 100%)	100%	100%	92%

* one young person missed two appointments and was then seen out of time

- 2.3.4 The nursing staff now share a 'Medical summary' when a child or young person is moved out of area to ensure all health needs can be met in the local area without delay

3. Health Passports

Table 4 - Health Passports Issued

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3 <i>to date</i>
Number	14	12	18
Compliance	100%	100%	100%

4. Looked After Health Team

- 4.1. the signs of safety scaling system are being embedded into the health assessments too align with the TFC sign of safety model.
- 4.2. Dr Sarah Mills will be taking maternity leave from July 2021. There is planning within the team on how Dr Mills workplan will be covered over this period.
- 4.3. Face to face Initial and Review health assessments have commenced April 2021

5. Service improvements

- 5.1. The Health Profile Data (Sunderland Looked After Health Team, Data Launchpad) continues to be collected at each health assessment.

- 5.2 In-depth projects looking at Asthma, Weight, Epilepsy and the health of care leavers have been completed. Recommendations for changes to practice in Asthma and Epilepsy care have been implemented and the outcomes will be re-audited in 2022. 5.3
- 5.3 The Designated Doctor has joined the 'Best start in Life' group within Sunderland Council
- 5.4 A project around obesity is been completed within the medical team, looking at this particular area with our cared for children and resources. An information leaflet about Abnormal eating behaviours in cared for children is being produced to support carers in managing weight gain when children come into care. This is being done in conjunction with CYPS and foster carers will be asked for their opinion on the leaflet before it goes into production.

6. Recommendations and Actions

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note the content of the report.

Jo Morgan
Designated Nurse Looked After Children
Sunderland CCG

Cumbria, Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Trust Sunderland Children Cared For Report

April 2021 (Dec 2021 –Feb 2021)



Sunderland Children Cared for Report. December 2020 – February 2021

1. Activity

	Dec	Jan	Feb
Referrals	7	10	13
Referrals discharged unseen	2	1	4

Referrals discharged unseen

The following provides narrative in relation to reasons why the young people were not seen by the service.

December

- One young person requested referral was retracted as did not wish to engage with CYPS, CYPS clinicians liaised with social worker and referral closed to CYPS.
- One young person was referred, referral declined as inappropriate referral.

January

- Young person referral declined as currently undergoing care proceedings, due to uncertainty re. placement, advised to re- refer once care proceedings have been finalised.

February

- 4 referrals were declined as they were inappropriate referrals.

2. Referral Urgency

All cases referred to CYPs either by phone, fax, and email or in written format are reviewed on a daily basis by members of the clinical team. The purpose of this initial review is in order to signpost any cases that have been inappropriately referred and to ensure any cases that require an emergency or urgent response are highlighted and actioned immediately.

CYPS Intensive Community Treatment Service now sits within the Universal Crisis Team and offers a 24/7 service 365 days per year. ICTS will respond to the young person via telephone to offer a telephone triage within 1 hour. Any young person requiring an emergency

appointment will be offered an appointment within 4 hours of referral being received and for urgent referrals the young person will be offered an appointment within 24 hours.

	Dec	Jan	Feb
Emergency	0	0	0
Urgent	2	3	5
Total	2	3	5

3. Waiting Times (All Referrals)

Current Waiting Times to Treatment are detailed below. (Treatment is defined as second attended contact)

	Dec (Weeks)	Jan (Weeks)	Feb (Weeks)
Wait to Treatment	3	4	5

Referrals

During COVID the service has continued to accept all referrals and complete consultation, assessments and offer face to face psychological interventions. New Ways of Working have been fully embraced by the Team to facilitate contact with young people and their families / carers such as online consultation and phone contact, where face to face appointments cannot be supported.

Children who are Cared for Pathway

This Pathway specifically focuses on 2 areas, direct therapeutic work with the young people and non direct work with Foster Carers and staff working not residential homes, this includes Psychoeducational Group Interventions, Consultation and Training to Foster Families in conjunction with Together for Children and continued dedicated scaffolding support to Residential Homes in Sunderland.

Young People are offered priority appointments within CYPS and following assessment will access treatment within 6 weeks. The Pathway is a multi disciplinary team consisting of Nursing, Psychology, Child Psychotherapy and Psychiatry. The team have all completed specific formal training to deliver psychological therapies to meet the needs of the young people and their carers.

4.Current Caseload

	Dec	Jan	Feb
Total Children Looked After	98	103	107
Total CYPS Caseload	1710	1717	1754
Total % Children Looked After	5.7%	6.0%	6.1%

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD	
DATE:	19 th April 2021
REPORT AUTHOR:	Linda Mason HEAD TEACHER Virtual School
SUBJECT:	Head Teacher's Report
PURPOSE:	FOR INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with updated information about cared for children since the last report in January 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Board is requested to receive the report for information

3. Context - Cohort and Characteristics

Currently as of 12 April 2021 (report written) we have 625 Cared for Children a reduction of 8 compared to 633 Cared for Children in January 2021.

