

# Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: Monday 15 January 2024  
Time: 10.00 am  
Venue: Hybrid (Committee Room 2) - Shire Hall

## Membership

Councillor Sue Markham (Chair)  
Councillor Marian Humphreys  
Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell  
Councillor Brett Beetham  
Councillor Caroline Phillips  
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse  
Valerie Corcoran  
Jackie Channell

Items on the agenda: -

1. **General**
  - (1) Apologies
  - (2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
  - (3) Minutes of the previous meeting 5 - 10
2. **Voice, Influence & Change Team - Updates** 11 - 20
3. **Performance Data** 21 - 22
4. **Update on Warwickshire County Council's Children's homes** 23 - 26
5. **Development of the Work Programme and Items on the Forward Plan** 27 - 30  
Items from the Forward Plan relevant to the remit of the Panel.
6. **Any Other Business**
7. **Date of Next Meeting**  
The next meeting will be held on 25th March 2024 at 10am.

Meetings are not webcast and are not open to the public.

**Monica Fogarty**  
Chief Executive  
Warwickshire County Council



## Disclaimers

### Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election of appointment to the Council. Any changes to matters registered or new matters that require to be registered must be notified to the Monitoring Officer as soon as practicable after they arise.

A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless they have a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if they have not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

Non-pecuniary interests relevant to the agenda should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

Meetings are not webcast and are not open to the public.

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web for information  
<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

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# Corporate Parenting Panel

Monday 13 November 2023

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

Councillor Sue Markham (Chair)  
Councillor Marian Humphreys  
Councillor Caroline Phillips  
Councillor Penny-Anne O'Donnell (virtual)  
Councillor Breet Beetham (virtual)  
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (virtual)

#### Officers

Helen Barnsley, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Shinderpaul Bhangal, Delivery Lead  
John Coleman, Director - Children and Families  
Nicole Conway, Democratic Services Officer  
Sharon Shaw, Head of Corporate Parenting  
Johnny Kyriacou, Director of Education  
Deena Moorey, Virtual School Head  
Brenda Vincent, Head of ACE  
Jo Smith, Operational Lead - Children & Families, Fostering and Alternative Carers Support  
Leah Adams, Head of Early Years and School Effectiveness

#### Others Present

Valerie Corcoran, Designated Nurse Children in Care

### 1. General

#### (1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Nigel Minns, Executive Director for People and Dr Vaishali Desai, Designated Doctor for Looked After Children Warwickshire, South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust.

#### (2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Marian Humphreys confirmed that she is an independent member of the Adoption Panel.

Councillor Caroline Phillips confirmed that she is the Chair of Governors at Stockingford Maintained Primary School.

### **(3) Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes from the meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

## **2. Voice, Influence & Change Team - Updates**

Shinderpaul Bhangal, Delivery Lead, presented information to the Panel in relation to the Lead Participation Network which includes 14 local authorities across the West Midlands, including Warwickshire. It was confirmed that one area of focus for the network is corporate parenting and participation. A survey has been sent out to establish how corporate parenting works across the network and to identify good practice.

It was agreed that the survey would be sent out to all members of the panel, including officers who work within corporate parenting. It was noted that once the results are compiled, officers will be able to view Warwickshire specific information as well as information relating to the whole network.

The Panel noted that there had been several activities taking place for Care Experienced Week. These included a Halloween event, a movie night and lunch for Vietnamese children in care – this is a new area for Warwickshire County Council and a positive development.

It was confirmed that there would be a full update of all activities in January 2024.

The Chair thanked Shinderpaul for the report and information relating to the survey and took the opportunity to reiterate the importance of everyone completing the survey.

## **3. Report from the Virtual School Head**

Deena Moorey, Virtual School Head, confirmed that today's presentation would provide the Panel with the opportunity to understand in more detail the children behind the data that is part of the regular reports. The presentation would concentrate on early years data.

It was confirmed that the virtual school has two key roles –

- Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children.
- Promoting the education of children with a social worker.

The Panel received additional information in relation to the role of the virtual school including –

- The high level of children
  - 1) with additional needs, including EHCPs.
  - 2) who experience of adversity and trauma.
  - 3) who experience frequent transitions.
  - 4) whose experiences affect attendance, learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

The Panel learnt that good and positive experiences and strong relationships can help to repair the damage done to the development of the brain as a result of traumas etc. The Panel was asked to take into consideration that it isn't always a fair measure to compare children in care with other children as they will not all have had the same experiences. There will be some children, not in care, who have also had negative experiences.

