

Agenda

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Monday 3 July 2023 at 6.00 pm
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

- | | | |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence | 7 - 8 |
| | To receive any apologies for absence. | |
| 2 | Declarations of Interest | 9 - 10 |
| | Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting. | |
| 3 | Minutes | 11 - 22 |
| | To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2023 as a correct record. | |
| 4 | Urgent Additional Items of Business | |
| | To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency. | |
| 5 | Corporate Parenting Week | 23 - 36 |
| | To consider and comment on the report detailing the feedback from Corporate Parenting Week. | |



6 **Scrutiny Action Tracker** 37 - 46

Standing item to consider and note progress on implementation of actions and recommendations.

7 **Cabinet Forward Plan** 47 - 50

Standing item to consider future items on the Forward Plan.

Shokat Lal
Chief Executive
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution

Councillor Hinchliff (Chair)
Councillors Chambers, Allcock, Ashraf, Choudhry, Fitzgerald, W Gill, Mayo,
Pall, Uddin and Weston
Barrie Scott Co-opted Member - Church of England dioceses of Birmingham
and Lichfield Representative
Carmel Hinton Co-opted Member - Roman Catholic archdiocese of
Birmingham Representative

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Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence from the members of the Committee.



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Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.



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Minutes of Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Monday 20 March 2023 at 6.00pm
Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Hinchliff (Chair);
Councillors Chidley, Dunn, Preece, and Uddin.

Officers: Michael Jarrett (Director of Children and Education);
Julie Andrews (Head of Learning and Advisory Support);
Jacqui Smith (Chair of Sandwell Children's Trust);
Steven Gauntley (Head of Operations Sandwell Children's
Trust);
Mandip Chahal (Senior Joint Commissioning Manager);
Oliver Flowers (Headteacher, Westminster School).

11/23 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W Gill and Mayo and co-opted member K Heeley.

12/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

13/23 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 9 January and 22 February 2023 are approved as a correct record.



14/23 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider.

15/23 **Sandwell Children’s Trust Performance Update**

Further to Minute No. 25/22 (10 October 2022), the Board received a performance update from Sandwell Children’s Trust (SCT) for the period July 2022 to February 2023.

Ofsted had carried out an inspection into the Voluntary Adoption Agency in December 2022. The Voluntary Adoption Agency Ofsted rating had been rated Good. The judgement noted; overall experiences and progress of service users taken into account; how well children, young people and adults were helped and protected had been rated Good, while the effectiveness of leaders and managers had been rated as Required Improvement.

SCT worked to progress permanence for children when adoption was identified as a part of a child’s care plan and continued to work closely with the Regional Adoption Agency to increase the number of children placed in fostering to adopt placements.

The highlights of the inspection noted the positive relationships children built with adopters; children were introduced to adopters in a planned and sensitive way; collaboration between partners had ensured children had uninterrupted support; a governance structure enabled good oversight and service delivery; a culture of high expectations and aspirations for children.

The inspection had resulted in a number of recommendations; more feedback should be encouraged from children; child stories should be individualised; child and prospective adopters should be introduced in a timely manner; the adoption process should be non-judgmental and feedback and lessons learned should be sought from adopters.



The Board noted the following key performance headlines:-

- referrals had decreased to 474 per 10,000 over the last 12 months - a reduction from 580 per 10,000. The referral rate was lower than the statistical neighbour and West Midland average;
- re-referrals had increased from 20% to 23% over the last six-months which was 2.6% higher than statistical neighbours and 1.5% above the England average;
- there had been a reduction in referral rate (400 in the last 12 months) was a factor in the re-referral increase;
- the focus was ensuring the quality of the assessments and making use of the support services available;
- single assessments completed over the past 12-months had ranged from 56.5% to 95.2%. During February 2023 the number completed had been 88.3% and had been above 85% since October 2022 which was above statistical neighbour, West Midland and England average;
- the rates of assessment per 10,000 over the last 12-months had reduced from 718 per 10,000 to 530 per 10,000;
- there was continued improvement in relation to Section 47 Enquiries stemming from a better understanding and management of risk;
- the trajectory anticipated a rate of 183 per 10,000 over the last 12-months, significantly lower than 2018/19 with a rate of 312 per 10,000;
- initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 working days was in February 2023 was 94.7%.
- of the Initial Child Protection Conferences, 82% resulted in a Child Protection Plan;
- there had been a reduction in the number of Child Protection Plans over the previous 12-months from 409 to 365. The figures were below the statistical neighbour and in line with the England average;
- of those children on Child Protection Plans, 16 children had been on a plan longer than two years;
- as of February 2023, 811 children were in care, a reduction from 848 in February 2022;



- over the last 12-months 167 children had entered care with 211 ceasing care;
- of those children in care 67 children had moved three times or more within the last 12-months;
- care leavers aged 19-21 who were NEET was 55.5%, which was 13% below the statistical neighbour and 15% below the West Midlands average;

The continued Social Worker recruitment challenges had been addressed. The national and regional shortage in social workers had been recognised in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and SCT was proactive in addressing the workforce recruitment and retention. A Workforce Strategy focused on growing our own, developing a marketing campaign and promoting a Sandwell Deal.

Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were provided and issues highlighted:-

- the number of children leaving care would require additional staff to support care leavers where necessary;
- among those who leave care a number moved to be with family members;
- intervention and preventative services worked to prevent re-referrals, however, a number of service users declined continued involvement with the service following the initial intervention;
- for those families who received intervention work, more had been done to ensure they understood the benefits of access to available services;
- the higher re-referral rates were linked to domestic abuse, and partnership working continued to alleviate this;
- a contract had been negotiated with the Richmond Fellowship which was hosted within SCT, for the delivery of the perpetrator programme, which aimed to break the cycle of domestic abuse;



- a cost of living summit held by the Council in March had been well attended with a range of voluntary and community partners, the work with partners was focused on supporting those in need and promoting ongoing partnership working;
- SCT and the Council continued to work in partnership to provide the necessary support and plans for those young people leaving care who were not in education, employment or training;
- the Regional Adoption Agency and SCT had been collecting information relating to feedback and lessons learned but had not adequately shared this between partners. Work was now undertaken to ensure partnership working between the Regional Adoption Agency and SCT;
- an ongoing challenge was adopters did not feel comfortable offering difficult or negative feedback fearing it having a detrimental impact on their application. SCT was encouraging potential adopters to engage with them and highlight any concerns;
- the Care Review had made specific reference to the ongoing workforce challenges and its implications. It was hoped that agency and project teams would be attracted back into local authorities.

16/23

The 16+ provision at the Westminster School

The Head of Westminster School outlined the work undertaken to improve educational and life-skill outcomes for children and young people at Westminster School and set out how the newly established Specialist College post-16 provision had provided new opportunities and skills for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The Westminster School had been at its present location since 2011, developing its offer and had been able to provide the children and young people with skills and opportunities to enable them to be productive and active members of the local community.



Westminster School had gone from being rated Good in 2014 to Outstanding in 2017, the first internship was in 2015, in 2016 the first students entered an apprenticeship and in 2017 the first student moved into paid employment. In 2019 the school had expanded into its own post-16 centre and 2020 saw a visit from a Government Minister. In 2021 the new 19-25 provision was approved.

The Westminster School provided a holistic approach to the curriculum with the child at the centre, the curriculum was specified across six areas;

- My Creativity;
- My Community;
- My Care and Independence;
- My Thinking Skills;
- My Communication;
- My Wellbeing.

The focus across the learning areas was enabling children and young people to become independent not dependent. The structure of education was to not have learning support continuously attached but rather building the skills and confidence of children and young people, to enable them to move from physical, modelled, verbal and general help to independence and independence across different situations.

The post-16 pathways was an effort to develop a genuine and realistic trajectory into employment for young people with SEND. A pathway for young people with SEND had often taken them from school to college, but then rather into employment, they had been consigned to staying at home and living separate to society.

For adults with a learning disability the percentage in England for those in employment was only 4.8% and in the West Midlands it was only 3.3%. The rate had also decreased over the last decade. Considering the money and effort that went into the education of children and young people with a learning disability, the outcome for the majority was very poor.



The Westminster School Specialist College was an attempt to reverse the trend and enable young people to progress into employment and become a valued member of the community. The Specialist College focused on developing employability pathways. Initially young people would be exposed to taster sessions allowing them to see what was on offer for them, following this the young people would be offered work experience to enable them to get a good understanding of what the job would entail. An internship would then develop the young person's ability to undertake the role with an idea that the young person would then move onto direct employment, an apprenticeship or traineeship.

A work readiness rubric enabled young people to be assessed and enable them and the school to understand their strengths but also areas for improvement, the skills-builder enabled a young person's development to be tracked overtime and demonstrate their growth and readiness for employment.

Since 2017/18 there had been a year-on-year success with 15-30% of young people moving into apprenticeships, internships and paid employment. Whilst the take up and growth of the post-16 provision had not been as great as was expected, the trend had continued to grow and was expected to increase following the introduction of the Specialist College.

The Westminster School Specialist College had allowed for the expansion and renewed focus on developing the skills and abilities of young people post-16, with a focus on those young people aged 19-25. The internship and apprenticeship programme had allowed young people to enter the workforce, gain the necessary skills to undertake a role and ultimately enter paid employment.

The Westminster College had developed good working relationships across businesses in Sandwell and this had allowed many students to undertake apprenticeships and ultimately paid employment from a wide variety of businesses. It was hoped that the Council would consider building an apprenticeship programme that could incorporate some of the Westminster School Specialist College young people.



Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- the Employment and Skills Team recorded destination data for young people leaving education. Looking at destination data across Sandwell would demonstrate a broad range of outcomes;
- regeneration and employment and skills was a strategic priority for the Council and more work was required in terms of the cost of living crisis, work was required to look holistically at challenges in order to improve outcomes as a whole;
- levelling out opportunities for young people with SEND was a priority, recognising that current outcomes were not in line with neighbouring authorities;
- the Council was one of the biggest employers in Sandwell and it was therefore important that SEND apprenticeship opportunities were offered by the authority and its partners;
- the corporate apprenticeship levy was a means of funding apprenticeships for young people with SEND and allow the Council to get a return on its investment;
- the Council received £406 million under the dedicated schools grant, of this funding £66 million was identified with the High Needs Block and maximising the return was priority;
- as a Sandwell school, residents of the borough were a priority in admissions, however, if the model allowed, places at Westminster School could be offered to those who live out of borough;
- the Council's Specialist Place Planning Strategy worked to prioritise the placement of children and young people within Sandwell, however, in some instances necessary provision must be sought out of borough;
- Westminster School worked closely with the Supported Employment Team to identify those young people with SEND who wanted to move into employment and guide them towards the Specialist College post-16 provision;



- supporting a sustainable growth strategy and getting young people into employment was the focus, which was not just about employment, but rather, about encouraging young people to be part of wider society, and a positive member of that society.

Resolved that the Cabinet Member for Children and Education be requested to provide a response to the Children’s Scrutiny Board on his plans to increase the number of inclusive apprenticeships offered by Sandwell Council and its contractors.

(Councillor Dunn left the meeting)

17/23 **Education Investment Area and Priority Investment Area developments**

The Interim Assistant Director of Education Services provided an update to the Board on the Education Investment Area and Priority Education Investment Area developments.

The Priority Areas Programme was established to challenge and support schools to raise standards in all key stages to close educational gaps and to increase the proportion of schools and academies rated good or better by Ofsted.

The programme aimed to bring about rapid improvement in outcomes for pupils across Sandwell at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4). The additional support would enable students to be better prepared for the next stage in their education or employment and enhance their life chances and choices.

The Government had announced in February 2022 that it would be delivering a package of measures in 55 Education Investment Areas, to further drive school improvement in England, as part of the levelling up agenda. The identified areas were comprised of local authorities where educational outcomes at the end of both KS2 and KS4 were the weakest and containing an Opportunity Area or areas previously identified by the Government for additional school improvement support.



Of the 55 Education Investment Areas, 24 of these had been identified as Priority Education Investment Areas and were set to receive more intensive investment. Sandwell was one of these Priority Education Investment Areas and had been allocated £2.9million in Local Needs Funding to support the initiative and deliver the agreed priorities and improvements within the life of the programme.

A Local Partnership Board had been established to work with Sandwell. The role of the Local Partnership Board included helping to identify the main challenges to improving outcomes for children and young people, identifying a range of interventions to address these challenges, and helping to drive support and activity within the Priority Education Investment Areas. The Board had also contributed to the development of Sandwell's Local Needs Delivery Plan and would support the monitoring of progress towards the agreed criteria within it.

Sandwell's Local Needs Delivery Plan was focused on three themes:-

- maths would focus on improving the quality of provision across targeted schools;
- English would focus on improving the teaching of literacy to ensure it was of good quality in all schools to enable learners to access the rest of the English curriculum and other subjects across both primary and secondary phases;
- speech and language would focus on ongoing development due to the impact of the pandemic, resulting in challenges in learning phonics at early years and KS1, which would have a long-term impact on KS2 attainment.

Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were provided and issues highlighted:-

- the data presented in the report was from May 2022 based on the academic year and the results from that year;
- the DfE were positive in taking on board the data from this academic year when considering further measures;



- the Council would be moving forward with a campaign on attendance and tackling persistent absence, it was important that measures aimed at improving attainment should be impacting those who required it;
- Early Years and SEND were a priority in addition to the areas identified;
- the Council had looked to be innovative and was focused on output, working on evidence to deliver results;
- the Council would work to enhance the digital offer and its use in education and curriculum delivery;
- work was underway to support young people and families with career aspirations, and a campaign was planned to be launched in the summer of 2023;
- those children who had taken up an early education place statistically achieve better educational outcomes than those who did not, work was underway to encourage more parents to access that offer.

18/23 Scrutiny Action Tracker

The Board noted progress on actions and recommendations from previous meetings.

Meeting ended at 7.58pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk



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Report to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

3 July 2023

Subject:	Corporate Parenting Week
Director:	Director of Children and Education, Michael Jarrett
Contact Officer:	Michael Jarrett, Director of Children and Education Michael_Jarrett@sandwell.gov.uk Sally Giles, Assistant Director – Children's Commissioning, Partnerships and Improvement Sally_giles@sandwell.gov.uk Rosa DaSilva, Corporate Parenting Officer, Rosa_DaSilva@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 that the Scrutiny Board considers and comments on the report detailing the feedback from corporate parenting week, which took place from the 12 June to 16 June 2023.

