

**The City of Cardiff Council  
Corporate Parenting Advisory  
Committee**

**Annual Report  
2015/16**



## **Chair's Foreword**

I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee for the 2015-16 year.

As the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, I would wish to extend my thanks to fellow committee members for their focus during the year on the wellbeing of our looked after children and young people. Their commitment to the role and importance of the committee in its first full year has helped to make Corporate Parenting a much more tangible reality.

We know that looked after children and young people are amongst the most vulnerable in our community, and that all too often their life chances are restricted. We have a responsibility and a commitment to changing this pattern and so the development of the Council's first Corporate Parenting Strategy was for me an important milestone in the committee's work programme.

Above all I am pleased that we have continued to listen directly to Looked After Children and young people and that this area of the committee's work is beginning to assume the greater significance it deserves. Perhaps what has been most telling in this context, has been the modesty of children and young people's expectations contrasted with the scale and significance of the struggles they face as they approach independence. By any everyday standards, their challenges are formidable and my challenge to all Corporate Parents is that we should all support them to aim higher and expect more, rather than just cope, which is still too often the case. Against the backdrop of the recent 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Convention of the Child, our approach must be driven more clearly by the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers as voiced by them and we have much to do to strengthen this further – in terms of listening and then doing,

By contrast, the committee has also heard about and met with Looked After Children and young people who have overcome significant challenges and secured real achievements, often at the highest level that anyone could expect. The role and commitment of our dedicated staff in this regard, and particularly social workers and staff in the Looked After and Leaving Care Teams and by schools, educationalists and health professionals, has been very significant. I would wish to record my thanks to them all.

This Annual Report gives me greater confidence that we are better placed to fulfil our statutory duty as corporate parents and to improve our capacity to nurture, respect and be as ambitious for our looked after children and young people as we would for our own children.

**Councillor Sue Lent**

Chair, Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee

## **Executive Summary**

The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee represents the responsibility of the authority as a corporate body to ensure the best possible services and support for looked after children and young people.

In setting out the work undertaken in the Committee's first full year of operation, this Annual Report demonstrates the important role that members need to play in developing a close understanding of what it takes organisationally, in resource terms and in terms of professional and personal commitment, to look after the 600 plus children and young people that are in the care of the City of Cardiff Council.

The range of key statutory areas considered by the committee is very broad in scope encompassing Adoption; Residential Care; Care Leaver services; Children's Rights; Advocacy; Complaints; Safeguarding; Education, Training and Work Placements; Social Work practice; Housing and Accommodation; Fostering; Regulatory Inspections; Commissioning; and performance management. Understanding this complex and layered policy and practice context also requires the committee to engage more closely with other Directorates and external agencies who play a vital role in delivering effective services. But the role of the corporate parent doesn't consist solely in having a strategic or broad policy understanding, vital though that is. The role of corporate parent can only be discharged effectively on the basis of a reasonably sophisticated level of operational understanding and most importantly through knowing something of the lived experiences of looked after children themselves. It is this greater degree of proximity to front line operations and this more direct relationship with children and young people that distinguishes the role of the CPAC member.

Good overall attendance at committee, allied to a real commitment by members to get out and see for themselves, has empowered members to act effectively on behalf of Looked After Children and to seek improvements across a range of service areas. In addition to 11 direct visits to social work teams during the year, close consideration of 13 inspection or similar formal reports and several thematic presentations from external researchers, national agencies and key service areas, a rich source of evidence has been the direct engagement with young people. Members are quite rightly keen to do more of this because it really does provide an opportunity to test out the effectiveness of services and connect to tangible issues and outcomes. This wide range of material evidence, much of it only ever really considered by officers previously, is now given detailed and transparent consideration in committee.

Finally, the committee, having drawn on this learning and evidence has been able to develop a comprehensive Corporate Parenting Strategy. The strategy will provide the key policy platform for ensuring that our commitment to Looked After Children is translated into action that has impact and is capable of improving outcomes. It is certain that young people will be watching throughout the life of the strategy to see whether we mean what we say and whether we are able to improve the experiences and outcomes of Looked After Children. Direct member engagement sessions between children, young people, members and officers during the year ahead will provide an appropriate avenue for challenge.