The following data was shared with the Panel –

For Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (cohort of 23 children) it was noted that -

- 19 children in the cohort experienced at least one placement move.
- 16 children in the cohort attended more than one school.
- All the children who achieved a good level of development (GLD) had stayed in the same school and had attendance over 90%

For Key Stage 2 (KS2) (cohort of 28 children) it was noted that –

- 16 children in the cohort remained in one placement over the school year.
- 13 achieved age-related expectations in reading, writing and maths.

For Year 11 (cohort of 46) outcomes it was noted that children in care performed below the national average.

- 6 children in the cohort were expected to achieve a strong pass (Grade 5 or above)
- 8 children in the cohort had poor or no attendance.
- 6.5% of the children in the cohort spoke little or no English.

Following a question from Councillor Marian Humphreys, it was confirmed that early intervention with children is very dependant on each situation. There is always a review when a child enters care to what, if any, early intervention there has been. Sharon Shaw, Head of Corporate Parenting, confirmed that the service may not be aware of a child until they enter care which may not be until they start school, or later.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse noted that the challenges faced by the virtual schools will continue to increase as the challenges faced by the children increase. It was confirmed that this is reflected in the information collected by the virtual school as the number of children they see increases. It was noted that the impact of Covid is still being felt.

Leah Adams, Head of Early Years and School Effectiveness confirmed that the solution is to look at how the council can work in a collaborative way. The Panel noted that there is much closer working in place between the council's family service and children's service. There are monthly partnership boards where not only departments within the council meet up, but also external partners. John Coleman, Director of Children & Families Service added that the virtual school provides a lot of support to schools in Warwickshire and will challenge the schools if needed.

Following an earlier comment in relation to the possible repair to developing brains, Councillor Penny-Anny O'Donnell asked if there was any more data around the impact on neurodevelopment. It was confirmed that there are two speech and language therapists in place who are working with the children that need support, and their families.

The Chair requested that where a % was used in a performance table or to reflect data, that the number the % represented was also included in order for the Panel members to get a clearer understanding.

The Panel thanked Deena and Leah for a very helpful report and useful presentation. It was agreed that the slides from the presentation would be shared with the Panel.

#### **4. Annual Adoption Reports**

Sharon Shaw, Head of Corporate Parenting presented the annual adoption reports to the Panel and confirmed that Warwickshire is part of Adoption Central England (ACE) along with four other authorities - Coventry, Herefordshire, Solihull, and Worcestershire. The annual report from ACE informed the Panel of the work undertaken over the last twelve months and the future work plans for ACE. It was noted that the Warwickshire Annual Adoption Report included much more specific information relating to the children in Warwickshire.

It was confirmed that there has been a significant decline in the number of children adopted and that there are more children waiting for adoption but who had not completed the required process. It was confirmed that many of the delays are still because of Covid and the backlog of cases. It was also noted that there has been an increase in Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) and that this is likely to continue. SGO is where a child is placed with a family member or connected person and is always preferable to adoption. Since April 2023, seventeen young people have been adopted with is already an increase from the total adoptions in the previous year. 73.3% of children adopted were part of sibling group.

Confirmation was given in respect to the Foster to Adopt scheme which often involves very young children who are often relinquished at birth or where previous children have been removed from a parent. This scheme offers placement stability – children are placed with a family who will adopt them but who foster them at the start of the process.

The following points from the report were highlighted –

- There have been three adoption disruptions in the last 12 months – one female child and two male children. All have now been moved to permanent adoptions.
- Moving forward, the focuses for the future for the Warwickshire adoption service will include more promotion of family time which especially important for siblings who aren't placed together.
- The adoption service will be promoting Life story books for children and young people.
- The service will also be promoting the fostering for adoption scheme.
- The service will look to reduce the time between an adoption order being granted and the child/ren going to the matching panel. It was noted that this can be challenging, especially if the child has special needs or is part of a sibling group.



Brenda Vincent, Head of ACE, confirmed that COVID and the cost of living crisis has had an impact on the number of potential adopters coming forward. But there are signs of this changing and there are more people coming forward. Currently there are 59 families going through the assessment process which is a sign that things are improving after the pandemic. It was confirmed that consideration is given to how much support potential adoption families will need and that currently, there are 500 families across the region currently receiving support.

Councillor Marian Humphreys added that the ACE adoption panel also offer a lot of support for families, from the start of the process. Councillor Humphreys added that members of the adoption panel also get a lot of training. It was noted that support is also offered to birth parents, where appropriate and that courts look to maintain relationships with birth parents where possible. This will include more than just postal communication.