2 Reasons for Recommendations


- 2.1 As part of the continuing activities to raise awareness around corporate parenting and the responsibilities that are shared across the Council and partners it was agreed by the Cabinet Member for Children and Education, in partnership with the co-chair of the Corporate Parenting



Board (who is also the chair of the Forum for Independent Adults), that Sandwell deliver a focussed programme of activities in the form of a 'Corporate Parenting Week'

2.2 The purpose of this item is to provide an update for consideration and discussion on the delivery of this programme of activities.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people</p> <p>Every councillor and officer within the council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child.</p> <p>Having an effective corporate parenting function ensures services and partners are appropriately challenged to provide the best possible services for children in care and care leavers.</p>
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4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 In 2022, the Local Government Association (LGA) facilitated training sessions for Sandwell Cabinet Members, Elected Members and the Corporate Parenting Board. The LGA recognised the progress Corporate Parents as a multiagency team are making with regard to improving the approach to Corporate Parenting in Sandwell.

4.2 The first annual Sandwell Corporate Parenting Week was held on Monday 12 June - Friday 16 June 2023. As a partnership, SMBC, Sandwell Children's Trust, Black Country NHS Foundation and CAHMS colleagues were aiming to:

- Raise the profile of corporate parenting across partnerships.
- Ensure a clear understanding of what it means to be a corporate parent.



- For individuals to develop the confidence to become a good corporate parents.

The week delivered various activities and sessions which were held virtually and face to face.

- 4.3 The week was opened with a 1-hour virtual live event on Microsoft Teams presented by Chief Executive Sandwell Council, Director of Children's Services, Chief Executive Sandwell Children's Trust, Chair Sandwell Children's Trust, Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Education, Chair of Forum for Independent Young Adults and Participation Manager Sandwell Childrens Trust.
- 4.4 Over 600 employees from Sandwell Council and Sandwell Children's Trust colleagues attended the virtual event, which was led by the voice of a care experienced young person, now a care leaver, who shared the story pf their journey through care.
- 4.5 During the week sessions delivered were:
- Sandwell Children's Trust's provided a webinar to help colleagues understand the journey of the children in care and care leavers.
 - Dr Jennifer A Nock delivered a trauma-informed webinar on supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma.
 - LGA delivered 3 sessions across the week: Face to face corporate parenting training to Sandwell Council leadership team and assistant directors, a virtual training session for newly elected members and a workshop for Corporate Parent Board which focussed on developing a new corporate parenting strategy.
 - CAMHs and Sandwell SMBC delivered a 1-hour webinar on Understanding the Emotional wellbeing and mental health of Sandwell children in care and care leavers.
 - Health Partners celebrated Corporate Parenting week at Sandwell Hospital. They set up a stand outside the reception area near the children's outpatients. This was an opportunity to raise Corporate Parents awareness to all health professionals.



- Sandwell Virtual School provided partners with an opportunity to understand and learn more about the education of children in care and care leavers
- The Employment and Skills Team held set up a face-to-face networking workshop with business partners and care-experienced young people to identify what and how support can be offered to ensure that young people access employment and apprenticeships.
- The question and answer's session was delivered by key members of the board.

4.6 Throughout the week, feedback has been positive and there has been clear learning across the Council, Sandwell Children's Trust and partners – See Appendix A for feedback.

4.7 Key actions were identified from Corporate Parenting Week which will be a focus over the next 12 months:

- Redraft the Corporate Parent strategy
- Create a new vision
- Create a performance that measures what success looks like in terms of the new 5 pledges and 25 promises.
- Create an Assistant Director's group to which identifies gaps in services for children in care and care leavers.
- Work as a multiagency partnership to ensure Sandwell children in care and care leavers become a protective characteristic
- Ensure further corporate parenting training is provided to business partners
- Ensure all Elected Members and colleagues receive corporate parenting training in the next 12 months.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative to delivering a 'corporate parenting week' would be to continue to deliver the standard activities of the Corporate Parenting Board, this may mean that the wider workforce and partners do not fully understand their responsibilities and young people do not feel listened to.



The plan therefore would be to hold a Corporate Parenting Week every year to shine a spotlight on this important area and ensure all staff in the Council and partner agencies about their corporate Parenting responsibilities.

6 Implications

Resources:	The activities were delivered from existing resources, with a small additional contribution from the virtual school to fund an external speaker.
Legal and Governance:	<p>The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority, or is under 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent.</p> <p>There is an established Corporate Parenting Board that is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Education and a care experienced young person.</p>
Risk:	The Council's strategic risk register identifies no red risks relevant to this report.
Equality:	An Equality Impact Assessment screening is not required for this report. However, effective delivery of the corporate parenting function will have a positive effect on the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families in Sandwell, including those with protected characteristics.
Health and Wellbeing:	The health and wellbeing of children in care and care experienced young people is a key element of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.
Social Value	The Corporate Parenting Board oversees activity that contributes to social value including working to increase the opportunities for young people to gain work experience and access apprenticeships and employment and training opportunities.



