

## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**MONDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2025**

**Present:** Councillor Richard Burton – **Chairman**  
Councillor Cameron Adams – **Vice-Chairman**

Councillor Anne-Marie Moriarty  
Cathi Hadley  
Nigel Burton  
Louise Harris-Smith, Health Representative  
Damin Watt, Foster Carer Representative  
Unite Representative,  
Unite Representative,  
Insight Representative

**Also in**  
**Attendance:** Kelly Deane – Housing Representative  
Cllr S Mackrow

**Officers in**  
**attendance:** Nicky Cambell  
Jo Friend  
Rachel Gravett  
Jo Fry  
Terry Husher  
Leah May

### **90 Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. As part of the introductions everyone participated in an icebreaker led by the Vice-Chair.

### **91 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Nicola Cannings and Juliette Blake. Cllr S Mackrow would be joining the meeting online

### **92 Substitute Members**

Nigel Burton substituted for Juliette Blake

### **93 Declarations of Interests**

Cllr S Mackrow declared an interest in agenda item 8 Virtual School Headteacher Annual report as she had a family member eligible for this service.

### **94 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December were approved as a correct record.

### **95 Housing and Accommodation in BCP Place for CEYP**

The Director of Housing and Communities introduced this item and explained what had been happening in terms of the journey that the service had been in housing provision for Care Experienced Young People and a look forward into the future. The Housing Options Manager

gave a presentation, a copy of which had been circulated and a copy of which appear as Appendix B to these minutes in the Minute Book. The presentation outlined the progress which had been made since the last update to the Board in the following areas:

- Improve Practice & Assessment
- Data & Insight
- Consultation, Engagement and Learning
- Embed early intervention and co-operative action across services
- Effective housing assessment, suitable provision and choice

The Board was advised of the work which had taken place in these areas and what had been achieved to date. The presentation also highlighted feedback from a MHCLG focussed visit which took place in January 2025, work with different partners, including Homewards and the next steps for the future.

Out of area placements – it was noted that the situation was more difficult for those placed in different areas. Often CEYPs wanted to stay in the area in which they were currently living rather than moving to the BCP area. They were able to make a homelessness application in the area in which they were living but it was hoped that there could be some reciprocal arrangements put in place with other local authorities. It was noted that those living out of the area would often be more susceptible to homelessness. In order to target this there was currently a pilot in progress working with CEYP at an earlier age to put measures in place to support them to be able to avoid homelessness once they reach 18.

It was noted that there were approximately 4 CEYP each month presenting as homeless. It was noted that these were generally completely unexpected. During planning meetings each month any CEYP identified being at risk of homelessness were looked into and issues addressed.

In response to a query, it was explained that there were different types of Gold Band, including move-on Gold Band and Care Experienced Gold Band. Sometimes properties were allocated as having greater preference for care experienced young people. 1 in five properties were allocated from about 80 properties which became available across a whole year.

The number of young people presenting as homeless was concerning. It was noted that those identified as having a risk of homelessness, such as rent areas, or a family breakdown were addressed through plans put in place. However, it would be good to find ways to ensure that young people know where to go for advice and to do this in a timely way. There is a website being created at the moment to address CEYP access to young people. It was reported that young people had reported that it was difficult for CEYP to access the service.

The Board questioned why it was not possible for all CEYP to be placed into the Gold Band and it was explained that there were only about 80 one bed properties available across the area. If all CEYP were allocated Gold Band the most vulnerable people would not be able to access these properties as others would access the properties above them.

The Virtual School Head Teacher presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these minutes in the Minute Book. The report presented the successes of the young people in care and Care Leavers, the work undertaken by the Virtual School and the priorities for the next academic year are to be noted by the Board. The report served to provide a detailed overview of the activities and impact of the BCP Virtual School during the academic year 2023-24. The Virtual School operates on behalf of the Local Authority (LA), collaborating with partners to advocate for Children in Care (CIC) in education and ensuring positive and aspirational educational outcomes. The report outlines the future priorities and development plans for the BCP Virtual School, aiming to improve outcomes and support for a positive transition to adulthood for all

**Monday, 17th March, 2025**

Care Experienced young people. The report is based on the LA held pupil information and results from schools. At the time of publishing, there is no comparative national data available for the academic year 2023-24. Comparative data will be available upon its publication in April 2025. By conducting comparative analysis throughout the year, we aim to identify areas where the Virtual School has significant impact and areas where improvement is needed in relation to national benchmarks. This information will guide our efforts in providing the best possible support for children in care, aligning with broader educational standards.

It was asked whether it was possible for Councillors to be made aware of suspensions for CIC on a more regular basis in order to ensure that the awareness is raised for Corporate Parents of this issue. Work was underway to ensure that across all staff in schools were aware of issues and that everything was being done to avoid going down the suspension route. Recently there were issues around girls in years 9,10 and 11 who had come into care recently and what post 16 options there were available to them.

It was felt that the work of the Virtual Head and the Virtual School Team was very impressive, particularly in that they looked at alternative options and initiatives to address the situation.

The Virtual Head addressed issues raised around the communication between the Virtual School and the School, at any point the social worker or carers could contact the Virtual School Education Officer to provide support and assistance in communications with the School.

The Personal Education Plan is created when a young person enters care, an initial meeting is held within 10 days attended by social care and also normally the young person. A plan would be formulated focused around academic progress but also any support that they need within school. Personal Education Plans were part of a statutory requirement.

In response to how an increasing number of CEYPs were taking important exams like GCSEs, and many were achieving higher grades in English and Maths. It was noted that the priority for this was ensuring that young people were staying in school.

316 children from 2-19/20 who came within the remit of the Virtual School. There was a lot of support which went into ensuring SEND support was in place. There were about 60 percent of people with SEND who were placed outside of the BCP area and the Virtual School worked with other authorities to make sure that their needs were addressed, and they had appropriate school placements.

It becomes harder to retake a GCSE at the moment if not done alongside another post 16 college course. We are also focusing on functional skills courses for people to access as these had an equivalence to GCSEs. It was important to ensure that people were able to access opportunities at the right time for each individual.

It was important to ensure that the provision for those outside of the BCP area received the same support as those placed within BCP. It was important to ensure that the pupil premium was used in a supportive way.

It was noted that the Virtual School had been improving over the years but a huge difference had been noted over the past 12 months and foster carers welcomed being able to attend positive PEP meetings.

**97      Children in Care/Care Experienced Young People Data and Analysis Report**

This report was provided to the Board for information. There had not been any questions or comments received in advance of the meeting and the report was therefore noted.

**98      Corporate Parenting Board Development - Forward Plan**

**Monday, 17th March, 2025**

The Vice-Chair asked the Board if there were any suggestions for changes to the Board's Forward Plan. Whilst there were no specific items suggested the Board felt that it would be useful to have a more in-depth item for discussion at the next meeting. It was noted that there would need to be some discussion around how these issues were addressed.

**99     Future Meeting Dates**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 16 June 2025.

**Duration of the meeting:** 5.00 - 7.11 pm

**Chairman at the meeting on  
Monday, 17 March 2025**