

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2025 at 5.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr R Burton – Chairman

Present:	Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr D Farr Cathi Hadley Juliette Blake, Shan Searle, Kelly Deane Louise Maple, Nicola Cannings Insight Representative, Insight Representative, Unite Representative and Unite Representative	Councillor Representative Councillor Substitute Director Children's Services Children's Social Care Corporate Parenting Housing Representative Health Representative Education Representative
Also in attendance:	Cllr D Brown Rob Carroll Sarah Deane Aiden Dunn Jo Fry Rachel Gravett Simon Hester Terry Husher Laura Jones (online) Rachel Lachlan (online) Lisa Linscott Leah May Rubina Payne Jane Pullins Care Experience Young People x 3 (in addition to the formal membership)	Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing Director of Public Health Director of People and Culture Chief Executive Children's Rights and Participation Manager Director Children's Commissioning, Resources and Quality Head of Safeguarding Participation and Engagement Officer Service Manager, Quality and Commissioning Designated Doctor for LAC Director of Education and Skills Virtual School Head Fostering Manager Participation and Engagement Officer

25. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr C Adams and Cllr A-M Moriarty

26. Substitute Members

Cllr D Farr substituted for Cllr C Adams

27. Declarations of Interests

There were none on this occasion.

28. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September were approved as a correct record.

29. Young Persons Voice - Language that Cares

The Participation Manager introduced this item and explained that Language that Cares had been launched recently and was being promoted across the Council.

Everyone in the meeting was asked to discuss 2 different documents in pairs, Example A and Example B.

Participants were asked to feedback on any thoughts about the different documents both positive and negative. It was noted that Example B felt more personal using real examples. Example A appeared to be more generic. However, it was noted that Example B did use acronyms and it didn't necessarily give an accurate picture of the situation.

The pairs were then asked to identify language which may not be appropriate and the pairs shared a number of ideas on how things could be improved. It was suggested that things should reflect individual style and be personalised for all children. The Board reflected on the difficulty of using alternative language.

The Board considered potential new names for the Corporate Parenting Board, "virtual" was suggested as an option. It was noted that "corporate" made it feel like a business situation and the focus wasn't on young people's lives but on the "pay cheque". The Board asked the CiC and CEYP Councils to take this forward to find out the views of children in care and are experienced young people.

The Board considered the best ways of ensuring language was relevant and suggested annual training for those working directly with young people and refresher training for Councillors.

The Board asked what could be done to measure the effectiveness of changes made to language and that it would be good to hear how this makes a difference.

RESOVLED that an item be added to the Baord's Forward Plan for 12 months' time to see if any changes or improvements made and cultural change have had an impact.

30. Update on Pledges Progress

The Director of Communities as lead for the delivery of Corporate Parenting Pledges presented a report, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these minutes in the Minute Book. The Board were informed of the

background information to the Pledges and how progress had been made with them. The Director of People and Culture updated the Board on the work they were doing:

- **Work Experience:** Plans were being made so that care-experienced young people could get placements across the Council. Training for staff is being developed. Through this it was hoped that mentoring opportunities would go on to be developed
- **Discounts and Offers:** A new benefits platform was being extended to young people. It includes discounts for supermarkets, cinemas, tech, and more. The launch of this was expected in **January**.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Work is starting on recycling laptops and phones for young people including reaching out to suppliers as part of a social contract.
- **Extra Support:** Looking at extending the Employee Assistance Programme including free counselling and advice to care-experienced young people.
- **Corporate Parenting Champions Board:** This was due to be set up with representatives from every Council department and at least one young person.

The Board welcomed the work that had taken place on this issue

Action Points:

- ✓ Develop work experience programme and share opportunities.
- ✓ Explore extending counselling offer to young people.
- ✓ Set up a Corporate Parenting Champions Board with reps from every Council department and at least one young person.
- ✓ Consider mentoring opportunities alongside work experience.

The meeting adjourned at 6:21pm and resumed at 6:28pm.

31. Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2024/2025

The Head of the Virtual School 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 Board was advised that the report advised on the successes of the Children in Our Care and Care Leavers, the work undertaken by the Virtual School and the priorities for the next academic year. The report provided a detailed overview of the activities and impact of the BCP Virtual School during the academic year 2024-25. The Virtual School operates on behalf of the Local Authority (LA), collaborating with partners to advocate for Children in Our Care (CiOC) in education and ensuring positive and aspirational educational outcomes. The report outlined 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 Care Experienced young people. Some of the key points from the report shared with the Board were:

- **Attendance:** 89.6% overall, 91% for those in care over 12 months – above national average.
- **GCSEs:** 90% of Year 11s sat exams (up from 86%). More young people achieved Grade 4 in English and Maths than previously.
- **Post-16:** 95% moved into education, employment, or training; with 98% staying there.
- **University:** 22 young people are studying at university, moving closer to the 7% target.
- **Activities:** Sailing, residential trips, sports leadership, and university visits had been undertaken.
- **Bright Spots Survey:** This indicated that young people want trusted adults, chances to belong, and clear processes in education.
- **Personal Education Plans:** Ensure young people do not miss out on lesson time with meeting schedules and designated teacher availability.
- **Out of Area Placements:** Concerns were raised regarding the level of support for those placed out of area.

Action Points:

- ✓ Keep improving attendance and reduce exclusions.
- ✓ Explore more apprenticeships and guaranteed interviews for care-experienced young people. Widen the offer for more creative/vocational pathways. These were difficult to access and more support was needed
- ✓ Consider a **survey next year** to measure progress on virtual school support.
- ✓ Make the virtual School more visible and ensure young people know why it is there. Work with Insight and Unite to support this.

The Board felt that there were real positives and progress in the report and the experience on the ground has been positive.

32. Health of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People

The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The report outlined how NHS Dorset helped children in care and young people who have been in care. It looks at how their health needs were met between April 2024 and March 2025. It also shares facts about how many children are in care, what help they got, and what still needs to be done to make things better. Some of the key points from the report were shared with the Board including:

- **Dental Care:** This was a big success – 95% now have a dentist.
- **Mental Health:** A new system was coming so young people can self-refer. Work is ongoing to extend support beyond age 18.
- **Care Leaver Health:** The Care Leaver Transition Nurse provided support to young people, but demand is high due to the demographic increase in the number of care leavers. GP practices were also being trained to help.

- **Challenge:** Health records sometimes don't transfer correctly when young people move far away. Nurses are working to fix this.

Action Points:

- ✓ Share clear info with young people about how to access health support (including GP schemes).
- ✓ Look at extra support for the care leaver transition nursing role due to high demand high.
- ✓ Invite Dorset Healthcare to a future meeting to explain services.
- ✓ Provide a one-page summary on health assessment challenges and how they're being fixed as the completion of these had reduced.

33. Forward Plan

The Chair advised the Board that due to timing this wouldn't be discussed but that members and officers should send in any suggested amendments or additions.

34. CiC/CEYP Data and Analysis

This report was circulated with the agenda for information only and there being no questions or comments received prior to the meeting the report was noted.

Note: It was requested that future iterations of the report should take into consideration "Language that cares".

35. Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting date was noted as 16 March 2026.

The meeting ended at 7.31 pm

CHAIRMAN