

## **CS14141 Appendix 1**

### **Annual Briefing Report on the Work of the Executive Working Party on Child Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting 2014 -2015**

#### **Introduction**

The Executive Working Party on Child Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting is required to meet three times a year. Current membership comprises Councillors Robert Evans (Chairman), Nicholas Bennett, Diane Smith, Tim Stevens, Stephen Wells, Judi Ellis, Hannah Gray, and Pauline Tunnicliffe. The Working Party met on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 29<sup>th</sup> April, and 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015. A further meeting is planned for 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The focus for this group is to assist the Lead Member to carry out his responsibilities and to maintain an effective focus on services to safeguard children and promote life chances for Looked After Children (LAC) through detailed review and challenge.

The group is supported by the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Safeguarding and various officers depending on the agenda item however the Head of Service for Care and Resources and the Head of Quality Assurance for Safeguarding attend on a regular basis . The group is also supported by two Bromley Looked After Children in the form of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Living in Care Council.

#### **Work covered by the Working Group in 2014 -2015**

The work programme reflects priorities identified within the Corporate Parenting Strategy as well as urgent concerns identified by elected Members, for e.g. child exploitation arising out of developments in Rotherham. The following reports were considered for comment during 2014 -2015;

- Briefings and updates from Bromley Looked After Children (LAC) on the work of the Living in Care Council (LinCC)
- Report on the work of the Virtual School, consideration of the school Action Plan and Bromley LAC attainment.
- Report on early intervention, performance and activity, to support safeguarding.
- Development of the Bromley Sufficiency Strategy for Looked After Children.
- Report on the work being undertaken to improve education, employment and training (EET) for Bromley LAC.
- Report on the policy changes required and resulting financial pressures for the Council caused as a result of the Tower Hamlets judgement in respect of Connected Persons.

- Development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, 2014 – 16.
- Report on policy changes required and resulting financial pressures for the Council due to the legislative requirements introduced enabling young people to remain in foster care post 18 years, (Staying Put Policy).
- Consideration of how the council is protecting children missing, children at risk of child sexual exploitation and Bromley LAC children placed out of borough in the wake of the Jay Report findings and reports on child abuse in Rotherham.
- Review of the Pledge with the LinCC.
- Scrutiny of Adoption Performance.
- Consideration of the Annual Independent Reviewing Officer report.
- Social Worker Recruitment and Retention package.
- Report on the increased use of Special Guardianship Orders by Family Courts to achieve permanency for children with resulting cost pressures for the Council.

## **Key Issues**

Despite the substantial financial pressures being placed on Local Authorities nationally, there appears to be no decrease in expectations from central Government in relation to Safeguarding and Corporate parenting policy and practice standards as demonstrated by the Staying Put policy. In addition, the Courts have made a number of case law rulings which are also creating pressures in the form of increased Special Guardianships Orders, increased payments to connected persons and the Home Office failure to quickly process No Recourse to Public Fund applications for asylum.

## **Impact**

The Executive Working Party on Child Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting continues to provide an effective means to influence and challenge how officers develop policy and resources for safeguarding and corporate parenting

**Cllr Robert Evans, Care Services Portfolio Holder,  
Chairman of the Executive Working Party on Child Safeguarding and  
Corporate Parenting**