Councillor Caroline Phillips stated that she was pleased to hear that family time is a key area of focus. Brenda Vincent added that family contact is not always static; it evolves and is different with each child, and will change as the child gets older. Contact has to be ok with everybody involved and officers are always careful in how they respond in each case.

It was noted that Councillor Marian Humphreys is one of only two elected members in the region to be on adoption panels. Warwickshire is leading the way and hoping to encourage more elected members to join.

The Chair thanked all the officers for the reports stating that it has been easy to read and very understandable.

## **5. Fostering Reports**

Jo Smith, Operational Lead - Children & Families, Fostering and Alternative Carers Support Team introduced the reports to the Panel confirming that the service had a new name in recognition of a restructure and the fact that officers work with a range of carers, not just fosterers.

The Panel learnt that the team works with anyone who comes forward wanting to be a foster carer. The process can take up to five months and involves a lot of training and support. Foster carer applications are reducing but connected carers are increasing which is reflective of a cultural team. It was confirmed that the council currently has five family support workers in place. Within the Connected Persons Team there is a current 11 week wait from assessment to court date.

It was confirmed that there is a national shortage of foster carers at this point; in addition, initial enquiries about fostering have also decreased. Sharon Shaw, Head of Corporate Parenting confirmed that although the number of initial enquires is dramatically lower, the approval rate is increasing. This could suggest that people are better informed about what fostering involves and that the council is putting the right information out there. It was confirmed that after a contract with an external marketing company ended, all communication in relation to fostering and caring is now done internally with the Warwickshire County Council comms team and there is a much more effective marketing approach.

It was noted that a regional approach to fostering, like Adoption Central England (ACE) is being considered as a way to potentially move forward.

John Coleman, Director of Children & Families Service confirmed that the West Midlands are in the second round of applications to set up regional care cooperative with support from the Government. With regards to a Regional Fostering Agency there are concerns in relation to people who enquire looking to foster Warwickshire children, to help Warwickshire children and not those outside of the county. Jo Smith added that, as mentioned, there is such a shortage of foster carers within the county and the service wouldn't want to lose them to other areas. It was noted that other authorities feel the same. IT was agreed that it was important to support local children and keep them in the local area.

The Panel noted that work was underway on The Warwickshire Offer – a comparison/benchmarking exercise in relation to the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, the council has increased fees by 5% (maintenance costs). In addition, the equipment list was reviewed for the first time in five years and updated.

The Panel learnt that the Treehouse scheme opened two years ago and offers respite and support for foster carers. Sharon Shaw added that foster parenting can be different to general parenting so the support from close friends isn't always there. Families may face challenges that only other foster carers will understand. The council is looking to increase the treehouse support.

John Coleman confirmed that in relation to fostering, Warwickshire County Council is making progress and has a good fostering and private fostering service.

The Panel agreed that they would like to see another annual update in twelve months' time in relation to fostering and caring in Warwickshire. It was noted that this would be added to the work programme.

## **6. Development of the Work Programme and Items on the Forward Plan**

The updated work programme was agreed by the Panel.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 15th January 2024.

Meetings are not webcast and are not open to the public.

The meeting rose at 11:55

# Corporate Parenting Panel

15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

## CiCC, CLF & Voice, Influence and Change Team Update

### 1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Panel note the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), Care Leavers Forum (CLF) and the Voice, Influence and Change Team (Participation).
- 1.2 That the Panel acknowledge the work that continues to take place with young people.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This is a standing item on the Corporate Parenting Panel agenda which updates members on the work of the CiCC and CLF.

### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no significant financial implications to consider at this stage.

### 4. Environmental Implications

- 4.1 There are no significant environmental implications to consider at this stage.

### 5. Supporting Information

This update covers the period from 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

#### 5.1 Children in Care Council Meeting Updates

- 12<sup>th</sup> September – Welcome back from the summer holidays. Going through the CiCC webpage and flyer and gathering thoughts and ideas.
- 10<sup>th</sup> October - Rachael Boswell, Rachel Thomas and Jackie Soulier in attendance to discuss young people's views about accommodation including foster homes, residential homes and supported accommodation. These views will be implemented into the Sufficiency Strategy.