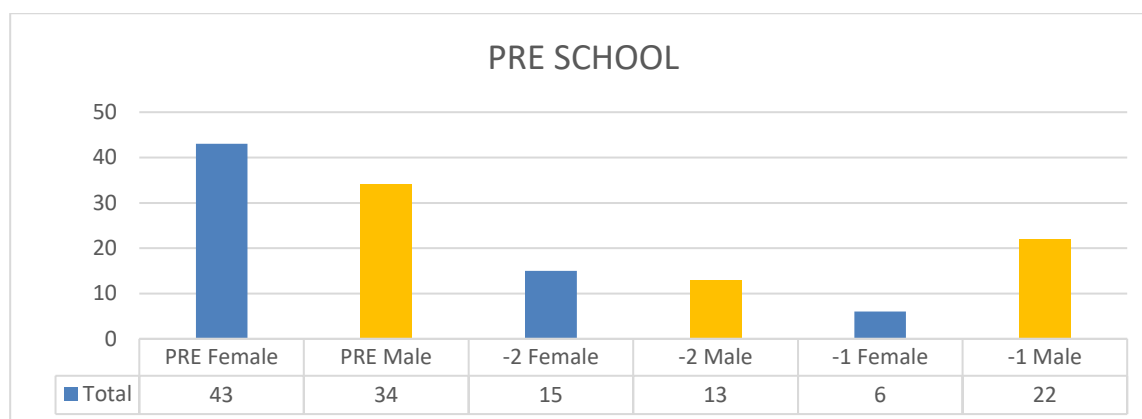
Historical cohorts (when report written)

January 2021	633
October 2020	622
July 2020	578
January 2020	569

3.1 COHORT

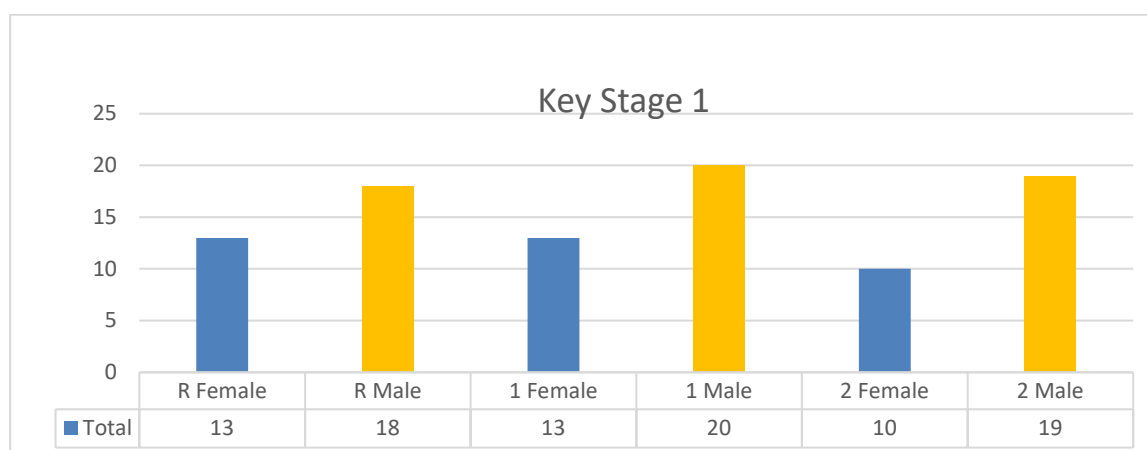
Source Virtual School Data 12 April 2021
Cohort Tables by Key Stage

3.1.1 PRE SCHOOL

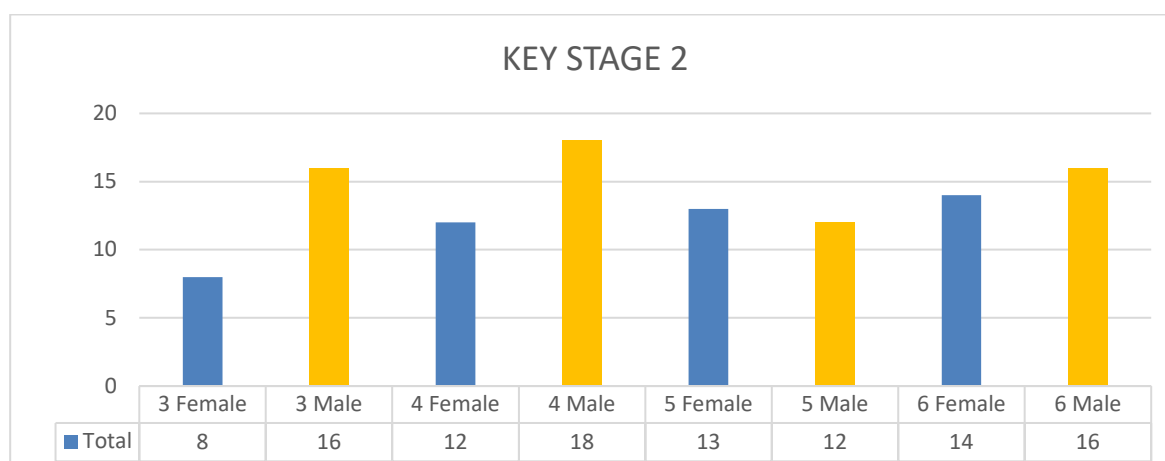


Pre-school children are aged 0 – 2 years, - 2 (early years provision, childcare or nursery) children are aged 2/3 and -1 (early years provision, childcare or nursery) children are aged 3/4

