

Report to: Policy and Review (Performance) Panel
13th April 2005

Report from: Head of Strategy

Report by: Kathryn Smale, Strategy Adviser

CORPORATE PARENTING REVIEW UPDATE

1. Recommendations

The Policy and Review (Performance) Panel are recommended to:

1. Note progress against recommendations since the last update report to the panel in September 2004 (see Appendix 1)
2. Agree any corrective action required where recommendations have not been achieved

2. Background

At their meeting on 15th September the Policy and Review (Performance) Panel received an update report on progress with implementing the recommendations from the scrutiny review of Corporate Parenting, which was undertaken by Topic Panel B in 2002. The Performance Panel requested that a further update report be presented in six months time setting out progress towards targets which had not been achieved.

3. Assessment of progress over the last 6 months

The update report the panel considered at their meeting in September included a table setting out the recommendations from the corporate parenting review and progress to date in implementing these recommendations. This table has been updated to reflect further progress over the last 6 months. This table is attached as Appendix 1.

Main areas of achievement over the last 6 months include:

- The authority is currently in the process of reconfiguring children's social services in response to the provisions of the Children's Bill. Part of this process has been to establish a team specifically for Looked After Children. This will help to address issues of allocation, planning etc. The new team will go live in a couple of months.
- Progress is being made on reporting on performance in key areas of corporate parenting, with development of a Report Card of outcomes for Looked After Children. The report card will include contributions from a number of Council departments. The report card will be reported to the Executive member for Education Children and Families and to the Executive collectively.

- The recent CSCI inspection of children's Social Services highlighted improved performance in providing stability for Looked After Children and meeting their health and education needs.

Areas where further progress required:

- The current authority-wide Looked After Children policy needs to be updated. It is important that the Council revise this policy in order to respond to draft statutory guidance relating to the duty on Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children. The Gatsby project lead officer is waiting for a paper to go to the Executive member for Education Children and Families to get the political mandate to make changes to the current policy.

Recommendation	Comments and Action Taken	Progress
<p>1. The Executive (collectively) assume responsibility for looked after children in the City Council's care and that it should receive regular reports on the status of children in the Council's care, including their education attendance and records of progress (any such reports to be no less frequently than every six months)</p>	<p>A report on outcomes for looked after children will be considered by the Executive at their meeting in April. The report proposes that work continue to develop the Green Report (the annual report relating to educational attainment, attendance and provision for looked after children) into a 'Report Card'. The report card will provide an overview of the City's Council's performance in key areas of corporate parenting and include information on the story behind the figures as well as the plans for sustaining or improving performance. The report card will include contributions from a number of Council departments and is therefore likely to be presented to the Executive collectively as well as the Executive member for Education Children and Families.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>2. Social Services managers be instructed to adopt a target of 80% completion of Personal Education Plans (PEP's) by the time of the scheduled four month review of each child's case as a means of monitoring and measuring each child's performance</p>	<p>The situation remains that all LAC in Portsmouth have an appropriate education planning mechanism of some sort (statement, PSP etc). It should be noted that the recent re-structuring of the Social Services teams and the creation of a dedicated LAC Team will improve performance with regard to allocating LAC cases. An increase in the number of allocated cases should increase the number, and more importantly the quality of up to date Personal Education Plans that are in place.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>3. Given the costs of independent sector placements, the Social Services cash limit be increase by £91,000 in 2002/03 to ensure that Portsmouth foster carers are paid at the recommended levels of the Foster Care Network. (The Panel sees this as being a recruitment and retention</p>	<p>Foster carer payments have been enhanced and foster carers are now paid at the recommended levels. Recruitment and retention measures, including a scheme offering carers £250 for introducing friends or neighbours who go on to become foster carers, have increased the number of carers. The number of family placement carers has risen from 94 in April 2003 to 102 in April 2004 and 104 in June 2004. The number of professional carers has also risen from 8 in April 2003 to 12 in April 2004 and 14 in June 2004. However, the number of looked</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Recommendation	Comments and Action Taken	Progress
issue with regard to carers)	after children is also going up and this means there is still a heavy demand for Independent Foster Agencies.	
4. The Corporate Management Team be instructed to implement, prioritise and maintain whole authority policies relating to the education of children and young people in the City Council's care	The current whole authority policy relating to the education of children and young people in the City Council's care is currently in need of updating. The authority needs to revise this policy to take account of draft statutory guidance relating to the duty on Local Authorities to promote the education achievement of Looked After Children. The Gatsby co-ordinator is currently leading on the development of the revised Corporate Parenting policy. This process was originally delayed until the new Strategic Directors were appointed and in post. The proposals need to go to the Executive member for Education Children and Families as soon as possible to get the political mandate to make changes to the current policy.	Delayed
5. The Director of Social Services be instructed to draw up a local version of the Quality Protects Management Action Plan each year, as soon as ring fenced "Quality Protects" grant funding ends in 2004/2005.	The Quality Protects Action Plan has been replaced by the Children and Families Delivery and Improvement Statement. The Quality Protects grant is now wrapped up with Children's and Families base grants with the majority of funding covering much the same elements of service delivery as under Quality Protects.	Completed
6. Every effort be made to establish a local Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership by no later than April 2003 as part of a drive to focus on appropriate preventive services	Portsmouth's Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) or Children's Trust is now in place. Among the key objectives of the partnership is the development of preventive services. The CYPSP is organised in a series of interconnecting groups, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • geographically based groups • groups focussed on particular needs of children and young people • Partnership Commissioning Group 	Completed