- 14<sup>th</sup> November - Rebecca Clifford attended to gather some final thoughts around what makes a good foster carer, CiCC views to be included into the Hey Foster Carer booklet. Young people supported with creating videos and information for the CiCC webpage and flyer. Discussion around priorities for 2024 which were:
- Mental Health
  - Experiences/support in Education – going into schools to talk about children in care.
  - Life in care/life after care
  - Trips and Opportunities
  - Family Time
  - Not seeing social workers enough

## 5.2 Care Leavers Forum Meeting Updates

- 12<sup>th</sup> September – Cath Winton from Compass in attendance to talk to the group about the services that Compass provides. Cath also asked for views of young people about the name of a new service being developed. Young people were consulted about what they think would be helpful to have in a mental health box to support young people who are struggling with their mental health.
- 10<sup>th</sup> October - Rachael Boswell, Rachel Thomas and Jackie Soulier in attendance to discuss young people's views about accommodation including foster homes, residential homes and supported accommodation. These views will be included into the Sufficiency Strategy. Views and opinions sought around young peoples' experiences of being brothers and sisters in care.
- 14<sup>th</sup> November - Young people's views were sought on the rights and entitlements booklet in preparation for a re-design in the New Year. Young People also discussed access to records and what they know and understand about this.

## 5.3 Care Experience Week – 25<sup>th</sup> October-1<sup>st</sup> November

Throughout Care Experience Celebration Week, a number of events and activities were arranged for our care experienced young people to take part in. Throughout the week, good news stories and successes were shared across social media to celebrate young people on their achievements.

**26<sup>th</sup> October** – Winter Social took place at Myton Park where food was shared and games/activities were on offer to take part in.

**27<sup>th</sup> October** – Young Parent’s Party took place during the day for those young parents with care experience and their children. Lots of painting, pumpkin carving and children dressed up in their halloween outfits.



**30<sup>th</sup> October** – A meal was organised during the day at Myton specifically for young asylum seekers from Vietnam. In the evenings, a halloween movie night was organised at Hatter’s Space where young people could either watch a scary movie, or take part in



halloween crafts and activities.

**31<sup>st</sup> October** – Unaccompanied Young Asylum Seeking Children had the opportunity to have a meal in Coventry, socialise and meet new people.

**1<sup>st</sup> November** – Our British Care Leavers went to Nandos in Coventry to share in a meal together and socialise and meet new people.

#### 5.4 **UASC Football Tournaments**

On 25<sup>th</sup> October Warwickshire was represented at a tournament in Milton Keynes in memory of a young person who sadly died. Teams from different counties were the Fire and Rescue service and Jaguar Landrover. Warwickshire players came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, losing to the Fire Service in the final.

On 30<sup>th</sup> October the players were at another tournament in Walsall and this time came first and won the Care Leaver Week tournament!



### 5.5 **Apprentices Involved in Training**

The Voice, Influence and Change team have been working alongside the Practice and Learning Hub to ensure that young peoples' voices are embedded into training. This has included our apprentices with Care Experience helping to deliver the 'Improving the Journey Through Care' training and also being a part of the training for the Cohorts of newly qualified social workers focusing on communication with young people and language used.

### 5.6 **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Training**

A member of the Voice, Influence and Change team is continuing to deliver training to newly arrived young asylum-seeking children. This training has become a mandatory session for young people creating an opportunity to explore Relationships and Sex Education within UK. Sessions that took place recently are as follows:

26<sup>th</sup> September - Sudanese & Eritrean (8 Young people attended)

27<sup>th</sup> September - Kurdish & Pashtu (8 Young people attended)

18<sup>th</sup> December - Sudanese & Eritrean (2 Young people attended)

19<sup>th</sup> December - Kurdish & Pashtu (2 Young people attended)

### 5.7 **Youth Conference – 3<sup>rd</sup> November**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November, the Voice, Influence and Change team along with colleagues from the wider Quality and Impact team planned and hosted with young people the "Voices of Tomorrow" Warwickshire Youth Conference which was attended by over 125 young people.

The conference was jointly funded with Warwickshire County Council by Warwick University through a partnership set up by Child Friendly Warwickshire. The Slate building at Warwick University was a fantastic venue

for the event with the use of breakout rooms in the adjacent building for workshops.

Eight workshops were available to young people on themes chosen by them. Twenty organisations provided stalls on local organisations and businesses. A range of fun activities were also on offer for part of the day including a graffiti wall, pick n mix station and arts and craft table.

Feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees describing it as well-organised and safe. One young person said: *"I loved it! I would really like to go again. I had a wonderful time."*

Another said, *"This conference gave us that chance by creating a space to talk with each other and to local organisations about our views on issues we care about and how we can make a difference and shape our communities."*

A report highlighting key elements of the conference can be accessed here [Voices of Tomorrow Warwickshire Youth Conference 2023](#)



## 5.8 **Residential and Brothers and Sisters Feedback**

Following on from the brothers and sisters residential in August 2023, a follow up activity was organised to gain the children's views and opinions. As part of the activity young people were asked about the residential and their experiences of being siblings in care and not living together. An event was hosted at the Jump In trampoline park with an area booked for food and feedback after the session.