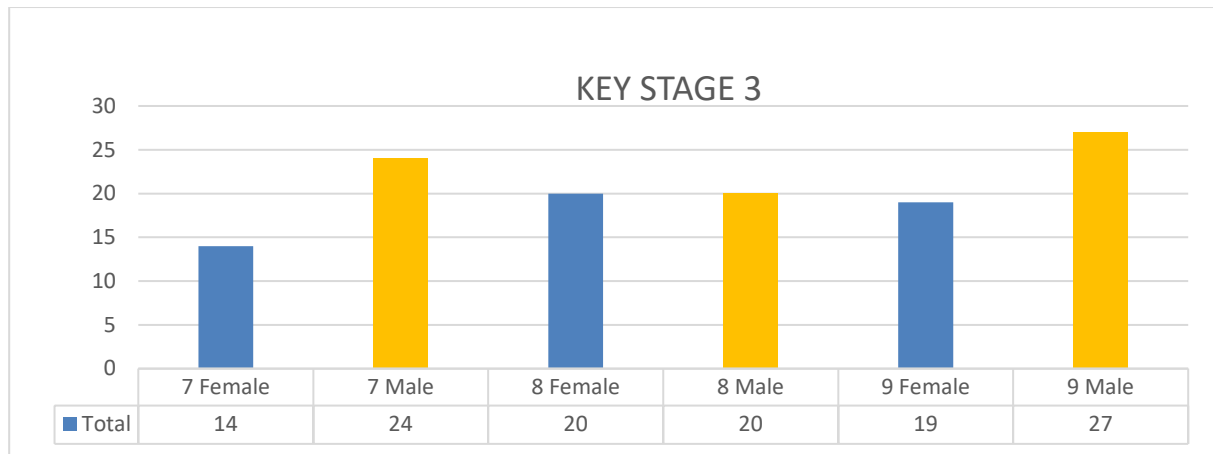
3.1.2 KEY STAGE 1



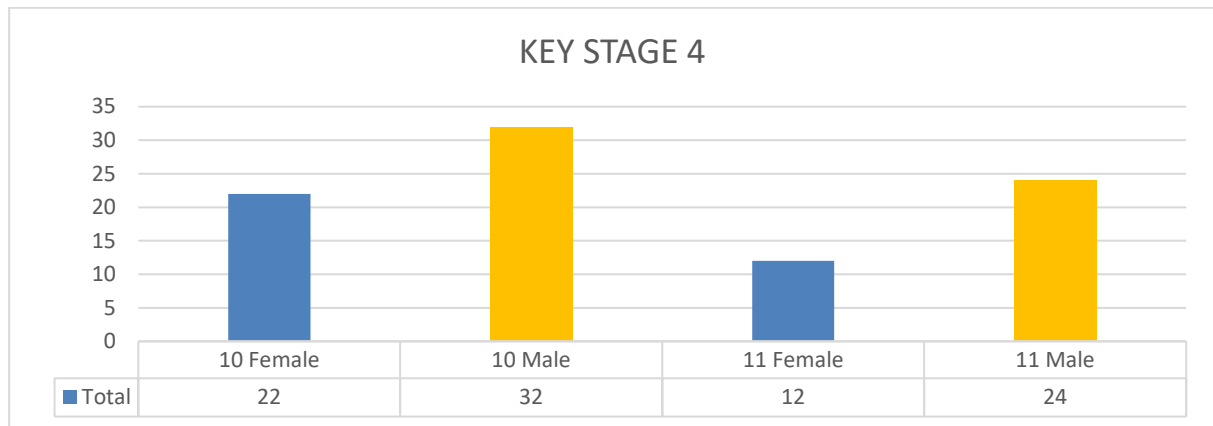
3.1.3 KEY STAGE 2



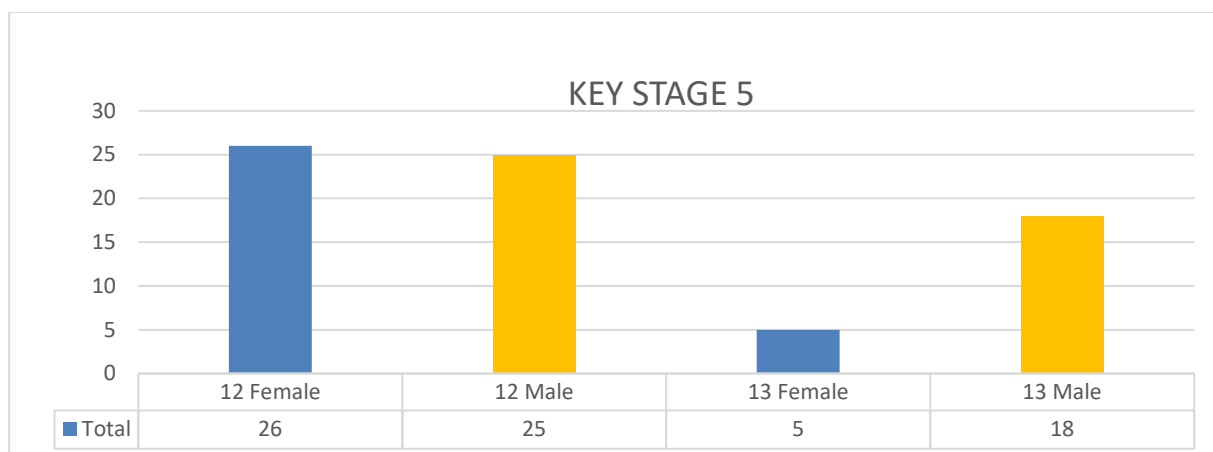
3.1.4 KEY STAGE 3



3.1.5 KEY STAGE 4



3.1.6 KEY STAGE 5



3.2 SEND Analysis

The Sunderland SEND cared for children school age population (Reception – Yr13) in total is 223 (SEND Support + EHCP).

- 45% of the cared for population have an identified SEND.
- 137 or 28% receive SEND support in school with some support of external agencies.
- SEND Support 64% male, 36% female
- 86 or 17% receive more intensive support due to having an EHCP.
- EHCPs 81% are male 19% female
- 71 or 82% of those with an EHCP attend specialist educational provision in Sunderland and out of area (23 or 27%) too.
- As previously stated in earlier reports, compared with national data (LAIT 2019) we do not have as many cared for children with EHCPs as other similar authorities. However, our SEND support (K) is higher than the national figure. The reason behind these figures is currently being considered with schools and the SEND Service.
- Primary Need for those identified as in need of SEND support (national data in brackets):

SEMH	32% (47%)
MLD	25% (20%)
Communication and Interaction (ASD)	5% (12%)
- Primary Need for those with and EHCP (national data in brackets);

SEMH	49% (40%)
Communication and Interaction (ASD)	14% (12%)
Communication and Interaction	18% (10%)

3.2.1 Analysis

Building on the graphs presented in Annual Performance report January 2021 the number of EHCP for cared for children is less than that nationally. An exploration of those currently receiving SEN support will take place to ensure that a move to an EHCP assessment is being considered where appropriate. This will be done in conjunction with schools and the SEND service and will influence policy and practice. Further work will focus on the gender and timeliness of SEND identification and assessment. Predominantly boys are more likely to have an EHCP than girls, we need to consider if girls needs are being fully met. SEND identification and EHCPs tend to increase towards the later stages of KS2 and KS3. Work is currently being done to determine how this correlates with when a child becomes cared for and the period leading up to this decision i.e. when a child may have been a child in need (CIN) or had a child protection plan (CP) and whether their SEND needs were identified during this period.