**Tony Young**

Director of Social Services

## **Introduction**

This report is structured to provide an understanding of the activities of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. It begins with background information that is helpful in understanding the Committee's function, purpose and the scale of its responsibilities. That is followed by a section that summarises the conclusions which were drawn by the Committee at the end of 2015/16. The Committee's recommendations are presented along with an outline programme for 2016-17. The remaining sections of the report provide greater detail about how those conclusions were drawn; first a record of meetings and attendance, which is followed by a summary of Committee and Member activity throughout the year. The summary of business is structured around the Committee's terms of reference, and Appendix A represents that relationship as a diagram.

## **Background**

### **Corporate Parenting**

The term “corporate parenting” indicates that the local authority has the same interest in the progress and attainment of looked-after children as a reasonable parent has for their own child.

The Welsh Local Government Association Corporate Parenting Workbook states:

*“...good corporate parenting only happens when elected members and officers are working together to protect and promote the interests of looked-after children”.*

The overarching objective of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee as stated in the terms of reference is:

*“To seek to ensure that the life chances of looked after children, children in need and are leavers are maximised in terms of health, educational attainment, and access to training and employment , to aid the transition to a secure and productive adulthood”.*

### **Children’s Rights**

The rights of children and young people must be upheld in accordance with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, the Children Act 2004, Children Act 1989, the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

- All departments and all levels should put children’s interest first (article 3).
- Special attention should be given to any children who are suffering discrimination (article 2).
- The active and informed participation of children as citizens and rights holders should be promoted (article 12.)

These principles are central to Corporate Parenting.

### **Governance**

A Corporate Parenting Panel was established in Cardiff during 2007 as a good practice mechanism to support the discharge of the Council’s responsibilities. That Panel had no statutory role or formal decision making powers.

In 2014 the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee undertook a joint Inquiry to consider:

- Ways to raise the profile of corporate parenting.
- The role of the Panel.
- Lines of accountability.

As a result of the recommendations arising from the inquiry, a formal Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee was created to replace the Panel. The Committee met for the first time on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2014.

As a Committee, the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee has a remit:

- To advise and make recommendations to the Cabinet or Council (pursuant to s.102 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972) with regard to the discharge of corporate parenting functions.
- To ensure that Corporate Parenting has a role and status within the Council.

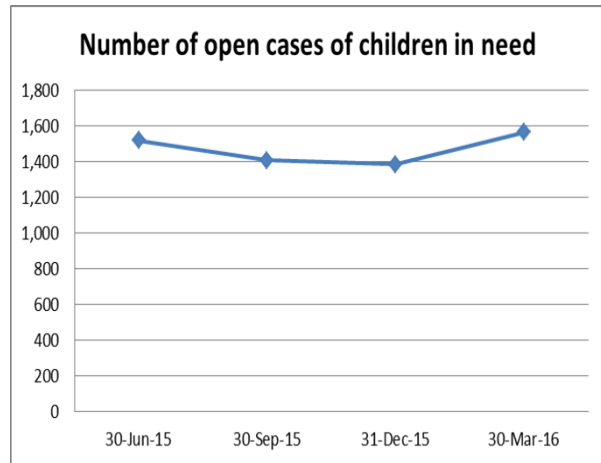
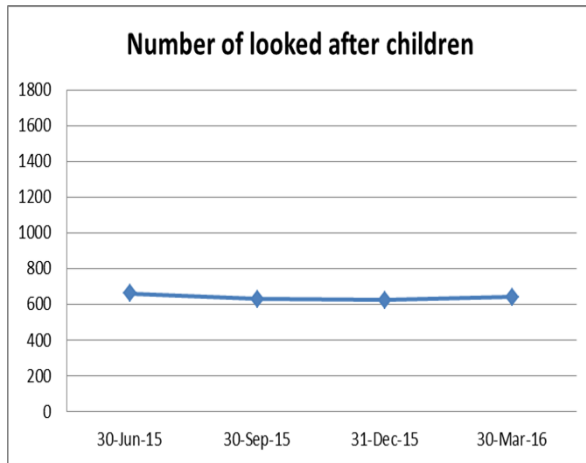
## Terms of Reference