Feedback was also sought from the Care Leavers Forum in October around experiences of being brothers and sisters in care. Below are some examples of the feedback recorded for each area:

Feedback from children and young people who attended the residential

*"Liked it. I was able to spend time with my siblings."*

*"Meeting and being with people in a similar situation to myself was good."*

*"It was really good!"*

Feedback when asked if children had 5 minutes with a manager, what would they want them to know:

- *"Stop separating us"*
- *"Stop taking them (brothers and sisters) away"*
- *"Let us write to each other more"*
- *"I am happy with how things are"*
- *"We want more contact"*
- *"They have phones, let them call each other"*
- *"We want more things to do with each other"*
- *"Explain why we don't live together better"*
- *"Keep explaining reasons to me for my age at that time"*

Feedback from Care Leavers Forum

- More support connecting with brothers and sisters still in care even when they had left care.
- More family time with brothers and sister in care and/or with family members.

Please see the link below to the full report shared with the Senior Leadership Team in November:

[SLT Young People Voices Update - 16.11.2023.docx](#)

#### 5.9 **DfE Befriending and Mentoring Programme Bid – Grandmentors**

At the end of August 2023, Warwickshire applied for some funding from the DfE as part of their Befriending and Mentoring Programme to support the work of our current Grandmentors programme with the charity Volunteering Matters. At the end of November, we found out we had been successful in securing £107,000 to support this work until the end of March 2025. This money will ensure that young people with care experience aged 14+ will have the opportunity to have a mentor to support them at a stage in their life where this could be a great support. Warwickshire is working closely with the Grandmentors coordinator to increase referrals to this valuable service.

#### 5.10 **Care Leavers' Christmas Party – 13<sup>th</sup> December**

On 13<sup>th</sup> December, around 100 care leavers attended their annual Christmas Party, which took place at the Collingwood Centre at Rugby school. The event included a mocktail station, pizza van, raffle with fantastic prizes and live music and entertainment. The evening was also well attended by staff from



Warwickshire County Council who were able to spend time with their young people and celebrate with them.



#### 5.11 **Children in Care Christmas Bowling – 13<sup>th</sup> December**

On 13<sup>th</sup> December, 25 children in care chose to go bowling for their Christmas Party. The children were given the option of ice skating, trampolining and bowling and the majority wanted bowling. Staff from the Voice, Influence and Change team and the Children in Care team attended and played alongside the children. The evening included a meal and the chance to socialise and engage with each other.

#### 5.12 **Pantomime Trips – 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December, children in care with their foster families were given the opportunity to go and see the pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk, in Leamington Spa. A total of 110 tickets were purchased and distributed to families that wanted to attend, including some sibling groups attending together who are in different foster homes. This provided an excellent opportunity for foster carers to meet other families and enjoy an experience together in the lead up to Christmas.

#### 5.13 **Norma's Hampers**

This Christmas, Norma (an ex-Warwickshire foster carer) produced around 250 hampers to send out to Care Leavers to support them over the Christmas period. Warwickshire staff members from the Corporate Parenting team and Quality and Impact team supported by collecting items to go into the hampers and providing money to buy essential food and hygiene items. Together with Morrisons, Evelyn's Gift and the Fire and Rescue team, all these items were delivered to Norma's house to be able to make up the hampers ready to be collected and delivered to young people by their Personal Advisors.



### 5.14 **Mental Health Boxes**

A member of the Voice, Influence and Change team has worked and partnered with different organisations to be able to provide 12 mental health boxes for care leavers. Although not a solution to their mental health issues, the boxes are aimed to provide support whilst they are seeking further help. The box includes:

- Weighted blanket
- Meditation kit
- You're not alone book
- Acupuncture rings
- Hygiene items
- Fidget toys & stress ball
- Hot chocolate & biscuits
- Cosy socks
- £30 Sports Direct voucher (limited availability)
- Free GYM session voucher

In addition to the box, there is an A-Z guide of mental health services that the young people are able to access for additional support.

## **6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps.**

6.1 An update report to be presented to the next Corporate Parenting Panel.

### **Appendices**

None.

### **Background Papers**

None.