3.3 Ethnicity (current)

ETHNICITY	NUMBER	%
Asian Or Asian British Any Other Asian	3	0.48
Asian Or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	0.16
Black Or Black British African	4	0.64
Black Or Black British Any Other Black	3	0.48
Gypsy/Roma	4	0.64
Information Not Yet Obtained	2	0.32
Mixed Any Other Mixed Background (White & Any Other)	7	1.00
Mixed White & Asian	7	1.00
Mixed White & Black African	3	0.48
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	1	0.16
Other Ethnic Group - Other	8	1.00
White Any Other White Background	6	0.90
White British	574	92.0
TOTAL	625	

Nationally the figure is 74% white and 7% Black or Black British. The remaining categories are similar to Sunderland. This data reflects that of Sunderland's population demographic where 93.6% are White British.

4 Progress and Achievement

There will be no nationally reported data for any of the key stages in 2021. The Virtual School will collate the outcomes (teacher assessment) for Key Stage 4 directly with schools when the data is finalised.

Progress and achievement at individual child level is monitored termly through the EPEP.

5 Attendance and Absence monitoring

Autumn Term 2020	ACTUAL	94.9%
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Spring Term 2021 up to March 4 th 2021			
attendance	60.9%	(40% nationally all SW)	
authorised absence	38.4%	remote learning	
pupils full time	57%	230	
pupils fully remote learning	24%	101 of cohort (416)	
blended learning	21%	85	

Spring Term 2021 March 8 th up to 23rd March 2021		
Primary	99% returned to school	93% national
Secondary	96% returned to school	87% national
Current attendance overall	93.2% actual	90% national

The Virtual School monitors attendance daily through Welfare Call and contacts carers to ensure attendance at school is a key priority if concerns arise. Analysis of the detail behind the data occurs termly and virtual school staff work closely with schools, carers and social workers to ensure attendance is improved.

There will be immediate checks on return after Easter to ensure cared for children have returned to school and that this is maintained throughout the summer term.

6 Suspensions and Expulsions

(previously known as fixed term and permanent exclusions)

Autumn 2020			
Expulsions (Permanent Exclusion)	0	0	0
Suspensions (Fixed Term exclusion)	40	151.5 days	22 children

8 Cared for Children received more than 1 suspension

5 Cared for Children received more than 3 suspensions:

- 2 are in specialist provision (both EHCP)
- 2 are in residential homes
- All have had more than 3 placements
- 3 are currently placed out of the area

The Virtual School works closely with schools, carers and social workers when suspensions occur to understand the antecedents and to ensure appropriate support and plans are put in place to prevent further suspensions. This includes the use of the SEND ranges to ensure needs are identified and resources are put in place, but also referrals to other agencies are aligned such as CYPS, CAMHS for example. The EPEP should include targets related to any social and emotional or mental health needs.

7 EPEPS

All Designated teacher were fully trained in June 2019 for full implementation in September 2019 for cared for children in Reception through to year 11. 94% of EPEPS were completed during this period within statutory time frames. There was dip in

compliance during the summer holiday period due to the statutory time frame falling during school closure period (20 days from becoming cared for). IROs received their training in December 2019 and had full access to their children's EPEPs via Welfare Call. It was agreed social workers would be trained in March 2020, this delay was due to the fact they were fully involved in Signs of Safety training at that time. Due to Covid restrictions this training eventually took place in September 2020 (75% have completed the training and the remaining 25% is underway).

In conjunction with Next Steps and the Careers and NEET service a Post 16 EPEP was developed and introduced in September 2020. An Early Years EPEP has been developed in conjunction with Early Years Providers and this was implemented in January 2021.

Currently 97% of Reception through to year 11 EPEPS are complete. 96% of Post 16 EPEPS are complete. 75% of Early Years EPEPS are complete in the context of lockdown three this is an impressive figure. The summer holiday period dip has been resolved an interim PEP will be completed by the Virtual School and will be finalised as soon as schools return in the September of the new term.

Quality assurance has been a key area of focus. Each section of the EPEP is assessed and this is fed back to schools using a RAG rating. If there are concerns about the quality of the EPEP a meeting is held to consider how it can be improved. Virtual School staff are also involved in moderation exercises to ensure a consistency of judgements. This will be expanded in future training with Designated Teachers.

8 CURRENT COHORT INFORMATION – OFSTED CATEGORY

CATEGORY	TOTAL E Y - KS5	%	PRE	PRE %	Primary	Primary %	Secondary	Secondary %	KS5	KS5%
Outstanding	70	14	11	21	19	9	31	15	9	22
Good	328	65	41	77	161	80	103	48	19	46
Requires Improvement	71	14	0	0	17	8	41	19	13	31
Inadequate	38	7	1	1.8	3	2	34	16	0	0

79% of cared for children were in good or outstanding schools.

As stated in previous Board reports we do not automatically remove a cared for child from a school who goes in to a Requires Improvement or Inadequate category. The Virtual School does initially check the OFSTED report to see what is said about the performance of vulnerable children and what is reported in the "Behaviour and Attitudes" and "Personal Development" sections. Another check is how closely the curriculum matches the needs of the school population "that it is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged the knowledge to succeed in life".