Climate change	There is no direct climate change impact associated with this report.
Corporate Parenting	The report details the activities that were delivered as part of corporate parenting week and contribute to this priority.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Detailed session breakdown

Appendix B – Initial feedback from participants



Appendix A

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Additional information of each session

Monday 12th June

The week was opened with a 1-hour virtual live event on Microsoft Teams presented by:

- *Shokat Lal, Chief Executive Sandwell Council*
- *Michael Jarrett, Director of Children's Services, Sandwell Council*
- *Emma Taylor, Chief Executive, Sandwell Children's Trust*
- *Rt Hon Jacqui Smith, Chair, Sandwell Children's Trust*
- *Councillor Simon Hackett, Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Education*
- *Lukas, Chair, Forum for Independent Young Adults*
- *Abdul Kahar, Participation Manager*

The event was led by the voice of the young person, sharing their story as a child going into the care system, living away from their biological family, and now learning to be a care leaver. Our senior leaders and officer highlighted the importance of Corporate parenting and that we are all Corporate Parents.

600-615 of Sandwell Council and Sandwell Children's Trust colleagues tuned in to watch the event. The event sparked interest from colleagues. There was a large interest in how services can improve as Corporate Parents and the experiences of Sandwell children in care and Care leavers.

On Monday afternoon, Sandwell Children's Trust's Head of Services delivered a virtual webinar for 1 hour on Microsoft Teams to Understand the journey of the children in care and Care leavers. The open webinar showcased how the whole multiagency team becomes a part of the child's and young person's journey while in the care system and beyond.

The event was open to Sandwell Council and Sandwell Children's Trust colleagues and to the wider partnership. 40 participants attended the virtual session. Participant's feedback was positive, and participants expressed that the webinar was insightful.

Tuesday 13th June

In the morning, *Dr Jennifer A Nock* delivered a trauma-informed Microsoft teams webinar for 1 hour on *Supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma*.

The webinar focused on the following:

- What is Attachment and why does it matter?
- The impact of developmental trauma The D Word - discipline
- Take away key tools, techniques and relational activities to develop positive, nurturing relationships.

The session was interactive, with handouts provided to the 25 attendees. Participants were asked to consider

- How do professionals work with children?
- How could they adapt their practice with the understanding of the trauma children and young people have experienced?

Appendix A

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Additional information of each session

The session was interactive, with handouts provided to the 25 attendees. Participants were asked to consider how they work with children and how they could work differently with an understanding of the trauma children and young people have been through.

Key takeaways included a link to a training session provided to foster carers and connected carers, the webinar presentation would be highly invaluable for them as they are part of the Sandwell family, and they should be able to access the training. School leaders were asked to attend and access this training to understand why some behaviours may be present.

Overall, the session supported participants in understanding how as Corporate Parents, we can support children in care to understand their behaviours and work on strategies to support them.

Participants' feedback was the webinar was *'informative and helpful in putting things in a conceptual framework, it was great input, it was very relevant, and it was a nice introduction to childhood trauma, and ways of managing the day-to-day examples were beneficial thank you.'*

The LGA delivered Corporate Parenting Training to the Sandwell Council leadership team face-to-face for 2 hours. The training focused on:

- What is a Corporate Parent?
- What does it mean to be a Corporate parent?
- How can Sandwell Council leadership team be better Corporate Parents?

The group discussed how the council's directorates could be better Corporate Parents. This included reflecting on personal understanding and knowledge of what it means to be a child in care and care leavers.

The 19 participants agreed that the assistant directors would form a group to identify how services can better support Sandwell children in care and care leavers, with the support and leadership from the Corporate Parenting officer and young people. Leaders will focus on the data to identify the service gap and effectively support children and young people.

Participant's feedback was that the training was informative and provided an in-depth understanding of and how they can be Corporate Parents. Some leaders admitted they do not consider children in care and care leavers when making policy decisions. This was echoed across the group. Some leaders felt that children in care and care experienced young people should be a protective characteristic.

To raise the profile of Sandwell Corporate Parenting, the LGA facilitated a 2-hour workshop for the board. The face-to-face session was attended by 19 participants, including elected members, multiagency partners and young people.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023 expired in April 2023. As part of the project to redraft the new strategy, the LGA delivered a workshop to begin redrafting the new vision and strategy. The session focused on the new redrafted 5 pledges and 25 promises, put together by the voices of Sandwell and the forum for independent young adults.

With the support from the young people, partners were split into 4 groups to explore how each pledge and promise would look in the redrafted strategy. The group agreed that the vision

Appendix A

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Additional information of each session

statement should be written with children in care and care leavers with the consideration of the new pledges and promises.

The LGA suggested that the vision and strategy should be a Sandwell Corporate Parenting vision across all partnerships. The board was advised to lead on the redrafting of the strategy, ensure the multiagency partner's feedback on the final version and sign off at the Corporate Parenting board meeting.

Feedback from members was that by redrafting the pledges and promises, new vision and strategy, the board needs to be clear on how we will measure success between 2023 to 2026.

