

Children in Care Panel

Terms of Reference

The purpose of this Panel is to provide assurance at elected member level that the County Council is discharging its duties in relation to children in care, having particular regard to the following:-

- (i) Corporate Parenting;
- (ii) Education of Children in Care;
- (iii) Consideration of children and young people causing the most concern, such as those in Secure Accommodation;
- (iv) Standards in Fostering, Adoption and Community Homes provided by or commissioned by the County Council.

This will be done as follows:-

- (i) To consider how effectively the County Council is fulfilling its role as a Corporate Parent, having particular regard to the needs of looked after children in the following areas:-
 - Education;
 - Health, including sexual health;
 - Information;
 - Safe and appropriate care;
 - Material standards;
 - Participation in decision making;
 - Preparation for adulthood and citizenship;
 - Placement strategy.
- (ii) To visit children's community homes and consider the quality of foster care.
- (iii) To consider reports from regulatory bodies, specifically Ofsted, on services for looked after children, including children's homes, fostering and adoption.
- (iv) To monitor the performance of the Department in relation to services for children in care.
- (v) To act as a point of reference or sounding board for the Director of Children and Family Services in relation to elected member involvement in corporate parenting.
- (vi) To act as a point of reference or sounding board for the Director of Children and Family Services in considering the quality of care for looked after children.

Matters of concern or matters which raise policy issues will be referred to the Director of Children and Family Services or the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Membership

Membership has not yet determined. However, it is proposed that the Panel consists of five members with the following political balance:-

3 Con: 1 Lab: 1 Lib

At least two of the member should also serve on the Children's Social Care Panel.

[Note: should we develop a detailed protocol regarding visits to Community Homes?]