The Committee operates within the following terms of reference, approved by full Council on the 24 July 2014:

- To actively promote real and sustained improvements in the life chances of Looked After Children, Children in Need, Care Leavers and children and young people in the criminal justice system and to work within an annual programme to that end;
- To develop, monitor and review a corporate parenting strategy, and ensure its effective implementation through work plans and corporate parenting training programmes;
- To seek to ensure that the life chances of Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers are maximised in terms of health, educational attainment, and access to training and employment, to aid the transition to a secure and productive adulthood;
- To recommend ways in which more integrated services can be developed across all Council directorates, schools and other stakeholders to lead towards better outcomes for Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers;
- To ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers, to play an integral role in service planning and design, and that their views are regularly sought and acted upon;
- To ensure performance monitoring systems are in place, and regularly review performance data to ensure sustained performance improvements in outcomes for Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers;
- To receive all relevant Children's Services inspection and annual reports, including: Children's Homes Quality of Care Report; Case Practice Reviews, Fostering Annual Quality of Care Report; Adoption Annual Quality of Care Report; 4C's Commissioning; Out of Area Annual Report; Annual Report of Brighter Futures (with education); Children's Complaints reports; and Advocacy Annual Report;
- To report to the Cabinet at least twice a year;
- To make recommendations to the Cabinet where responsibility for that function rests with the Cabinet;
- To report to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee as necessary;
- To recommend the appointment of co-opted Committee Members for approval by Council;
- To develop and undertake a programme of consultation, listening and engagement events with Looked After Children and care leavers, as well as visits to services providing support and advice to Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers;
- To submit an Annual Report on the work of the Committee to Full Council.

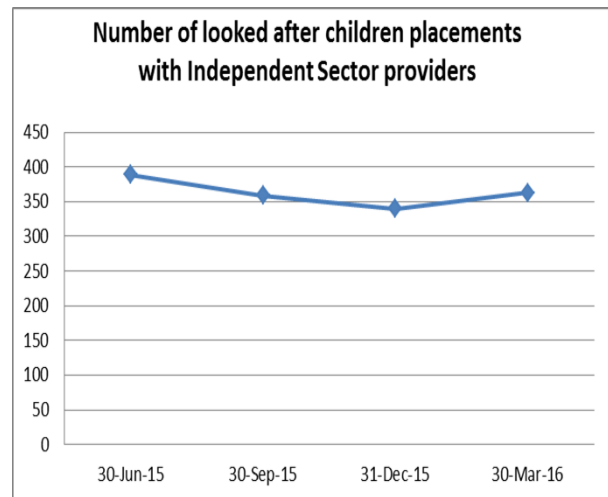
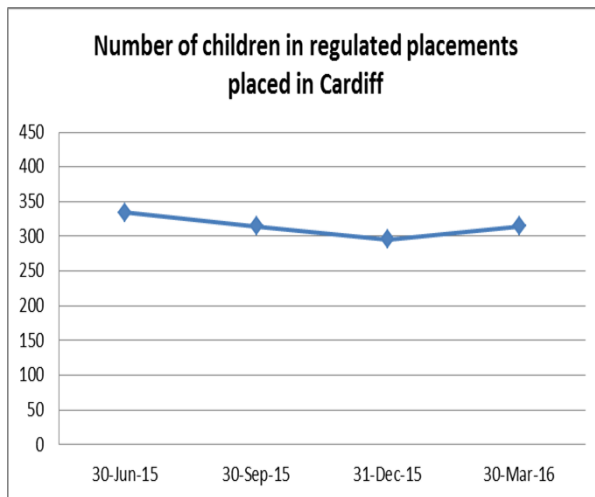
## The Population

The following charts show the scale of the Committee’s responsibility in terms of the number of young people who were children in need, looked after children, or care leavers during 2015-16.