If a child is seeking admission to school, we fully expect that the child would be admitted to a good or outstanding school. Interesting data is emerging on a national level that suggests that cared for children perform as well across all categories of schools (NCER). The EPEP is also used to monitor progress and achievement on a termly basis.

9 GOVERNANCE

We have re-established the Governing Board following a review by a National Leader of Governance. A new Scheme of Delegation has been finalised which clarifies the unique nature of the role of the Governing Board in the context of the governance provided by the Corporate Governing Board and the role of the local authority through Together For Children. The Board holds three full governing Board meetings annually and a further three Support and Challenge Committee meetings.

We have successfully recruited additional governors and now have Head Teacher representation across all phases including special. Sunderland College is represented, and the Head of Cared for Children and Provider Services is also a key member.

Sadly, our Chair of Governors Cllr Geoff Walker died suddenly. He was a great advocate of the Virtual School and wanted the absolute best for our cared for children. I will miss him greatly.

I am pleased to confirm that Cllr Claire Rowntree has been appointed to the governing body and we look forward to her involvement. In the interim the Vice Chair Yvonne Gray has chaired our meetings.

10 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

To be an effective Virtual School partnership work is essential. The school has ensured membership of key groups which include;

- Secondary HT
- Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships
- Vulnerable Pupils Panel
- SEND Panel
- Corporate Parenting Board
- North East Virtual School Head Teachers (Chair)
- National Association of Virtual Schools (Board Member)
- Previously Looked After Forum
- Primary HT
- Special School HT
- Primary and Secondary
- External Placements Panel
- Children with Complex Needs
- Social Care Team meetings

11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Pupil Premium Grant will be fully utilised in support of improving educational outcomes as expected by the DFE Grant conditions. The local authority receives £2345 per cared

for child. Schools receive £1800 per cared for child annually (paid termly to schools) and the Virtual School retain £445 per child. School directly receive £2345 per previously cared for child (adopted, Special Guardianship Order and Child Arrangement Order) if schools are aware and have included the child on their January Census returns.

Centrally retained funding is used for:

Tutors	Alternative Provision	On-line learning
121 tuition	Transport	Premises
Salary Costs		
Welfare Call (attendance, exclusions, Analytics and EPEP)		
Education Psychology reports		

12 COVID RESPONSE January 2021

The Virtual School in conjunction with School Improvement and Social care considered how to support young people during this third lockdown.

The Virtual School specifically:

- RAG and Risk assessment was agreed and actions communicated to schools with expectation of schools re Welfare checks
- VS maintained welfare calls for those deemed most vulnerable
- Checked all those working at home and those that were part in school and at home (blended learning) had laptop and access to school remote learning if appropriate
- Checked all cared for children attending - 60.9% attended (40% nationally)

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

14 CONTACT

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Position:	Head Teacher Virtual School
Email:	linda.mason@togetherforchildren.org.uk
Tel:	0191 5615696 07900 350502

CABINET MEETING – 23 MARCH 2021 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I									
Title of Report: Corporate Parenting Review									
Author(s): Director of Children's Services									
Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of an external review into the Council's corporate parenting arrangements and to propose a number of changes to the Council's approach.									
Description of Decision: To recommend Council to (a) Revise the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board as set out in section 6 of this report, with effect from Annual Council 2021 and (b) Subject to (a) above, note and endorse the recommendations of the external review as set out in section 5 of the Report of K Simmons, attached as an Appendix to this report									
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: Continuation with the current approach to Corporate Parenting would not meet the requirements of the continuing improvement journey for children, young people and their families in Sunderland.									
Suggested reason(s) for Decision: To ensure we meet our obligations for Corporate Parenting for all our cared for children.									
Impacts analysed; <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Equality</td> <td><input type="text" value="N/A"/></td> <td>Privacy</td> <td><input type="text" value="N/A"/></td> <td>Sustainability</td> <td><input type="text" value="N/A"/></td> <td>Crime and Disorder</td> <td><input type="text" value="N/A"/></td> </tr> </table>		Equality	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Privacy	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Sustainability	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Crime and Disorder	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>
Equality	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Privacy	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Sustainability	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Crime and Disorder	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>		
Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes									
Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes									
Is it included in the 28-day Notice of Decisions? Yes									

CORPORATE PARENTING REVIEW**Report of the Director of Children's Services****1. Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of an external review into the Council's corporate parenting arrangements and to propose a number of changes to the Council's approach.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)**2.1 To recommend Council to**

- (a) Revise the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board as set out in section 6 of this report, with effect from Annual Council 2021 and
- (b) Subject to (a) above, note and endorse the recommendations of the external review as set out in section 5 of the Report of K Simmons, attached as an Appendix to this report

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Corporate parenting is the term used to describe the overarching responsibilities the Local Authority holds for cared for and care experienced children. These responsibilities are and should be expressed both strategically and operationally and should also be clear in the way that the Corporate Parenting Board operates. The Board is a committee of Council and the effectiveness of that Board is used as the litmus test of corporate parenting commitment, from Officers, Elected Members and partners. The Board's leadership is tested as part of the full inspection of Children's Services and as a result informs the overall graded judgement Ofsted make of leadership and management.
- 3.2 Elected Members, Officers for the Council and Together for Children have a mandated responsibility to ensure our cared for children's education, welfare and best interests are paramount. Corporate Parents should treat every child and young person who is cared for as if they are our own (the 'would it be good enough for my child' test) and put their needs at the top of the corporate agenda.
- 3.3 Recognising the importance of having a high functioning Board, that can clearly evidence this ambition, the Chief Executive of the Council and TfC Board Chair agreed to initiate an independent review of the Board by Karen Simmons, who is a former Assistant Director for Safeguarding at Newcastle City Council's Children's Services Department. Ms Simmons has extensive experience of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting and is currently working for Together for Children as the Fostering Panel Independent Chair.