Recommendation	Comments and Action Taken	Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive <p>Portsmouth has been chosen to be a Children's Trust pathfinder, which means that our experience of working in partnership with others will be shared across the country.</p>	
<p>7. The City Council give full consideration to the importance of providing adequate resources to staff and run children services effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive have approved increased numbers of social workers, with an extra 3 social workers for Children and Families support approved last year. • The Social Services Inspectorate reports annually on social services performance. The 2003 Annual Review concluded that services for looked after children were comprehensive and coherent, care planning for children looked after was very effective and the Council was providing an effective service for care leavers. The report recommended further action be taken to improve school attendance, educational achievement and reduce offending of Looked After Children. 	Ongoing
<p>8. The Director of Social Services maintain appropriate recruitment and retention policies to ensure that high calibre entrants to the social work presentation are encouraged into Portsmouth</p>	<p>Portsmouth's current recruitment and retention strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing financial inducements to recruit and retain staff • A graduate trainee scheme • Approval of an additional 3 social work posts <p>However, recruitment and retention is likely to remain an issue with increasing competition from other local authorities and other sectors for high calibre staff. This will mean continuing problems in terms of allocation of cases. The Government's children green paper sets out proposals for addressing recruitment and retention issues and it is hoped that this will lead to future improvements.</p>	Ongoing

Recommendation	Comments and Action Taken	Progress
<p>9. Future planning of Children's Services be aligned with the need to develop appropriate strategies for dealing with prevention of teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and child/ adolescent mental health issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City-wide Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan, Young Person's Substance Misuse Plan and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy have all been brought under a single planning framework for Children's services through the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan. These strategies also feed into the overall preventive strategy for the City which is being taken forward by the Children's Trust. • These issues have been picked up in service delivery with the appointment of a mental health worker for foster care, and the launch of a Sexual Health Policy with associated training for carers. • Children's Services currently link with Adult Mental Health in terms of jointly assessing families and are developing similar links with substance misuse and learning difficulties. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>10. The City Council takes appropriate measures to highlight the important role played by carers and publicly acknowledge the invaluable work that they undertake</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last 2 years the Chief Executive has funded 300 tickets to the pantomime as a big thank you to foster carers. This arrangement has not as yet been put onto a formal basis but the assumption is the gesture will be repeated annually. • The media unit issue regular press releases regarding the importance of foster carers • Appropriate training is offered to carers and Portsmouth now has its first 2 foster carers qualified in NVQ3 in care. • Out of hours support for foster carers is still under negotiation. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>11. The City Council adopts and enhances preventive services wherever possible to minimise the need for statutory intervention and/or</p>	<p>A preventive strategy has been developed as a key part of the Children and Young people's Strategic Plan. Key elements of the Preventative Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systems to share information about a child between agencies, to 	<p>Completed</p>

Recommendation	Comments and Action Taken	Progress
<p>the involvement of acute services for children living in the city</p>	<p>give a holistic picture of his/her needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an assessment process that is shared by agencies avoiding the need for families to repeat information • a main point of contact (key-worker) for families and services to co-ordinate support • services that 'join-up' <p>These developments are being taken forward through the Information Referral and Tracking process under the auspices of the Children's Trust</p>	
<p>12. City Council services be designed and implemented in such a way to ensure that they are outcome focussed, community based and child centred</p>	<p>Outcomes - Portsmouth has developed 8 outcomes for children and young people. These outcomes form the framework for the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan, which is the major plan for children's services within the City and links to the Community Strategy. The Portsmouth Children's Trust has committed to the development of a report card on outcomes for young people to measure progress against agreed outcomes of child wellbeing. A basket of 17 high-level indicators on child well-being has been developed which has been mapped against the Portsmouth outcomes for children and young people and the national 5 outcomes.</p> <p>Community Based – Over time the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership aims to develop city-wide coverage of geographically based groups, building on the Community Board structure in the heart of the City and Paulsgrove/Wymering.</p> <p>Child Centred – Development of a main point of contact (key-worker) for families and services to co-ordinate support will ensure that</p>	<p>In progress</p>

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<p>13. Policies that have an impact on children in the city be developed in partnership with children, young people and their families</p>	<p>services are centred around the needs of the child and family.</p> <p>Actively involving users and carers in planning services is a key objective of the Portsmouth Children and Families Delivery Improvement Statement. Consultations with children, young people and their families include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Care Can Change Group (C3) – a consultation group with Looked After Children. The group has been consulted on aspects of service delivery, including training for social workers and foster carers and has fed into the development of national and local strategies, including the National Healthy Care Standards, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy and Home Office drug strategy. • The Children and Young People’s Strategic Plan was the result of wide ranging consultation with children and young people, parents, practitioners, voluntary and statutory agencies. Action plans will be developed in consultation with young people. 	<p>Ongoing</p>