The authority was in contact with 63 (94.0%) of young people formerly looked after at the age of 19.

The following charts show the circumstances of those looked after children and care leavers.



Of the formerly looked after young people the authority was in contact with, 85.7% (54 / 63) were known to be in suitable, non-emergency accommodation at the age of 19.

Of the formerly looked after young people the authority was in contact with 52.4% (33 / 63) were known to be engaged in education, training or employment at the age of 19.

## Conclusions from the Committee

During March 2016 Committee members met to draw conclusions from the information presented to them over the year and reflected on the Committee's operation. The following themes emerged from the discussion.

### **Practice**

Most significantly, the Committee were satisfied that children are safe in the care of Cardiff Council. Members were satisfied that the range and depth of the Committee's activities would have identified any significant shortfalls.

The Committee were satisfied that progress in maximising the life chances of children had been made by developing dedicated Looked After Children Teams, the Gateway to Accommodation, the Virtual School, improvements in education and a Trainee Scheme.

The return of several young people from out of county placements and the assurance that systems are in place for Senior Managers to regularly review out of county placements was considered positive, as were the financial savings that reduced numbers of placements outside of Cardiff will bring.

Information received during the year led Members to ask questions about staff capacity. Members observed that staff morale appeared good and were reassured by that. Mental health and emotional wellbeing emerged as areas requiring specific consideration during 2016-17.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy had been developed in consultation with Education and Health colleagues during the year and demonstrated progress towards greater integration of services. Members were confident that the development of a Corporate Parenting Strategy along with the Early Help Strategy and Resource Strategy will provide a firm direction for service improvement in the year to come.

### **Committee Functioning**

Committee members reflected that the assimilation of information by Members had been an important function during the year. Whilst meetings had run over time, the volume and standard of information presented had been appropriate. It was anticipated that as Committee members become more familiar with standing items, timing will improve, although it was also acknowledged that achieving sufficient capacity for informed constructive debate will require processes that enable members to prepare in greater depth beforehand.

Members felt better informed than previously. The level of oversight afforded by the information was important to the Committee in fulfilling its function. Moving forward into 2016-17 the view of the Committee was that it should start making practical proposals. Those proposals must be based on constructive dialogue, dynamic debate and will require mechanisms for feedback from officers, service users, the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet. It was acknowledged that this may at times present challenges where issues are complex, where views are diverse, or where the correlation between specific experience and general practice is unclear. The relationship between the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee was considered to require clarification to prevent overlap in function.

Committee Members were clear that good Corporate Parenting requires corporate engagement and participation extending beyond Social Services to all departments within the Council. Education representatives regularly attended meetings and presented items during the year. Extending participation beyond the Council to include Health agencies in 2016-17 was considered important.



Direct contact between Elected Members, staff and young people had been a valuable experience during the programme of Member visits. A representative from the commissioned advocacy service provider had been co-opted onto the Committee and had facilitated a programme of listening events. Increasing the Committee's contact with young people and developing mechanisms for young people to feed directly into Committee meetings was also considered a priority for 2016-17.

A diagram which depicts the relationship between Committee activity and the terms of reference during 2015-16 is presented in Appendix A.

## Recommendations

The Committee's terms of reference require it to make recommendations where appropriate. The following recommendations are made:

1. The terms of reference should be reviewed to ensure that the Committee's activity does not impinge or overlap with that of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
2. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee should provide a note of comments arising from each meeting to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
3. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee should refer items to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee where appropriate.
4. Individual Committee Members should become champions for thematic areas.
5. Processes should be established to decide which issues merit a place on the work programme.
6. A health / emotional health / mental health item should be added to the 2016-17 programme.
7. Co-opted members should include Cardiff University Health Board, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS) and academic advisors.
8. The frequency of advocacy reports should be increased.
9. Engagement with young people at Committee meetings and outside should be increased.
10. Further induction sessions should be held and invitations extended to non-Committee members.