As part of Corporate Parenting Week, Sandwell Corporate Parenting annual report 2021 to 2023 was sent for approval at full council on Tuesday, 13th June. The report was presented by Councillor Simon Hackett, elected member for Friars Park and Children and Education Services, and young people, Ieasha Khan and Lukas.

They shared their experiences working with the Corporate Parenting Board and Sandwell Children's Trust participation team. They challenged Cabinet and elected members to be better Corporate Parents to the children in care and care leavers in their wards.

Following a round of applause, the Mayor echoed the importance of Cabinet and elected members to be better Corporate Parents, and the full council approved the annual report

14th June 2023

CAMHS and Sandwell transformation partner delivered a 1-hour webinar on Microsoft teams on Understanding the *Emotional wellbeing and mental health of Sandwell Children in care and Care Leavers*.

The session focused on:

- Early Trauma and attachment difficulties
- Understanding the Emotional wellbeing and mental health of Sandwell Children in care and Care Leavers
- Transition information

The session informed partners about the support offered in Sandwell from CAMHS and Sandwell Council as part of our corporate parenting responsibility. It highlighted children's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs in care and care leavers.

Facilitators signed posted participants who wanted to understand more about the Emotional wellbeing and mental health of children, young adults and families.

The 19 participants responded that the session was interesting, insightful, and useful and insightful information. During the questions and answers, participants were interested in further understanding the topic.

To mark Corporate Parenting Week, OICB partners celebrated in Sandwell Hospital. Attending over the day was designated nurses, designated doctor, foster carers forum representatives, care leavers, Sandwell Children's Trust fostering recruitment and Cllr Simon Hackett.

Appendix A

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Additional information of each session

Partners set up a stand outside the reception area near the children's outpatients. This was an opportunity to raise awareness as Corporate Parents and health partners. NHS staff visited the stand throughout the day and were reminded that they are Corporate Parents, including:

- Junior doctors
- Paediatric consultants and nurses
- Business manager for children and young people at Sandwell Hospital
- Medical Director for Children and Women's
- Clinical Director for Acute Paediatrics.
- We handed out information and took contact of individuals interested in fostering for Sandwell, handed out leaflets on Adoption in Backcountry.

Photos of the day were taken by children's trust and SWBH comms and shared in hospital communication.

Sandwell Virtual school set up a face to face event to give the wider partnerships an opportunity to understand and learn more about the education of children in care and care leavers. The event *Meet the Virtual School - Understanding the Education of children in care and Care Leavers as Corporate Parents* was also an opportunity to:

- Understand the importance of education for Sandwell Children in Care
- How Personal Education Plans play a critical part in raising aspirations
- How the extensive package delivered by the Virtual School helps our children and carers to raise expectations.

The session was set up to run in 3 x 1-hour slots. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the event was cut short to 1 hour and only 3 participants attended including Cllr Simone Hackett the first session.

In the evening, Voices of Sandwell and Forum for Independent Young Adults invited Cabinet members, Sandwell council Chief executive, directors and the Corporate Parenting Board to attend their face-to-face weekly forum at the METSEC building in Oldbury from 5:30 till 7pm.

Sandwell Children's Trust participation team aimed for the session to engage senior leaders, the children, and young people. It was an opportunity for partners to meet their Corporate children, learn more about their interest's and meet the children they are championing for. Both young people and partners engaged in group workshops which focused on the 5 pledges and 25 promises. This was an opportunity for the young people to explain their pledges and promises, and as Corporate Parents we should interrupt them. Both Forums felt that understanding key terms of care system, the impact emotional wellbeing and mental health, and but also for seniors. leaders and partners to understand that all the pledges and promises are important.

Participants included 9 of Sandwell Children's Trust multiagency team, 7 Sandwell councils colleagues including the chief executive, 7 cabinet members and 15 young people. Overall, it was a successful event, with activities ranging from everyone making animal noises, singing, game boards and the opportunity to a face to face interaction with the young people.

Appendix A

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Additional information of each session

15th June 2023

The employment and skills team set up a 2-hour face-to-face networking/ workshop session at the METSEC Build with 6 business partners and 8 care-experienced young people.

The session aimed for businesses and Care experienced young people to discuss how businesses can better support young people in their organisations. The Session was divided into 3 workshop groups to have various discussions led by the questions for business partners and young people below:

- Q to employers – What experience do you have of employing care leavers?
- Q to Care leavers – What advice would you give to prospective employers wanting to support care leavers?
- Q to employers – What training do you feel your organisation has or may require supporting a care leaver in the workplace?
- Q to Care Leavers – What do you want to gain from a work opportunity?
- Q to Care Leavers – What are the challenges to taking up an offer of a work experience placement and/or apprenticeship/job?
- Q to employers – what are the next steps for organisation?
- Q to Care leavers - Any other questions?

