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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Bridget Bolwell (Chair), Stella Jones and Matt Bell

Present remotely: Cllrs Julie Robinson and Cathy Lugg

Apologies: Cllrs Duncan Sowry-House

Also present remotely: Cllr Clare Sutton

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Louise Drury (Head of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers), Paula Golding (Corporate Director for Care and Protection), Jane MacLennan, Jo Smark-Richards, Kaye Wright (Youth Voice Manager), Megan Cameron-Brown (Head of Quality Assurance and Partnerships), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), David Webb (Head of Service - Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service) and Tina Ironside (Strategic Commissioner)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):

16. **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed officers and members of the committee to the meeting.

17. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2025 were confirmed and signed.

18. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

19. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

20. **Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report**

The Quality Assurance Service Manager introduced the report and highlighted some of the key areas of progress and milestones that had been achieved over the past year.

The timeliness of minutes and the improvement beyond what is currently reported.

21. **Corporate Parenting Dataset**

The Head of Service for Children in Care introduced the Corporate parenting data set and described the context of children in care locally and nationally and the work that is going on to meet their needs.

The committee discussed the following areas.

- Children placed out of county and the costs involved in those placements.
- The competition of PETS and the upward trend of timely completion.
- The children in care school attendance in relation to general school attendance.
- The challenges around finding and maintaining safe and settled placements.
- Discussions about those in temporary placements and the reasons behind that.

22. **Advocacy and Independent Visitors**

The Senior Advocate, NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) introduced the report and described the activities that have been undertaken over the last year and set out the aspirations for the future.

The committee investigate the continuity of advocates and the opportunities for young people to have stability of advocacy.

There was discussion of the opportunity to promote independent visitors and the potential to capitalize of people with existing relationships through different aspects of childrens services such as fostering.

23. **Annual Report of the Virtual School: Education of Children in Care**

The Corporate Director for Education & Learning introduced the report and set out the actions and progress of the virtual school over the past year.

The use of headsets that allow people to experience things through the lens of a trauma experienced young person was raised and the opportunity for the committee to trial these was planned for 2026.

There was discussion on the tracking and monitoring of the performance of pupils along with the availability of extracurricular enrichment activities.

24. **Annual LADO Report**

The Head of Quality Assurance & Partnerships introduced the report and set out the areas covered over the past year.

There was discussion as to how Dorset Council has influenced and improved attendance of police at meetings by ensuring attendance is requested when it meets criminal threshold.

Faith group referrals were discussed to improve engagement with the service.

25. **Children in Care at Risk of Offending and Custody**

The report was introduced by the Executive Director for Childrens who invited the Head of Service at Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service who spoke to the details of the report.

The committee discussed the earliness of intervention around speech and language needs.

The committee sought reassurance around the practicalities of meetings in the home and the ongoing support of children in the same setting after investigation.

26. **Annual Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Report 2024/25**

The report was introduced by the Designated Nurse for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People.

The system approach to ensure the continuation of all health information through the child's journey through the system.

The use of population health management to support care leavers and the approach taken working closely with GPs to predict and manage needs was discussed.

Recognition was shared by officers and councillors for health colleagues for their continued support in the provision of health care for the children in care cohort.

27. **Complaints and Representations - Children in Care and Care Leavers**

The report was introduced by the Corporate Director - Care & Protection and the committee noted the contents of the report.

28. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next formal meeting to be held on 28 May 2026 and the next informal meeting to be held on 29 January 2026.

29. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

30. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 3.00 - 4.33 pm

Chairman

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