## **The 2016-2017 Programme**

The Committee's work programme requires a degree of flexibility to respond to emerging issues. However at the beginning of 2016-17 the following items have potential to be included:

### **Engagement**

- Feedback from the care leaver's event.
- Presentation from young trainees.
- Members visits: Out of County children's homes. Crossland's children's home.

### **The work programme**

- Engaging others in induction / training programmes and Corporate Parenting activities.
- Health / Emotional Health.
- The attitudes of schools towards looked after children.
- Exerting influence out of county.
- Foster carers.
- Staff workload.

### **Monitoring**

- The regular cycle of reports.
- Children placed out of County 2014 – 2016.
- 2015/16 updates: Looked After Children Teams, the Gateway, the Virtual Schools.
- The Corporate Parenting Strategy.

# Attendance

## Meetings

The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee had an agreed schedule of meetings during 2015/16. The Committee met on the following dates:

- 22 April 2015, 16 June 2015, 22 September 2015, 17 November 2015, 26 January 2016, 1 March 2016.

## Membership

Membership of the Committee was decided by full Council. There were 9 seats. Seats were allocated on a politically proportionate basis, and included 3 Cabinet members. Membership and attendance are detailed in the following table:

COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE		ATTENDANCE				
		Meetings: Possible	Meetings: Actual	Induction	Events	Visits
Sue Lent Chair	Deputy Leader. Cabinet member for Early Years, Children and Families. Labour	6	5	1	1	5
Kirsty Davies-Warner*	Liberal Democrat * a Committee Member since November 2015	3*	3	NA	0	NA
Daniel De'Ath	Cabinet member for Skills, Safety & Engagement. Labour	6	5	1	0	0
Jonathan Evans	Labour	6	3	0	2	2
Susan Goddard	Labour	6	4	0	1	0
Heather Joyce	Labour	6	3	0	0	0
Julia Magill*	Labour * a Committee Member until May 2015	1	0	NA	NA	NA
Sarah Merry	Cabinet member for Education Labour	6	6	1	0	1
Eleanor Sanders	Independent	6	5	1	0	1
Susan White	Labour	6	6	1	2	2

INDEPENDENT CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVE*		ATTENDANCE	
		Meetings: Possible	Meetings: Actual
Elly Jones	Project leader, NYAS Cardiff Advocacy Team	6	5

\*Representatives from co-opted partner agencies do not have voting rights.

Invited guest speakers presented to the Committee. Meetings were also attended by a core group of senior managers from Children's Services and Education to respond to questions.

## Induction

The Children's Services Training Unit provided a workshop to introduce members of the Committee to Corporate Parenting on the 22 September 2015. The objective of the training was to assist Members to understand their roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents, understand the Cardiff context, understand the legal framework, consider the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy, and agree a personal commitment.

# Summary of Business

## Engagement

The Committees' terms of reference require it to undertake events and visits. Also to ensure mechanisms are in place to enable looked after children, children in need and care leavers to play an integral role in service planning and design, and to act upon feedback. The following table list the engagement mechanisms used during 2015-16. Further details on each item are provided below.

Mechanism	Dates	Detail
1. A co-opted Committee Member	April 2014 to April 2016	NYAS representative.
2. Events	13 June 2015 12 March 2016	'Deal or no deal' event. Leaving Care Listening Event.
3. Member visits	02 September 2015 02 September 2015 3 September 2015 14 September 2015 14 September 2015 14 September 2015 10 September 2015 03 November 2015	Children's Access Point. Intake Teams. Children in Need Teams. Looked After Children Team <14. Looked After Children Team 14+. The Personal Advisor Service. The Fostering Service. Crosslands children's home.
4. Director of Social Services visits	21 August 2015  26 August 2015 9 October 2015	Children's Services Casework Teams Fostering Team Adult Casework Team
5. Video viewed	1 March 2016	The views of adopted young people.
6. Receipt of reports	April 2014 to April 2016	See following sections.

