

Corporate Parenting Panel Report



Participation and Engagement / Champion Model

Report sponsor

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Introduction

A key principle for corporate parenting is that local authorities must consider when exercising their function in relation to children in care and care leavers is for them to encourage children young people to express their views, wishes and feelings and to take account of their voice. It is important therefore that corporate parenting panel arrangements are more systemically able to hear young people's voices in the decisions they make and to inform as to the effectiveness of services in how a operate.

In Milton Keynes it has been considered that the children's voice in various council decision making processes is under represented and further evidence is needed to show that each councillor recognises their role as a corporate parent and how this influences the decisions they make

Historically in Corporate Parenting Panel arrangements meetings with young people have either preceded the main panel meeting or events have taken place where members are able to meet looked after children and gain an insight into their experience as what it feels like to be looked after in Milton Keynes. However, the development of how children and young people's views are gained and understood has evolved in Corporate Parenting practises and those that are considered to be understanding children's views well are those that are those councils that have introduced a champion model system.

The champion model proposes that the evidence of hearing children and young people's views in panel is only a small part of understanding the day to day experience of looked after child. It is considered that this understanding is best gained outside and between meetings and opportunities are arranged for representatives on the Corporate Parenting Panel to visit either teams, settings or young people and to evidence how they have championed the views of young people either at Cabinet, Council or on the Committees of which they are a part.

To assist in promoting the views of young people a change has been proposed with our MK Youth Service to enable increased capacity for participation and engagement for children young people. This work will be part of the Corporate Parenting Service and led by Richard Lee as the Team leader for our new Participation and Engagement Team. Richard will therefore be proposing opportunities for members to consider how they are best able to feel confident and assured of understanding the lived experience of our looked after children.

The proposal that we would like panel to consider therefore is for a named champion for each of the attached portfolio areas who may be able to represent on behalf of all the corporate parents in the council and bring to the attention to the Panel, where necessary, if it is felt children's views aren't being heard or addressed sufficiently.

From the work undertaken by the service it is evident that those Councils that are seen to be successful in ensuring children's views and experiences are systemically evident in council practises are where this champion model is present. We would therefore like to propose the panel consider this recommendation and for Richard and his team to then work and plan with members opportunities to represent on the attached areas.

Key staff involved in supporting our children's needs and care plan:

Children's Homes

Point of contact: Andy Rule - Androulla.Rule@milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 254462

- Unannounced visits with Commissioners.
- Meet with MK LAC C&YP living in those homes seeking their views.
- Attend House Meetings.
- Liaise with independent visitors.

Care Leavers

Point of contact: Huma Ali - huma.ali@milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 253434

- Meetings with Care Leavers.
- Shadow SW's and PA's.
- Attend Child Care Review and PEP meetings.
- Visit older Care Leavers in their homes.
- Meet with CSE & Exploitation worker and Police, gain understanding.
- Attend house meeting at Look Ahead.
- Attend team Meeting/meet with Team Manager.
- Develop understanding of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, attend *New to UK Group*

CIC

Point of contact: Sharon Godfrey – sharon.godfrey@milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 254004

- Shadow SW's.
- Attend Child Care Review and PEP meetings.
- Attend Child in Care Council.
- Attend Team Meeting/meet with Team Manager.
- Attend/observe court with Social Worker.

Health

Point of contact: Carol Baines - Carol.Baines@Milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 253317

- Meet with LAC nurses and Primary Mental Health Worker.
- Attend clinic appointment at Neath Hill.
- Attend joint H&SC monthly meeting.

Permanency/Adoption/Fostering

Point of contact:

**Carol Murray - Carol.Murray@Milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 253983 - Fostering
Jenny Stewart Cox: Jenny.Stewart-Cox@milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 252039
Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Team Manager**

- Observe Permanency and Fostering Panel.
- Attend Household Review.
- Meet with Team Managers/attend Team Meeting.
- Attend Foster Carers drop-ins/information events.

Participation

Point of contact: Richard Lee richard.lee@milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 253447

- Attend Youth and Children in Care Council.
- Attend Youth club.

Iro Service

Point of contact: Julia Roberts julia.roberts@milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 254371

- Meet with IRO's observe Child Care Review meetings.
- Attend Team meetings.

Education

**Point of contact: Michelle Mellor Michele.Mellor2@Milton-keynes.gov.uk
01908 254505**

- Visit schools/Colleges.
- Meet with Virtual School Head/attend Team Meeting.
- Observe PEP/shadow VS education staff.
- Visit Care Leaver at University.

Housing

**Point of contact: Eleanor Nickless eleanor.nickless@milton-keynes.gov.uk
01908 253032**

- Meet different Housing teams, attend Team meetings.
- Shadow Duty Housing in reception/visits in the community.
- Attend Housing Panel.