- 3.4 That review is now complete and Ms Simmons' report is attached as an Appendix to this report.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 In proposing a refreshed model for the Board, the aim is to develop a framework for corporate parenting which is agreed and fully adopted by the City Council and its elected members, Together for Children, partner agencies and cared for children. The intended outcome is to reinforce governance arrangements regarding corporate parenting to evidence that the Corporate Parenting Board is providing effective scrutiny of strategic plans and that as a result the quality of services demonstrates that it is making a difference to the lives of cared for children.
- 4.2 The review has considered how the Corporate Parenting Board currently operates through attendance at a Board meeting, a review of the reports and presentations to the Board and Board minutes. The review has looked at the conduct of other Corporate Parenting Boards across the country which have been identified as examples of good practice.

5. Outcome of the Review

- 5.1 In the best performing Councils, effective corporate parenting is a result of a shared vision, strong leadership, accountability through clear governance arrangements and challenge. As with Sunderland City Council, the majority of Councils have established Corporate Parenting Boards which include elected members and are attended by senior officers, to provide a strategic view of how cared for children and care experienced young people experience services.
- 5.2 This review has considered a range of corporate parenting arrangements across the country and in particular those Councils where their corporate parenting arrangements have been cited as good practice examples or rated highly by Ofsted. Analysis of the better performing Councils indicates that they have the following features in common:

Strategic Ownership | In a number of Councils, where their corporate parenting arrangements were seen as effective, they had a clearly articulated vision which was ambitious about the outcomes they wished to achieve for their children.

Champions | There were examples where elected members, senior officers in the Council and partner agencies proactively championed the needs of cared for children by promoting them as being everyone's business.

Involvement of Cared for Children | The experiences of cared for care experienced young people are an important measure about how well the Council is delivering on its corporate parenting responsibilities.

Structure of Meeting | Largely due to the involvement of cared for children, several Councils had modified the conduct of the Board meeting away from formal reports to presentations.

Involvement of Partners | The attendance of partner agencies is a uniform feature of Corporate Parenting Boards.

Accountability | In all Councils, the Corporate Parenting Board acts as an advisory rather than a decision-making committee. A number of Corporate Parenting Boards provide regular reports to Scrutiny Committee so that there is transparency about the work of the Board and to bring issues regarding corporate parenting into the Council's decision-making structures.

6. Proposals

- 6.1 The recommendations from the review are set out in section 5 of Ms Simmons' report, to which members are referred.
- 6.2 Members will note that it is recommended that the composition of the Board should remain non-partisan and appointed in accordance with political balance principles. While it is for the political groups which have seats on the Board to nominate whichever members they choose for appointment, it is suggested that those appointed should preferably have an interest in children's issues and relevant life or professional experience relevant to the focus of the Board.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the Board remains an advisory committee of the Council, and that it comprises 7 elected members (Lead Member for Children's Services plus 6 other members), appointed in accordance with the political proportionality of the Council, and that the Lead Member for Children's Services will chair the Board. Named substitutes may be appointed for each elected member. In addition, Together for Children may nominate one of its non-executive directors for appointment as a non-voting co-opted member of the Corporate Parenting Board. As co-opted members should be aged 18 or over, it is recommended that rather than co-opt members of the Change Council to the Corporate Parenting Board, the Chair, Vice Chair and one other member of the Change Council have a "standing invitation" to attend meetings of the Board. Additional representatives of the Change Council and other partner organisations may of course be invited to attend and participate in meetings as appropriate.
- 6.4 It is also recommended that each elected member on the Board has responsibility for leading a theme, for example, Cared for Children's Mental Health as identified by the Corporate Parenting work plan and that all elected members (and officers) should undertake regular training on Corporate Parenting to ensure they understand their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

7. Reasons for the Decision

- 7.1 It is considered that the proposals will contribute to securing optimum arrangements and outcomes for all cared for and care experienced children and young people.

8. Alternative Options

- 8.1 Continuation with the current approach to Corporate Parenting would not meet the requirements of the continuing improvement journey for children, young people and their families in Sunderland.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Assistant Director of Law and Governance has been consulted and her comments incorporated in the report.

11. Background Papers

Link to background paper >> [Corporate Parenting Review Document](#)

Review of Sunderland City Council's Corporate Parenting Board

1. Background

The scope of this review of Sunderland City Council's Corporate Parenting Board is to consider its current role in engaging elected members and key stakeholders including the wider Council, Together for Children and partner agencies to meet their collective corporate parenting responsibilities. The review has been tasked with proposing options for how the Board could be strengthened so that it is well placed to demonstrate its contribution to improvements in service delivery for cared for children and to meet the expectations of the 2018 statutory guidance '*Applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers*'.

- 1.1. In proposing a refreshed model for the Board, the aim is to develop a framework for corporate parenting which is agreed and fully adopted by the City Council and its elected members, Together for Children, partner agencies and cared for children. The intended outcome is to reinforce governance arrangements regarding corporate parenting to evidence that the Corporate Parenting Board is providing effective scrutiny of strategic plans and that as a result the quality of services demonstrates that it is making a difference to the lives of cared for children.
- 1.2. The review has considered how the Corporate Parenting Board currently operates through attendance at a Board meeting, a review of the reports and presentations to the Board and Board minutes. The review has looked at the conduct of other Corporate Parenting Boards across the country which have been identified as examples of good practice.