### 1. Co-opted committee member

The Committee's terms of reference include the facility for the Committee to recommend the appointment of co-opted members for approval by Council. The Project Leader for the NYAS Cardiff Advocacy Team was co-opted to the committee during 2015-16. NYAS is a UK charity contracted to provide the Cardiff Advocacy and Independent Visiting Service.

### 2. Events

During 2015-2016 NYAS facilitated two events for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. The first was a 'Deal or no deal' style event for the purpose of engaging young people in the development of the Director of Social Service's annual report. The second event on the 12 March 2016 was a Listening Event for young people leaving care.

Key themes expressed by young people at the first event were:

- That young people should be more involved before decisions are made about them.
- That they would like to be represented on the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.
- That being referred to as 'LAC' children was derogatory.
- Difficulties faced when leaving the care system and managing limited finances.

Members discussed representation by young people on the Committee.

Findings from the second event were scheduled to be presented to a Committee meeting during early 2016/17.

### **3. Member visits**

Between April 2015 and January 2016 visits were made to Children's Services teams by the Director of Social Services and Committee Members.

The range of visits represented a good cross section of Children's Services and reflected the journey of looked after children. Visitors identified positive messages as well as issues. Over and above the general impact of pressure and external demand factors, no Member identified any direct safeguarding issues as the result of a visit. All members were clearly impressed with the commitment of staff teams overall and were complimentary about particular areas.

### **4. Video viewed**

The Committee viewed a video of adopted young people expressing their views as part of a presentation by Adoption UK in November 2015. Further details about the presentation is included in the Annual Programme section of this report. The video highlighted that the participants:

- Want support to understand their emotions.
- Feel that people do not understand adoptions.
- Feel that they are bullied because they are adopted.
- Feel that they want to know about their past and adoption.
- Want more support around birth family contact.

The Committee were advised that adopters have a number of concerns, for example: obtaining therapy for their child, access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, getting support in school, and contact with birth parents.

### **5. Receipt of reports**

Details are provided in a following section.

## The Annual Programme

The Committees' terms of reference require it to develop and work within an annual programme to actively promote real and sustained improvements in the life chances of looked after children, children in need, care leavers and children and young people in the criminal justice system. The following items were presented to the Committee during 2015-16 and constitute its programme.

<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Dates presented</b>	<b>Guest speaker</b>
1. Review of the numbers of looked after children in Cardiff	22 April 2015	Staff from the consultancy firm Cordis Bright - authors of the study.
2. Trainee Scheme for looked after children	22 April 2015	Project Manager
3. Crosslands Children's Home Model of Care	17 November 2015	Staff and managers from the home
4. The Gateway to accommodation services	26 January 2016	Staff from Housing and Leaving Care Services
5. Needs of adopted children in school	1 March 2016	Speaker from Adoption UK

### 1. Review of the numbers of looked after children in Cardiff

The committee were presented in April 2015 with the findings from commissioned research undertaken by the consultancy firm Cordis Bright. Members noted the information presented, asked questions and provided feedback.

The Committee were informed that since the report had been published, significant progress had been made, resulting in a positive inspection of the Looked After Children service and reduced caseloads.

### 2. Trainee Scheme for looked after children

The Committee received a presentation which included the following:

- Ambitions for Children and Young People who are looked after or leaving care
- The pathfinder year
- The relaunched programme
- Referrals
- Placements
- New Trainees
- Next Steps

28 trainee places had been offered by the Council and 3 were in place. The Committee were encouraged by progress and asked questions which helped them further understand the experience of young people.

### 3. Crosslands children's home model of care

Managers and staff from the home presented at the Committee's request following a positive inspection report. The presentation explained 'Connect' the home's model of care, that staff are highly experienced, and that they are engaged in a programme of training and consolidation under the support of an instructor.

Members were shown examples of goodbye albums which capture memories for young people. Members were advised that Crosslands' positive reputation has been generated by the experience of young people and their professionals.