	Name	Contact Information
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The report was not circulated to the following members prior to publication:

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**804**  
**Children in Care**

An increase of **7 Children in Care** since 30 November 2023

**Children in Care Placement Type**

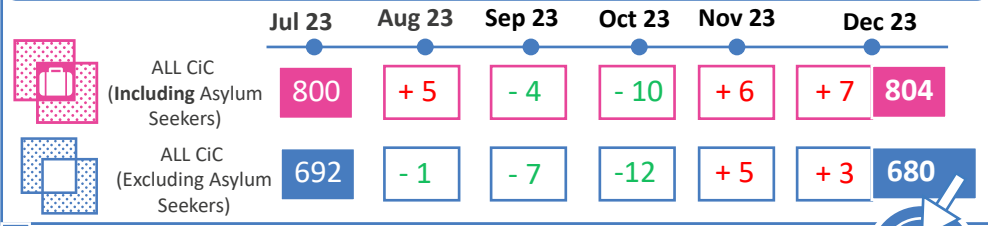
**WCC Foster Carer (inc Family and Friends carers)**  
323 children (40.0%); which is a decrease of 7 children on the previous month end.

**Placed for Adoption**  
18 children (2.2%) of all CiC at 30/11/2023; an increase of 1 child since 30/11/2023.

**Agency Foster Carer**  
185 CiC (23.0%); an increase of 4 children since 30/11/2023

**Residential Home or Supported Accommodation**  
175 children (21.8%); an increase of 4 children since 30/11/2023

**No. Children in Care - Monthly trend**



At 31 December 2023, Warwickshire's Children in Care population increased by 7 to 804, whilst the no. of CiC excluding asylum seekers increased by 3 to 680. **630 CiC target for 2023/24**

**Legal Status of Children in Care as at 31 December 2023**

**52.1%** (419) of CiC are on a **Full Care Order**; this is a decrease of 5 children since 30/11/2023.

**9.6%** (77) of CiC are on an **Interim Care Order**; this is a decrease of 4 children since the previous month end.

**5.0%** (40) of CiC are on a **Placement Order**; this is an increase of 3 children since 30/11/2023.

**33.1%** (266) of CiC are subject to **S20 Accommodation**; this is an increase of 14 children since the end of November 2023.

**Leaving Care Activity Status**

As at 31 December 2023, of those Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers (aged 16 - 21) ...

- 84.2%** had a contact within the last 8 weeks
- 79.5%** were in suitable accommodation
- 46.1%** were in EET (Employment, Education & Training)

**CiC out of county as at 31st December 2023**  
**18.3%** (147) of CiC were placed outside the LA boundary and more than 20 miles from where they used to live  
*NB. Please note that this is a quarterly measure*

**CiC 'Missing' or 'Away from placement without authorisation'**

**29 children in care were missing (71 missing episodes)**

During December 2023 there were **71 episodes** of a child missing or away from their placement without authorisation. This related to **29 individual children** with **12 children** having multiple missing episodes during the month.

**Gender**

**63.1%** (507) Male

**36.9%** (297) Female

0 'Indeterminate'

**Ethnicity**

**1/4 (28.6%)** of Children in Care (Including Asylum Seekers) are **Minority Ethnic (230)**;

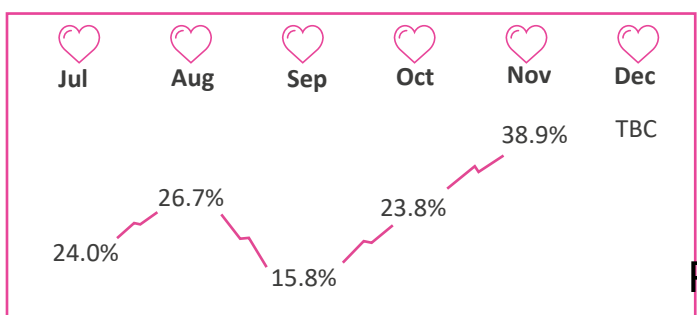
**71.4% (585)** are of White ethnicity

**Allocated Team**

- 15.4% (124)** of Children in Care are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
- 5.2% (42)** are allocated to the Children with Disability teams
- 26.9% (216)** are allocated to the CiC 14-18 Years Team