2. Corporate Parenting

- 2.1. The concept of the Council being the corporate parent for cared for children has been well established by national policy since 1998. The term means that when a child becomes cared for, the Council as a whole has responsibility for that child as its corporate parent. The standard expected of the Council, including its officers and elected members, in fulfilling its duties as a corporate parent, is to be ambitious and aspirational for their cared for and care experienced children and to consider whether '*this is good enough for my own child.*' This priority accorded to cared for children recognises the particular challenges they face, with the majority of cared for children coming into care due to abuse and neglect and experiencing poorer educational and health outcomes compared to their peers.
- 2.2. In 2007, the Government's White Paper '*Care Matters, Time for Change*' provided more explicit guidance to Councils about how they were expected to meet their corporate parenting duties, in particular the requirement that Councils must publish a Pledge to cared for children to confirm how it proposes to meet their holistic needs.
- 2.3. More recently, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, details in law the corporate parenting principles, comprising of seven needs, which each Council must have regard to when delivering services to cared for and care experienced young people. The principles apply to the whole Council. They are intended to embed a consistent, joined up and positive approach across the Council to govern how it delivers services. The principles require the Council to:
 - act in the best interests and promote the physical health and well-being of cared for children

- encourage cared for children to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of cared for children
 - to help cared for children gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the Council and its relevant partners
 - to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for cared for children
 - for those cared for children to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
 - to prepare cared for children and adulthood and independent living
- 2.4. While the delivery of care to cared for children, is largely delegated to children's services functions, the leadership responsibility for corporate parenting rests with the Chief Executive and as a key element of their statutory duties, the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children. The responsibility for corporate parenting also extends to other directorates in the Council and to partner agencies such as Police, Housing, Health and schools, who, through s.10 of the Children Act 2004, have a duty to co-operate with the Council in meeting the needs of cared for and care experienced children and young people.
- 2.5. In terms of the specific corporate parenting responsibilities attributed to elected members, while every elected member is a corporate parent, not all elected members are expected to have the same level of knowledge and involvement with cared for children. The National Children's Bureau (2013) provides a definition of how the corporate parenting role for elected members can be structured into three levels of responsibility.

Universal Responsibility | All elected members have a responsibility for the children cared for by their Local Authority.

Targeted Responsibility | Councillors who are members of the Corporate Parenting Board or Adoption and Fostering Panels.

Specialist Responsibility | Councillors with a specific role e.g. Lead Member for Children; Chair of Corporate Parenting Board.

3. Local Arrangements

- 3.1. Sunderland City Council's Corporate Parenting Board has been in place since 2006 and was intended to report to the Children's Trust Board. As with other Councils, it is not a decision-making body, its remit is advisory and to contribute to the scrutiny of arrangements for cared for children. It is a cross-party Board, attended by senior representatives from Together for Children such as the Chief Executive and Head of the Virtual School, and representatives from partner agencies including CAMHS and the Designated Doctor for cared for children. Representatives from the Change Council regularly present to the Board regarding participation activities and present their views on services.
- 3.2. The governance arrangements between the City Council and Together for Children present a unique opportunity for the Corporate Parenting Board to provide challenge and support to the collective approach between both organisations to corporate parenting. For the Council and Together for Children, there are clear benefits to ensuring that the Corporate Parenting Board is effective in championing corporate parenting across both organisations, and in the context of the TfC model, with the TfC Board itself which also holds the corporate parenting duty by virtue of delivering the service on behalf of the Council.

- 3.3. The span of influence of Together for Children is not as substantial as the Council's, which has a wide range of services, links to local organisations and businesses, and the local community. The Council is well placed to support the wider needs of cared for children in areas such as housing, job opportunities and access to cultural and leisure activities, and it is important it does so to benefit cared for children. The Corporate Parenting Board has an important role to play in engaging the Council to think about how it can keep the needs of cared for children at the forefront of its strategic plans and services.

4. Models of Good Practice

- 4.1. In the best performing Councils, effective corporate parenting is a result of a shared vision, strong leadership, accountability through clear governance arrangements and challenge. As with Sunderland City Council, the majority of Councils have established Corporate Parenting Boards which include elected members and senior officers, to provide a strategic view of how cared for children and care experienced young people experience services.
- 4.2. This review has considered a range of corporate parenting arrangements across the country and in particular those Councils where their corporate parenting arrangements have been cited as good practice examples or rated highly by Ofsted. Analysis of the better performing Councils indicates that they have the following features in common:
- 4.2.1. **Strategic Ownership** | In a number of Councils, where their corporate parenting arrangements were seen as effective, they had a clearly articulated vision which was ambitious about the outcomes they wished to achieve for their children and stated how they were going to deliver on the seven corporate parenting principles and their Pledge to cared for children about what they could expect from their corporate parents. This is usually developed in a strategic plan (Corporate Parenting Strategy or Looked After Children Strategy) which identifies what the Council intends to do to achieve its vision and the contribution of key partner agencies and the Council to deliver the plan. (*North Yorkshire, Leeds, Achieving for Children*) In a number of Councils, scrutiny of the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is used by the Corporate Parenting Board to measure the effectiveness of the Council's corporate parenting arrangements and to hold services and agencies to account (*Doncaster, North Yorkshire, Solihull, Westminster*).

In Councils where corporate parenting is well embedded, Directorates across the Council have a clear understanding about their contribution to the corporate parenting agenda as the 'family firm' which is driven by senior officers including the Chief Executive (Leeds, Westminster).

- 4.2.2. **Champions** | There were examples where elected members, senior officers in the Council and partner agencies proactively championed the needs of cared for children by promoting them as being everyone's business. In some instances, this was established by key officer roles in the Council being given specific tasks to promote corporate parenting e.g. Corporate Parenting Champions in each Directorate. A Corporate Parenting Week took place in one Council (Wigan) where cared for children shadowed senior managers. In two Councils, each Directorate across the Council is required to adopt a business objective which relates to corporate parenting (Solihull) or to lead on a theme of the Corporate Parenting Strategy (Leeds). There were also examples where the Corporate Parenting Board championed cared for children with other elected members and Cabinet by ensuring the needs of children were addressed in key strategies to make sure they kept the needs of children at the forefront of their considerations (Solihull).