#### **4. The Gateway to services for homeless young people**

The Committee were provided with a presentation on the Young Person's Gateway in January 2016. The Gateway was launched on 5 October 2015 with the aim of providing a 'one stop shop' for young persons' housing provision. It hopes to provide a structured and supported pathway with centralised systems as a corporate Housing solution. Members asked about pressure points and about feedback from young people.

#### **5. Needs of adopted children in school**

A speaker from Adoption UK was invited to speak at the March 2016 meeting. The presentation focused on the impact of adopted children's behaviour on attainment and schools, explained that the behaviour related to pre-adoption experiences, and suggested strategies. The presentation was warmly welcomed and the Committee recommended that other Committees would benefit from hearing the presentation.

### **Inspection & Annual Reports**

The Committee's terms of reference require all relevant Children's Services inspection reports and annual reports to be presented to the Committee. The reports are specified in the terms of reference. The following table lists the reports presented during 2015-16. Further details on each item are provided below.

<b>Inspection Reports and Annual Reports</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1. Children's Services inspection and annual reports	22 April 2015	Crosslands CSSIW Inspection Report.
2. Children's Homes Quality of Care Reports	22 April 2015 16 June 2015 22 September 2015 17 November 2015 26 January 2016 1 March 2016	Regulation 32 visits
3. Case Practice Reviews	None	None were published during the period.
4. Fostering Annual Quality of Care Report	None	The report will be produced during Q1 of 2016/17
5. Adoption Reports	17 November 2015	National Adoption Agency Annual Report 2014-15  National Adoption Service and Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Service – Progress Report and appendices
6. 4C's Commissioning	None	Potential for item during 2016-17.



7. Out of Area Annual Report	None	Scheduled for 19/07/16
8. Annual Report of Brighter Futures (with education)	None	Brighter Futures was superseded.
9. Children's Complaints reports	16 June 2015 22 September 2015 17 November 2015 1 March 2016	Quarter 4 2014/15 Quarters 1 2015/16 Quarter 2 2015/16 Quarter 3 of 2015/16 Deferred until May 2016
10. Advocacy Annual Report	26 January 2015	Activity and priorities for the next year.

### **1. Children's Services inspection and annual reports**

The Committee received the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspection report for the registered Children's Home Crosslands during April 2015. The inspection took place on the 4th March 2015 and was published on the 25 March 2015. This was an announced focussed inspection. Members were informed that it was a positive report with no areas identified for improvement. The Director of Social Services commented that Crosslands was the best Children's Home he had seen and a testament to the leadership of the manager. Members sent a letter to staff congratulating them and requested that they present to the Committee at a future meeting.

Cardiff Children's Services underwent a focused Inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) between the 11th and 25th of January 2016. The findings were published on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March. No meetings of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee were scheduled between the publication date and the end of March 2016, meaning that the Committee will be briefed during the 2016-17 period.

### **2. Children's homes quality of care reports (Regulations 32 visits)**

Crosslands Children's home is the only children's home directly delivered by the City of Cardiff Council. Regulation 32 of the Children's home (Wales) Regulations 2002 requires monthly visits and written reports on the conduct of the home. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee received the Regulation 32 reports by virtue of its role in representing the responsibility of the authority as a corporate parent.

The reports outlined visits which included interviews with residents, managers and staff, inspections of the premises, inspection of the daily log of events and inspection of the record of complaints.

No significant issues were raised during 2015-16.

### **3. Case practice reviews**

No Child Practice Reviews were published during 2015-16.

### **4. Fostering annual quality of care report**

The 2015-16 report will be produced during quarter one of 2016/17 and scheduled for presentation to the Committee as part of the future programme.

### **5. Adoption reports**

The Director of Operations, National Adoption Service presented the annual report to the Committee in November 2015.

Members were provided with a presentation which gave an outline of the:

- Reasoning behind establishing the National Adoption Service.
- Framework for organising and delivering adoption services across Wales.
- Aims and objectives;
- First year's achievements and performance improvements.
- Targets and priorities for 2015/2016.