The 3 groups were engaged in progressive discussions regarding the best way to support care experienced young people in the workplace. Some outcomes were that businesses understood that one size does not fit all, and what may be good for one young person is not good for all young people. Young people were vocal in expressing that not everyone person will want to share that they are a care leaver, but others may feel it is helpful to have businesses and employers know to ensure the best support is in place in case they are going through any personal issues.

Businesses and employers admitted that they could do more for care experienced young people. They understood that part of the work is to be more empathic and understanding is part of the work to remove the negative stigma around Children in care and care leavers. Businesses fed back that the session gave them a better understanding on the needs of children in care and care leavers.

In the evening, the LGA delivered a 1-hour virtual Corporate Parenting training on Microsoft teams to newly elected members and wider partners, *Corporate Parenting through the non-executive Councillor Lens*. The training focused on informing partners:

- What is a Corporate Parent?
- What does it mean to be a Corporate parent?
- How can Sandwell Council leadership team be better Corporate Parents?
- The importance of being a partnership to support children in care and care leavers.

23 participants attended the virtual training. Partners engaged in progressive discussions on how best to support children in care and care experienced young people. Participants felt that Sandwell children in care and care leavers should be a protected characteristic and care leavers should be entitled to receive birthday and Christmas presents.

Appendix A

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Additional information of each session

16th June 2023

As a partnership, those who coordinated the week, including Cllr Simon Hackett, delivered a virtual questions and answers session for partners who participated in the week's virtual and face-to-face events. This was an opportunity for those who participated to ask further questions about the week and share what they took away from the week.

To close the week, a video recapping the week's aim was shared with the group. The 22 participants reflected on the week's outcome, what we will do better next year and how we will keep ensuring Corporate Parenting continues to be a topic of conversation throughout the year.

Key actions from the week for Corporate Parenting to:

- Redraft the Corporate Parent strategy
- Create a new vision
- Measure what success of the new 5 pledges and 25 promises will look like.
- Form an Assistant director's group to identify gaps in services for children in care and care leavers.
- Work as a multiagency partnership to ensure Sandwell children in care and care leavers become a protective Characteristic
- Ensure further Corporate Parenting training is provided to business partners
- Ensure all elected members and Colleagues receive Corporate Parenting training in the next 12 months.

Appendix B

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Participant Feedback

Understanding the journey of a child in care webinar was insightful and provided a clear oversight to what happens once a child enters care. I've learnt a lot.

The trauma informed webinar was *'informative and helpful in putting things in a conceptual framework, it was great input, it was very relevant, and it was a nice introduction to childhood trauma, and ways of managing the day-to-day examples were beneficial thank you.'*

I don't work in Childrens the session today was real eye opener and its good to hear how we can support in our own departments.

I think that this training can be shared with wider partners and focus on sharing this with our foster carers, they would benefit from more understanding of the child's emotional needs.

It's great to see that the children have access to lots of provision through the Virtual school and there is additional support if they need it.

We can all done more to support the young people on their journey.

How can we get more involved in activity and sessions that can support young people, I know that we could do this in our team?

From today's session, I can see that as a business we can do more and how we can do this. I hope that more employees and be aspirational, get involved and support the needs of individuals to be successful.

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Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Scrutiny Board

3 July 2023

Subject:	Tracking and Monitoring of Scrutiny Recommendations
Director:	Law and Governance Surjit Tour Surjir_tour@sandwell.gov.uk
Contact Officer:	Connor Robinson Democratic Services Officer Connor1_Robinson@sandwell.gov.uk Democratic Services Unit

1 Recommendations







That the Board considers the items within the recommendations tracker and notes the progress on their implementation.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To facilitate the effective monitoring of progress on responses to and press with implementation of recommendations made by the Board and identify where further action is required.
- 2.2 Effective monitoring of recommendations facilitates the evaluation of the impact of the scrutiny function overall.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people	<p>The scrutiny function supports all of the objectives of the Corporate Plan by seeking to improve services for the people of Sandwell. It does this by influencing the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services.</p> <p>Effective monitoring of recommendations made supports this and allows scrutiny to evaluate its impact.</p>
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	
	A strong and inclusive economy	
	A connected and accessible Sandwell	

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The attached Appendix details the responses to and progress on the implementation of recommendations made by the scrutiny function.

5 Implications

Resources:	The resource implications will be detailed in the responses to recommendations as detailed in the appendix.
Legal and Governance:	<p>The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on the Executive to respond to Scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them.</p>



Risk:	<p>Any risk implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Risk Owner at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board.</p> <p>Any specific risks for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Equality:	<p>Any equality implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board.</p> <p>Any specific equality implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Any health and wellbeing implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board.</p> <p>Any specific health and wellbeing implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.</p>