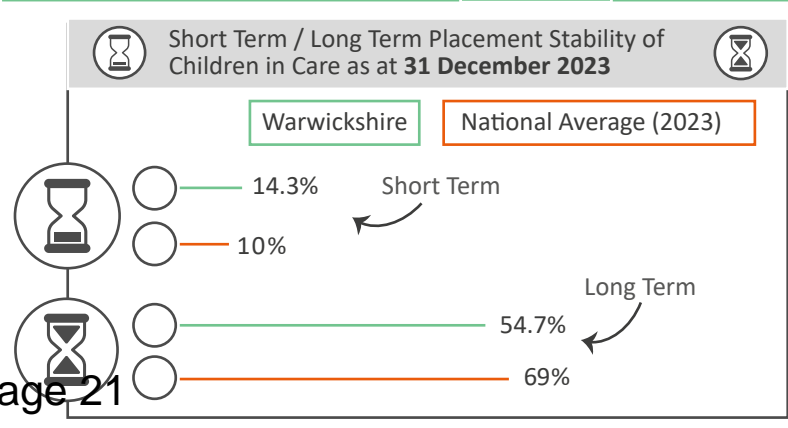
**89.8%** of Children in Care at 31 December 2023 have had a 'completed' health assessment in the last 12 months

**% of CiC accommodated during the month (who remained accommodated) and who had their IHA within 20 working days (Monthly trend)**



**Age breakdown of the 804 children**

- 3.9% (31)** 0 years old
- 13.1% (105)** aged 1 - 4
- 16.0% (129)** aged 5 - 9
- 37.3% (300)** aged 10 - 15
- 29.7% (239)** aged 16 - 17



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<b>Report To:</b>	Corporate Parenting Panel
<b>Report Title:</b>	Update on Warwickshire County Council's Children's homes
<b>Report Author:</b>	Sharon Shaw, Head of Corporate Parenting Ian Parker, Delivery Lead - Provider Services and Responsible Individual Tracy Avill, Delivery Lead Social Work Operations Manager

### Contents:

#### **Recommendations**

That Corporate Parenting Panel considers the information provided and discusses any areas that they feel requires further exploration.

#### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Corporate Parenting Panel on the progress of WCC's children's homes, including purchase and status of properties, young people who have been living in Cherry Tree and how we plan to increase the numbers. Recruitment of staff, Ofsted registration and development of a fourth children's home.

#### **Executive Summary**

##### **Chery Tree House CH1**

Cherry Tree House has been operational since March 2023 and in this period has supported up to 2 young people (4 bedded Unit) 1 young person who was the first young person to live in the home has been successfully rehabilitated home to his mother's care.

The home has operated at lower than projected occupancy since going operational. This has been due to both recruitment and difficulty in matching to the statement of purpose for the home.

Staffing is now filled except for one post, so it is hoped occupancy can now increase through 2024.

Minor building works are planned for 2024 to expand the office at the home and modify the front garden of the property.

## **South of the County**

### **Acorn Lodge (2 bedded home)**

This is a 2 bedroomed home that will provide accommodation for children between the ages of 13-18years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This home will support children in need of stabilisation due to entering care or placement breakdown. The building work of Acorn Lodge was completed on the 10.10.2023 and the property handed over. The furnishing of the property is complete in preparation for registration. The registration paperwork has been submitted to Ofsted. But awaiting health declaration to allow Ofsted to process.

Recruitment for this home and Oak Tree House has been ongoing through the build period and is detailed in the recruitment document. There have been a number of challenges in recruiting staff in the south of the county in particular, at the current time we are in a position that once Ofsted registration is given we could open Acorn Lodge using staff recruited for Acorn Lodge and Oak Tree House, however the most pressing recruitment need is to recruit a Registered Manager who will have responsibility for both Acorn Lodge and Oak House.

### **Oak Tree House (4 bedded home)**

This is a 4 bedroomed home that will provide longer term accommodation for children between the ages of 13-18years with emotional and behavioural difficulties This was handed over with Acorn Lodge. Due to not having a manager in post registration of this home has been delayed. The property is furnished and ready for registration. It is planned to utilise staff recruited for Oak Tree to support Acorn operationally initially until a registered manager is recruited and sufficient staff teams for both homes.

## **North of the County**

### **Beechwood House (1 bed home)**

This is a 1 bedroomed home that will provide accommodation for children between the ages of 8-18years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This home will support children in need of stabilisation due to entering care or if a placement breakdown.

The building work of Beechwood House was completed on the 16.11.2023 and the property handed over. The furnishing of the property is complete in preparation for registration with Ofsted.

Recruitment has gone well for this home with most vacancies filled. Staff from Silver Birch will initially support to allow the home to get fully operational upon registration.



The registration paperwork has been submitted to Ofsted. But awaiting health declaration to allow Ofsted to process.

### **Silver Birch (4 bedded Home)**

This is a 4 bedroomed home that will provide longer term accommodation for children between the ages of 13-18years.

The building works on the property have commenced. This property is likely to be handed over in April 2024. It will then be furnished and registered with Ofsted. We have strong recruitment and have recruited well in this area.

