

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	SOUTHAMPTON'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	24 NOVEMBER 2022
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	SCRUTINY MANAGER

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
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**STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

**BRIEF SUMMARY**

As Corporate Parents Southampton City Council have responsibilities towards Southampton's looked after children and care leavers. Southampton's Corporate Parenting Strategic Plan 2022-2027, approved in March 2022 (link provided in background documents), outlines how these responsibilities will be discharged.

In Southampton oversight of how the Council and partners discharge their responsibilities towards looked after children and care leavers is undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Committee, Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning.

This report briefly summarises how the Southampton Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 – 27 will ensure that corporate parenting responsibilities will be effectively discharged in Southampton, and, at the request of the Chair, provides details on key outcomes and developments for Southampton's looked after children in the following areas:

- Educational attainment
- Mental Health
- Placement Sufficiency

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

	(i)	That the Panel notes how corporate parenting responsibilities will be discharged in Southampton and scrutinises outcomes and developments for looked after children relating to educational attainment, mental health and placement sufficiency.
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**REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.	To enable the Panel to scrutinise outcomes and developments for looked after children in Southampton.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>	
2.	Not applicable
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>	
3.	<p>Corporate parenting principles are defined by the Department for Education as local authorities and partners having the following responsibilities towards looked after children and care leavers in their care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people</li> <li>• to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings</li> <li>• to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people</li> <li>• to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners</li> <li>• to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those</li> <li>• children and young people for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and</li> <li>• to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.</li> </ul> <p>Southampton's Corporate Parenting Strategic Plan identifies how these requirements will be met and was approved in March 2022.</p>
2.	Oversight of the Corporate Parenting Strategic Plan is the responsibility of the Corporate Parenting Committee, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning. Additional scrutiny is provided by the service's improvement board and the last focused discussion took place in September 2022.
3.	A brief overview of the number of looked after children and trend data is attached as Appendix 1. The number of looked after children, although having increased during the past 12 months, is now stable. Reunification and placement stability are service priorities moving forward into 2023.
4.	<p>The Chair of the Panel has requested that specific focus is given to a number of key areas essential to enabling Southampton's looked after children to thrive. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational attainment</li> <li>• Mental health support</li> <li>• Sufficiency of Placements</li> </ul>
	<b>Educational Attainment for looked after children</b>

5.	As referenced at the September 2022 meeting of the Panel, in recognition that the theme of the November meeting is outcomes for looked after children it was agreed that educational attainment of looked after children in Southampton would not be considered in September, alongside a wider discussion on educational attainment, but would instead be a focus of the November meeting.
6.	Attached as Appendix 2 is the Virtual School Annual Headteacher report for 2022. Educational attainment data is included in the report and the 2 associated annexes.
7.	The Virtual School Headteacher will be in attendance at the meeting to present the annual report.
	<b>Mental Health Support</b>
8.	In November 2021, in light of the post-pandemic increase in demand for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Panel considered CAMH services for Southampton's children and young people with a focus on the support for care experienced children and young people (link to 2021 briefing paper in background papers).
9.	Reflecting that a year has passed, and changes to the children looked after emotional and mental health offer were being proposed at the time, the Chair has requested that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support for Southampton's looked after children is considered at the 24 November meeting of the Panel.
10.	To enable an informed discussion, attached as Appendix 3, is a briefing paper from Solent NHS Trust updating the Panel on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support. The Service Manager for CAMHS will be in attendance to present the paper and answer questions from the Panel.
	<b>Placement Sufficiency</b>
11.	There is a legal duty placed upon the council to secure sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the council are looking after. The range of accommodation within the scope of the sufficiency duty includes adoption, foster care, children's homes and supportive accommodation.
12.	At previous meetings of the Panel in 2022 there have been references to foster care recruitment and the development of new residential homes in Southampton. Reflecting the focus of the agenda, and the financial pressures on the council, the Chair has requested an update on these initiatives as part of a wider discussion on sufficiency of placements for Southampton's looked after children.
13.	The Placement Sufficiency update is attached as Appendix 4. The Deputy Director for Children's Services and Learning will be in attendance to present this item.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>	

14.	Where applicable details are outlined in the appended briefing papers.
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>	
15.	Where applicable details are outlined in the appended briefing papers.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
16.	Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
17.	N/A
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
18.	Oversight of services, support and outcomes for looked after children is provided by the Corporate Parenting Committee. Additional scrutiny is provided by the service's improvement board.
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
19.	The 2022-2030 Corporate Plan includes, as one of its four goals, strong foundations for life where people are able to access and maximise opportunities to truly thrive, Southampton will focus on ensuring residents of all ages and backgrounds have strong foundations for life. Delivering consistently good outcomes for Southampton's looked after children will contribute to achieving this objective.

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	All
<b><u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u></b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1.	Children Looked After Demand Overview
2.	Virtual School Annual Headteacher's report
3.	Community Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) briefing paper
4.	Sufficiency Update

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1.	None
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		No
<b>Other Background Documents</b>		
<b>Other Background documents available for inspection at:</b>		
<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>		<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>
1.	<a href="#">Corporate Parenting Strategic Plan 2022/27 (southampton.gov.uk)</a> – Internal document	
2.	November 2021 CFSP briefing paper - <a href="#">Appendix 1 - Briefing paper on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.docx.pdf (southampton.gov.uk)</a>	
3.	Placement Sufficiency presentation to CFSP – July 2021 <a href="#">PowerPoint Presentation (southampton.gov.uk)</a>	