- 4.2.3. **Involvement for Cared for Children** | The experiences of cared for care experienced young people are an important measure about how well the Council is delivering on its corporate parenting responsibilities. To capture these, it is important that their voice is meaningfully heard by the Corporate Parenting Board, senior officers and partner agencies. In most Councils, the Children in Care Council is well established and attends the Corporate Parenting Board to provide their views. There were a number of models of how looked after children were involved in the Corporate Parenting Board. In some Councils, representatives from the Children in Care Council are members of the Corporate Parenting Board, share joint responsibility with elected members for the agenda of the Panel and in some Councils (Gloucestershire) chair the Corporate Parenting Board once per year. Another example was where the Corporate Parenting Board held joint meetings with the Children in Care Council. In those Councils where cared for children took a proactive role in the Corporate Parenting Board, they regularly met with elected members to discuss their experiences. As a result, elected members were able to gain an increased insight into the care experiences of these children which led to a more informed understanding of information and data.

Several Councils had supported cared for children through the modern apprenticeship scheme to be either Young or Care Ambassadors (Hampshire, Doncaster, Gloucestershire) whose role is to represent the views of cared for children, contribute to policy and advise senior leaders. These roles were seen as an invaluable means of supporting the Corporate Parenting Board and senior leaders to be child centred and to be responsive to the issues identified as important by children. These roles have been cited as an example of good practice by Ofsted in terms of providing challenge and evidence of impact on service improvements.

- 4.2.4. **Structure of Meeting** | Largely due to the involvement of cared for children, several Councils had modified the conduct of the Board meeting away from formal reports to presentations. Several Boards explicitly reported that they had adopted a collaborative approach, providing challenge in a structured and constructive way with a view to establishing a common purpose and mutual respect with all stakeholders at the Board (Gloucestershire). The focus of the discussion in a number of Boards was a clear focus on tangible improvements with the Board evaluating performance of services against a clear set of measures agreed by the Board. (Doncaster) with feedback from a variety of sources including cared for children. Those Corporate Parenting Boards where children were members of the board or had chaired the meeting, tended to be smaller with no more than six elected members on the Board.
- 4.2.5. **Involvement of Partners** | The attendance of partner agencies is a uniform feature of Corporate Parenting Boards. This predominantly takes the form of the Head of the Virtual School and Designated Nurse or Doctor with regular reporting from Housing, CAMHS and the Youth Offending Service to provide assurance about how these services are meeting their corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 4.2.6. **Accountability** | In all Councils, the Corporate Parenting Board acts as an advisory rather than a decision-making committee. A number of Corporate Parenting Boards provide regular reports to Scrutiny Committee so that there is transparency about the work of the Board and to bring issues regarding corporate parenting into the Council's decision-making structures (Gloucester, Doncaster, Bristol).

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The proposals below are intended to strengthen the role of the Corporate Parenting Board so that it provides effective scrutiny and assurance about how the Council, Together for Children and partner agencies jointly meet their corporate parenting responsibilities.

Recommendation 1 | The Council, Together for Children and their partners develop a shared vision for how they will work together a jointly agreed framework such as a Corporate Parenting Strategy which articulates each of their contributions to meeting the needs of cared for children and their plan to improve services for them.

Recommendation 2 | The impact of the shared vision and Corporate Parenting Strategy on the experience of cared for children is regularly reported and scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Board through a set of measures agreed by the Board.

Recommendation 3 | The membership of the Corporate Parenting Board is revised to include 6 elected members of the Council in addition to the Lead Member of Children's Services as Chair. There are nominated substitutes for each of the elected members to ensure quoracy.

Recommendation 4 | Elected members appointed to the Board should preferably have an interest in children's issues and relevant life or professional experience relevant to the focus of the Board.

Recommendation 5 | The composition of the elected members on the Board remains non-partisan and politically balanced.

Recommendation 6 | The Corporate Parenting Board includes up to 3 non-voting co-opted members nominated by the Change Council, including its Chair and Vice Chair.

Recommendation 7 | Key Officers in attendance include: DCS; Director Children's Social Care; Cared for Children Service Manager; Head of Virtual School; Designated Nurse and Doctor. The Chief Executive and Executive Directors of Sunderland Council are participant observers who are there to provide advice and assistance to members of the Bboard. Directorates nominate a senior lead to represent their Directorate at the Board.

Recommendation 8 | The Corporate Parenting Board is held bi-monthly.

Recommendation 9 | There are regular joint meetings between Corporate Parenting Board and Change Council, three per year, where the agenda is set jointly, and the meeting is jointly chaired.

Recommendation 10 | Each elected member has responsibility for leading a theme from the Corporate Parenting Strategy and works with a representative from the Change Council, Together for Children and a lead Executive Director to promote the theme.

Recommendation 11 | The Corporate Parenting Committee is required to consider and provide comment on all Council plans and strategies which might impact on cared for children.

Recommendation 12 | The Council considers the appointment of Care Ambassadors to promote the needs of cared for children with Together for Children and Sunderland City Council.

Recommendation 13 | The Corporate Parenting Board maintains a Challenge Log to evidence where it has provided challenge to services and the impact of that challenge.

Recommendation 14 | The minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board are shared with the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee and that the Corporate Parenting Board provides the Committee with a report regarding its work, identifying key issues for cared for children every six months to provide greater oversight and challenge.

Recommendation 15 | That mandatory induction training is provided to elected members and officers regarding their corporate parenting responsibilities.

Recommendation 16 | The Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Board are revised to reflect the recommendations of this report.

Recommendation 17 | An officer to be identified from the Chief Officer Group to carry the role of Principal Corporate Parent. The recommendation would be that this is the Chief Executive of Sunderland City Council.

Recommendation 18 | A Non-Executive Director of the Together for Children Board to be a co-opted non-voting member of the Corporate Parenting Board.

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