6 Appendices

Appendix – Monitoring Table



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Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board 2022/23				
Scrutiny Board Date	Agenda Item Title	Action/Recommendation	Responsible Director /Body	Activity Log as at 23 June 23
20 March 2023	The 16+ provision at the Westminster School	That the Cabinet Member for Children and Education give a response to the Children's Scrutiny Board on his plans to increase the number of inclusive apprenticeships offered by Sandwell Council and its contractors	Cabinet Member	
20 March 2023	Impact of Lockdown on Children and Families	That the Chair of the Thrive Board presents a report to the scrutiny Board outlining its work and the impact of, in relation to the impact of the pandemic on students' mental health and well-being.	Democratic Services	Under consideration to be added to the work programme
		That representatives of the SEND Strategic Board/SEND Operational Board report to the Board on the services and support provided to SEND children and the impact, including attainment data.	Democratic Services	Under consideration to be added to the work programme
		That the Director of Children and Education reports to the Board on the progress and outcomes of the national review into the covid-19 response in so much as it relates to education and children's services.	Democratic Services	
		That, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board is requested to undertake a	Democratic Services	

		review and monitors the recovery strategy of mental health services within the Borough.		
		The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Board writes to the Sandwell Children's Trust to request details of their plans to address the challenges of recruitment and retention of social workers.	Democratic Services	
		That the Chair of the Children's Services and Education Board writes to the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board to request details of their plans to address the challenges faced by children in care and care leavers and to understand how the pandemic has impacted them and what has been done to address this.	Democratic Services	Under consideration to be added to the work programme – CPB to come to Children's Scrutiny to address issues raised.
		That the Director of Children and Education reports to the Board, providing an update on the Councils' Covid-19 Recovery Plan, in as much as it relates to education and children's services.	Democratic Services	

Recommendations Approved by Cabinet on 15 February 2023				
		that the Director of Children and Education is proactive in working with schools in the area to consider the creation or adoption of multi-academy trusts;	Director of Children and Education	
		that the Director of Children and Education is proactive in considering suitable locations in the Borough for specialist sixth-form free schools which are funded by central government;	Director of Children and Education	
		that the Council joins the Department for Education's 1-2-1 attendance mentoring pilot to monitor issues in schools across the Borough.	Children and Education	
		that, the Cabinet Member for Children and Education pledges to improve and increase the Borough's educational assessment data in line with the national average by 2027, in line with the aims and objectives of Vision 2030;		

		that the Cabinet Member for Children and Education writes to the Secretary of State for Education, to request that the Government actively engages with education practitioners to understand the long-term problems caused by the national pandemic and prepare appropriate resources to help children and young people recover academically, socially and psychologically.		
		That the Director of Children and Education encourages and supports schools in the Borough to provide sports programmes and extracurricular activities to help children catch up in all areas of lost learning and experiences and to improve mental and physical health;	the Director of Children and Education	
		that the Director of Children and Education reviews the Council's partnership working with education providers and the Sandwell Children's Trust to ensure that actions, outcomes and best practice work are shared to ensure we are working cohesively together.	the Director of Children and Education	

		<p>That the Cabinet Member for Children and Education investigates ways to connect with young people and offer extra support, mentoring and encouragement including, but not limited to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) establishing a peer mentoring programme; b) encouraging social youth work, sports, drama, and outdoor activities; c) engaging with local businesses to improve the number of available apprenticeships; d) supporting a holistic youth services experience which accompanies physical and digital offer; e) supporting and championing the new Eco Bus with young people's involvement. 		
		<p>that the Cabinet Member for Children and Education writes to the Secretary of State for Education, to lobby for recurrent yearly funding which will allow for consistent support to address young people's emotional wellbeing and (low level) mental</p>		

		health as we recovery from COVID and the impact that it caused, whilst supporting the Council's ambition to improve academic performance, socialisation, conversation, mental health and wellbeing;		
		That, the Director of Children and Education works with multi-agency partners to support, engage and monitor the stability within the early years settings;	the Director of Children and Education	

The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive:-

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
1	<p>Appointment of a non-executive director of Sandwell Children’s Trust</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mandip S. Chahal</p> <p>Director: Michael Jarrett, Director of Children and Education</p>	<p>Cabinet – Children, Young People and Education (Cllr Hackett)</p>	Public	12 July 2023	Post	Report by Director of Children and Education



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
2	<p>Children’s Social Worker recruitment and retention</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mandip S. Chahal</p> <p>Director: Michael Jarrett - Director of Children and Education</p>	<p>Cabinet – Children, Young People and Education (Cllr Hackett)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>12 July 2023</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Report by Director of Children and Education</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
3	<p>Hamstead Infant School Tanhouse Avenue, and Hamstead Junior School, Hamstead Road, Great Barr - Proposed Closure and Expansion</p> <p>Contact Officer: Martyn Roberts</p> <p>Director: Michael Jarrett - Director of Children and Education</p>	<p>Cabinet – Children, Young People and Education (Cllr Hackett)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Report by Director of Children and Education</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
4	<p>Proposed Relocation of Causeway Green Primary School to Brandhall Village Development, Oldbury</p> <p>Contact Officer: Martyn Roberts</p> <p>Director: Michael Jarrett - Director of Children and Education</p>	<p>Cabinet – Children, Young People and Education (Cllr Hackett)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Report by Director of Children and Education</p>