It was reported that the Vale Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative had been operational since June 2015. Recruitment of prospective adopters had been prioritised.

### **6. 4C's commissioning**

No reports were presented during 2015-16.

### **7. Out of area annual report**

The 2015-16 report will be produced during quarter one of 2016/17 and is provisionally scheduled for presentation to the Committee during July 2016.

### **8. Annual report of Brighter Futures (with education)**

Having achieved its objective of improving the relationship between Children's Services and Education Services, The Brighter Futures group did not meet during 2015-16.

Alternative arrangements are now in place. Those arrangements are:

- Regular joint Education and Children's Services senior management meetings.
- Monthly meetings between managers in the Looked After Children Service and the Looked After Children Education Team.
- Termly training sessions for Looked After Children Designated Teachers.

### **9. Complaints & representations report**

Reports summarised complaints, compliments, subject access requests and representation activity numerically, identified themes and provided examples of complaints. The September report explained the Welsh Government guidance and regulations in relation to social services complaints and representations. Members of the committee asked questions and received responses from Officers.

## 10. Advocacy annual report

The 2015 Cardiff Advocacy and Independent Visiting Service Annual Report was presented to the January 2015 meeting.

The report focussed on the promotion and development of the service, emerging themes / issues, recommendations made to Children's Services, participation and consultation work, feedback from children and young people and delivery of the independent visiting service.

## Monitoring Performance

The terms of reference for the Committee require the Committee to regularly review performance data and ensure performance monitoring systems are in place to achieve sustained improvements. The following table lists the reports presented during 2015-16. Further information on the reports is provided below.

<b>Performance reports</b>	<b>Dates presented</b>	<b>Subject</b>
1. Education report	22 April 2015 16 June 2015 September 2015 17 November 2015 26 January 2016	Various
2. Independent Reviewing Officer Performance Report	22 April 2015 1 March 2016 Deferred	Feedback from reviews of care plans.
3. Safeguarding Report	16 June 2015	Arrangements to strengthen corporate governance.
4. Children's Services Performance report	September 2015 March 2016	Quarter 2 2015/16 Quarter 3 2015/16

### 1. Education report

Education Reports were presented at five of the six meetings. The Committee were provided with information on looked after children's performance in Cardiff schools, informed about progress on developing a virtual school, tracking, training, personal educational plans and activity to raise the profile of looked after children in schools.

The Committee were informed that a thematic inspection was to be carried out by Estyn in January 2016. No meetings were scheduled between the publication date and the end of March 2016, meaning that the Committee will be briefed during the 2016-17 period.

### 2. Independent Reviewing Officer performance report

A report to the Statutory Director of Social Services was presented at the 22 April 2015 meeting. The report included information about the role, function and activity of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) service. IROs monitor the implementation of care plans and conduct reviews for individual looked after children. Members found the report helpful. A further IRO report was deferred from the March 2016 meeting until May 2016 due to insufficient time to discuss.

### 3. Safeguarding report

At the 16 June 2015 meeting the Director of Social Services provided Members with a draft Cabinet report outlining proposed arrangements to strengthen corporate governance of safeguarding, in response to the findings and recommendations of a Welsh Audit Office (WAO) report.

#### **4. Children's Services performance report**

This item was added to the programme from September 2015. The purpose was to enable the Committee to understand the factors that impact on outcomes for children in need, looked after children and consider opportunities for improving outcomes. Members scrutinised the figures and asked for explanations around specific areas of performance. A request for a future presentation on the Single Gateway for accommodation for vulnerable young adults arose from this item.

### **Strategy**

The Committees' terms of reference require it to recommend ways in which more integrated service can be developed across Council directorates, schools and other stakeholders. The terms of reference also require a corporate parenting strategy.

A Strategy was drafted by Mangers in Children's Services in consultation with colleagues in Education and the University Health Board. The proposed Strategy was approved by the Committee at the 26 January 2016 meeting, prior to submission to Cabinet.

# Appendix A

## The relationship between Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee activity and the terms of reference during 2015-16

