

Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2011-2012

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MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL: INTEGRATED SUPPORT AND SOCIAL CARE

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - ANNUAL REPORT (2011/12)

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This is the Annual Report on the activities of the Corporate Parenting Panel, which is presented to the Children and Young People's Select Committee.
- 1.2 This report provides the Committee with the opportunity to review the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2011/12.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee note the Annual Report.
- 2.2 That the Committee recommend any further areas, which they feel, should be considered by the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2012/13.

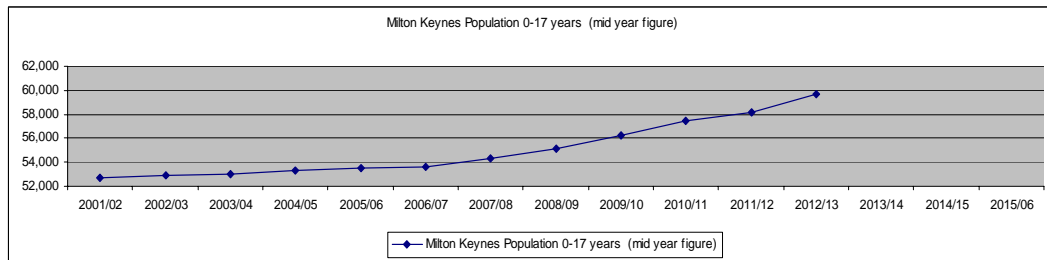
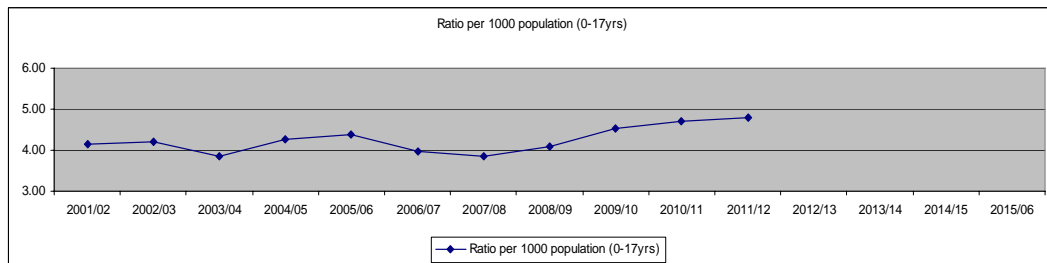
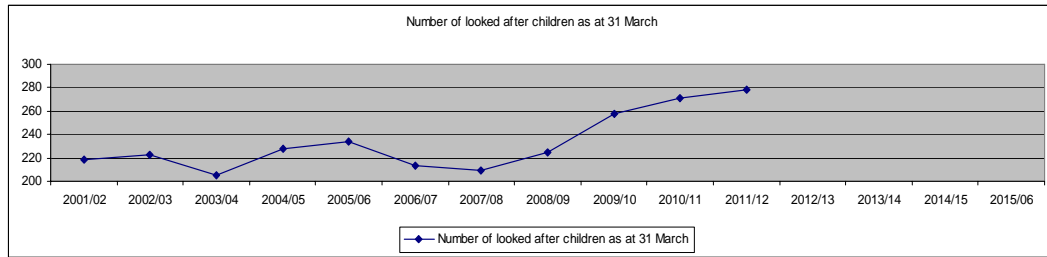
3. Background

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel was first established on an equal political party basis in 2003.
- 3.2 The Children and Young Persons Act 2008, which was fully implemented in April 2011, positions the importance of corporate parenting as one of the priority issues for shaping services to children in care. The Local Authority has a responsibility as a 'Corporate Parent' for all children in the care of Milton Keynes Council (sometimes referred to as Looked After Children (LAC)). Corporate parenting emphasises the collective responsibility of the Council and its members to achieve good parenting and good outcomes for all children in their care.
- 3.3 All children in care deserve excellent parenting: nurturing, supportive and ambitious care which provides stability promotes resilience and respects cultural heritage.