### **Property number 4 (4 bedded Learning Difficulties home)**

Viewings ongoing. One potential property identified. being second viewed with costings being explored to check viability.

### **Key Issues Across the homes for further discussion**

- Recruitment of a Registered manager for Leamington homes
- Competitive salary offer, (e.g., registered manager post advertised in Oxfordshire CC is £55,783 - 59,010, in comparison to WCC recently re graded salary of £47,989 – 53,964).
- Recording systems to support evidencing progress of children and management oversight.
- ICT within the homes
- Review Statement of Purpose for Cherry Tree House
- Identification of children who can return to Warwickshire from out of county residential homes.

### **Conclusions**

It is extremely positive that the building work has now finished on three of the properties and we were successful in the CIF bid. The recruitment campaign in the north has been successful in a competitive market, however it is evident that the recruitment of registered managers is a challenge, with very few applications and resource across the whole sector (17% of RM posts are vacant across the country). Identifying and matching children will continue to be discussed and progressed with the re-introduction of residential panels where all children who are in out of county residential will be discussed to see if they can move back to Warwickshire.

### **Environmental Implications**

Reviewing ECP ratings of all homes to bring them to a C or below rating.

### **Financial Implications**

CIF funding successful and will need to keep within budget for future purchases.  
In the longer term we need to achieve high levels of occupancy to make the homes financially viable.

### **Appendices in relation to recruitment**

**Appendix A** – Interviews

**Appendix B** – Successful Candidates

**Appendix C** – Unsuccessful Candidates

**Appendix D** – Staff for homes

## Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme 2024

Item	Report detail	Date of Meeting
Update from CICC and Care Leaver Forum and Change Team	Children in Care Council/Care Leaver's Forum, & Voice, Influence and Change Team Update – <u>next full update 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024</u>	* Standing items for every meeting
Performance Data	Report which includes key data regarding CLA & Care Leavers	
Development of Work Programme for 2023 and Forward Plan information	To consider proposed work programme & future areas of work for the panel; including information from the forward plan with items relevant to the remit of the panel	
Report from the Virtual School Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spring Term</b> (March/April) - focus on validated achievement outcomes</li> <li>• <b>Summer Term</b> (July/August) - focus on other work of the Virtual School such as enrichment opportunities, as this supports the raising achievement agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Autumn term</b> (November) - focus on provisional achievement outcomes</li> </ul>	<b>Quarterly Report – next report due 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>

Report detail	Date of Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Home Update</li> </ul>	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sibling Strategy (Sheila Beckett)</li> <li>Care Leavers Offer and UASC Offer</li> </ul>	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work Force Strategy (TBC)</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2024
	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fostering and Alternative Carers Support Team Annual Report</li> </ul>	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2025

#### **Actions from the previous meetings/additions to the work programme**

- County Line – a police representative will be asked to attend.

#### **Briefing notes requested**

- Further information in relation to siblings in care - a more detailed breakdown was requested following the report presented at the meeting.
- Information about the KOOTH website.
- Further information in relation to missing episodes – the panel would like to see how many episodes relate, for example, to being 10 minutes late and how many are when a child is missing for several days. (Due in January 2024)

**Information circulated to Members outside of meetings - *none currently.***

**Items included on the Forward Plan relevant to the remit of the Panel:**

The remit of the panel is to secure elected member and cross-organisation support and commitment for delivering improvement services and better outcomes for looked after children, young people and care leavers:

Decision	Description	Date due	Decision Maker
SEND Public Consultations	Proposals from the SEND Public Consultations for SEND Service Offer.	23 January 2024	Cabinet
SEND and Inclusion	Review of the revised core offer following Public consultation	15 February 2024	Cabinet

### **Upcoming Member Development Sessions**

Please contact Helen Barnsley (Senior Democratic Services Officer) if you would like more information or if you are missing a calendar invitation. All development sessions will be held via Microsoft Teams unless otherwise stated.

Session	Date and Time
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CQC and The Care Act</b></p> <p>An overview of Care Act duties and CQC inspection and an update on Warwickshire's preparations for forthcoming local inspection.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 2pm</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Warwickshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)</b></p> <p>The rights of way service is using the process of reviewing its ROWIP to understand the needs of residents of Warwickshire County more fully. You are invited to this webinar to find out more about the ROWIP and the process of its review.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 at 2pm</p>

### **Future Meetings – 2024**

- 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 10am
- 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 at 10am
- 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 10am
- 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 10am

#### **2025**

- 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 10am
- 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 10am