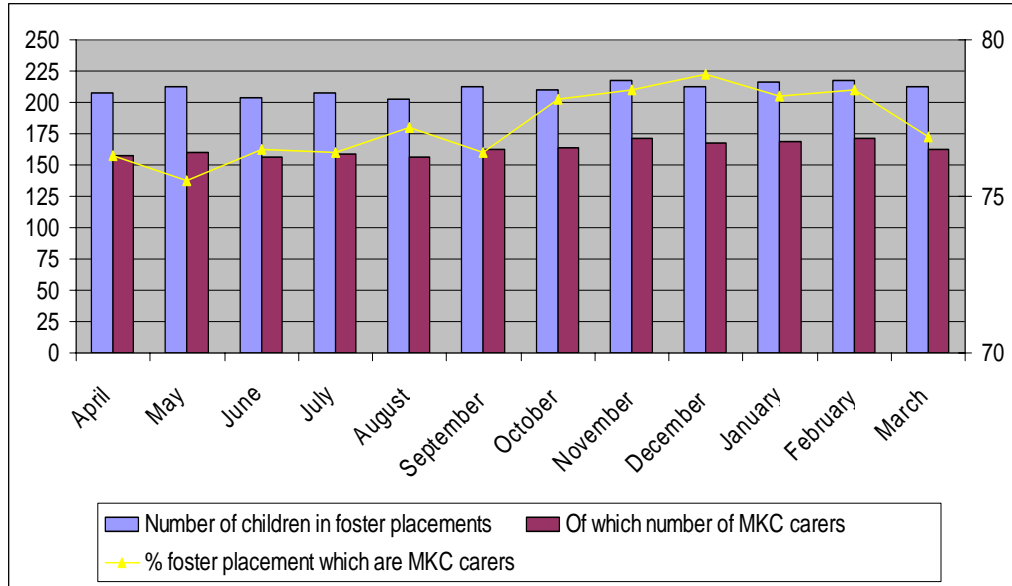
4. Children in Care

- 4.1 There were 225 children in care in March 2009; 260 children in March 2010; 271 children in March 2011 and 278 children as of March 2012. The last three years have seen Milton Keynes, and many other Local Authorities, experience an upward trend in its numbers of children in care. This is considered largely to be as a result of the impact of the death of

Peter Connelly ('baby peter') as well as the continued and rapid growth and diversity of the population locally.



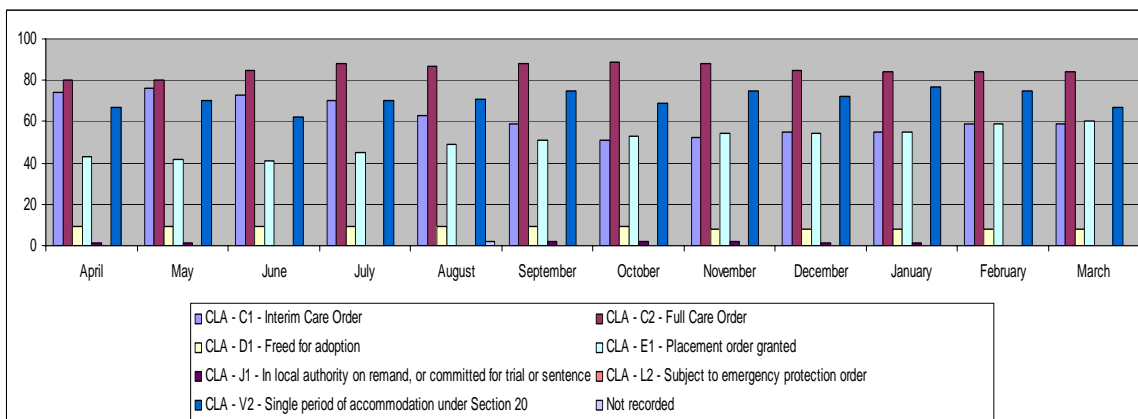
4.2 There are currently as of March 2012: 212 children were in foster care placements (163 – 77% with MKC foster carers); 13 children were placed for adoption; 23 in residential provision (5 were in MKC provision); 2 in residential schools; 19 are at home with parents; 7 are in forms of supported lodgings and 2 young people were missing from their foster placements. Milton Keynes CSC does know the young peoples whereabouts and are in contact with these young people.



4.3 The demography of children in care, as of March 2012, is as follows:

- 203 children and young people are on interim care orders (59), care orders (84), or placement orders (60); 67 are accommodated under Section 20 (voluntary) care and 8 children 'freed for adoption'. There were no young people on remand (remanded to LA care by the youth court until trial).
- 221 are white/white British, 15 are of Caribbean or mixed background, 22 are of Asian background, 12 are Black African and 8 are from another ethnic group.
- 12 are young asylum seekers. 137 are female and 141 male. 71 are aged 0-4, 62 are aged 5-9, 72 are aged 10-14 and 73 are 15 or over.

4.4 In the last four years the Council has applied for interim care orders (the start of care proceedings for children suffering neglect or abuse) as follows: 50 in 08/09; 88 in 09/10; 65 in 10/11 and 49 in 11/12 .



5. Review of Corporate Panel Meetings

- 5.1 This year the Panel has met on 4 occasions with a further meeting scheduled for the 12th March 2012. The Panel has reviewed its terms of reference and work plan and considered how Corporate Parenting Panels operate in other Local Authorities.
- 5.2 Cllr Norman Miles has continued as chair of the panel. Members have readily undertaken Regulation 33 visits to Children's homes, and undergone CRB checks and training in relation to Regulation 33 visits and Children in Care Councils.
- 5.3 The Panel has considered a number of reports and service areas over the past year including:
- The attainment at key stages 2 and 4 of children in care;
 - The Pledge for Children in Care;
 - Participation for children in care and care leavers including the outcomes of a children in care survey and consultation event in 2011;
 - Annual Reports in relation to Corporate Parenting Panel; children in care; adoption services; fostering services; residential care; Independent Reviewing Officers; and Milton Keynes Community Health for children in care;
 - Commissioning plan for sufficiency for children in care;
 - Performance indicators 2010/11 and LA data on LAC including Milton Keynes benchmarking;
 - Children in care and youth justice;
 - Leaving care and transitions to adulthood;
 - Staying put (care leavers remaining in foster homes post 18);
 - Regulation 33 visiting;
- 5.4 Panel Members meet quarterly with the children in care council, which is called 'Today's Children, Tomorrow's Future' (TCTF) and have ensured that issues raised by TCTF are acted on by officers.
- 5.5 The young people set the agenda for TCTF meetings with CPP Members. Listed are the issues raised by the young people that were considered and agreed:
- Agreed the revised children in care pledge and the delivery of the pledge;
 - Discussion on transport options for children in care, including the provision of bikes for children in care and ensuring this was addressed within the children in care pledge;
 - Reviewed and agreed improvements to practice in relation to how clothing allowances are distributed to young people;

- Reviewed and agreed within the children in care pledge accessibility to the internet outside school hours for young people;
- Reviewed and agreed to improved communication and accessibility between social workers/independent reviewing officers and children in care/care leavers by ensuring that children in care/care leavers have contact details for social workers and independent reviewing officers;
- Improved the way TCTF members get to know and communicate with Corporate Parenting panel members with the introduction of Panel Members and Lead Member 'profiles' and by holding an annual 'pizza' party for TCTF and CPP Members;
- Reviewed and agreed an update to the financial policy and pathway planning social work practice for care leavers;
- Sign up to the national 'no bin bags' charter for children in care moving between placements;
- Reviewed and agreed improvements to the children in care council and participation groups, with the introduction of a 'reward scheme' for participation with our children in care and care leavers;
- Reviewed and agreed information guides for children in care to ensure that children in care know their rights as well as better understanding the role of their social worker and independent reviewing officer;
- Review of the recently updated children in care website, KIC MK;
- Review of the 'top ten things' that TCTF members had considered at the National children in care council forum that Councils should do for children in care, as well as things that children in care councils should ask their Council for. TCTF members felt that these top ten issues were appropriately addressed within Milton Keynes;
- Development of the library scheme for children in care/care leavers by establishing an improved service for use of library facilities for children in care/care leavers;
- Considering the challenges for children in care and care leavers in finding employment in the current economic climate and agreeing to share information of 'jobs' available to children in care/care leavers via their social workers, foster carers and/or on a 'jobs' section within the children in care website. (KIC MK);
- Feedback provided on various participation events for children in care, such as Big Rock consultation with children in care, children in care survey, True Triumph Celebration event, TCTF participation in national and regional events for children in care councils;

5.6 Panel Members have undertaken regular statutory (regulation 33) visits to the Council's three children's homes and have made recommendations for improvement as appropriate. Panel Members have produced guidance for future Councillors in relation to statutory visits.

6. Future Work Programme

6.1 The Panel will continue its work on those standing items included in their terms of reference.

6.2 The Panel has a work plan for 2012/13. This includes:

- review the updated children in care strategy for 2013/16;
- support a multi-agency children in care strategic group to deliver the children in care strategy;
- scrutinise the stability and the educational attainment of children in care, and services to care leavers;
- scrutinise the quality and sufficiency of residential and fostering placements;
- monitor the delivery of the Pledge - CPP will continue to work with young people to provide a clear and effective pledge that really does what it says and achieves real improvements to the lives of our children in care;
- monitor compliance with required standards through undertaking regulation 33 visits to Council children's homes;
- monitor the implementation and impact of the new children in care regulations which came into force in April 2011;
- monitor the adherence to the 'No to black bags' national charter;
- quarterly meeting with young people on TCTF;
- Consider specific areas of service such as children with disabilities, leaving care, teenage pregnancies and availability of children's placements.

Background papers

Minutes of Corporate Parenting Panel – 2011/12

CPP – Terms of Reference

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