

Joint Parenting Panel

Slough Borough Council & Slough Children's Services Trust

Terms of Reference 2016-17

1. Purpose of the Joint Parenting Panel

1.1 The Joint Parenting Panel is a private meeting of the Council, and is the primary vehicle for SBC Councillors and Non –Executive Directors of Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST) to demonstrate their commitment to deliver better outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers.

1.2 The Joint Parenting Panel is a key mechanism by which both Councillors and Non Executive Directors of SCST can ensure that services meet the needs of children and young people in care and care leavers. In particular this includes:

- high quality care, nurturing supportive and meaningful relationships that encourage their growth of self-esteem, confidence and resilience; enabling young people to cope with change and difficult times
- the highest standard of education which is consistent with the needs and abilities of the child
- opportunities and encouragement for self-development and keeping fit and healthy
- encouragement to take up hobbies, acquiring life skills and being a good citizen
- opportunities for education, employment and training, including open days and work placements, apprenticeships
- assistance with the transition from care to looking after themselves, including the provision of suitable accommodation

2. Responsibilities of the Joint Parenting Panel

2.1 The Joint Parenting Panel should:

- provide clear strategic and political direction in relation to corporate parenting
- ensure that councillors and non-executive directors undertake their annual programme of visits to children's homes
- ensure that the needs of children and young people in care and their carers are prioritised and this is reflected in the Pledge to Slough's children in care.
- receive quarterly reports of key performance and quality indicators (as set out in the

- Corporate Parenting Scorecard) relating to children and young people in care, and identify areas for improvement
- receive regular and/or annual reports on the level and quality of the range of services to children and young people in care and care leavers
- engage with and support the work of the Children in Care Council Reach Out groups
- listen to the views of children, young people and their carers and involve them in the assessment and development of services
- champion the provision of dedicated, specialist council-based work placements and apprenticeships for young people in care
- promote achievement and acknowledge the aspirations of children and young people in care by supporting celebration events and activity days
- meet with Ofsted inspectors where appropriate for their input into inspections
- participate as members of the Slough fostering panel
- agree an annual work plan based on the Corporate Parenting Strategy priorities/Pledge to Looked After Children, reviewing progress, membership of the Panel and the impact they have had on the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
- Report formally to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet/Council as agreed

3. Membership & Operation of Panel

3.1 Membership will be reviewed annually as follows:

- (a) For the Council by the relevant political groups, at the commencement of each municipal year.
- (b) SCST board nominations to the Panel will be received annually at the commencement of each municipal year.

3.2 In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interests, the Chair of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel and the Council's representatives on the Slough Children's Services Trust Board shall be prohibited from sitting on the JPP as a Panel Member.

3.3 The Quorum of the Panel shall be a minimum of three voting members of the Panel.

Chairing the Panel:

- 3.4 The Chair shall be co-chaired by Slough's Commissioner for Education and Children, and a nominated Non-Executive Director of Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST).
- 3.5 The Chair of the Panel shall alternate at each subsequent meeting, with an equal number of meetings chaired by the Commissioner for Education and Children, and the Non-Executive Director of the SCST.
- 3.6 Vice Chairs shall be confirmed at the commencement of the municipal year, and must include one SBC Member of the Panel, and one Non-Executive Director of the SCST.
- 3.7 If a vote is called, and there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote.
- 3.8 In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside over the meeting and will retain the Chair's casting vote.

Voting Members:

- 3.9 The Panel will be made up of Voting and Non Voting Members
- 3.10 The members of the Panel that can cast a vote on any matter shall be as follows:
 - Commissioner for Education and Children (Co-Chair)
 - Non Executive Director of Slough Children's Services Trust (Co-Chair)
 - Six Councillors, including the SBC Vice Chair (*All seven elected member appointments to the Panel will be made on a politically proportionate basis)
 - One SCST non-executive director (SCST Vice Chair)

Non voting members

- 3.11 Non Voting members are required to attend all meetings, or to nominate a substitute in the event of their absence.
 - Director of Children's Services, Slough Borough Council
 - Chief Executive, Slough Children's Services Trust
 - Foster carer
 - Reach Out! Group representatives
 - Representative of Children in Care Council
 - Housing representative
 - Thames Valley Police representative
 - LAC Nurse or designated Health services representative
 - Virtual School Head
 - Head of Young People's Service

Meetings

- 3.12 The Panel will meet a minimum of 6 times a year.
- 3.13 Each meeting of the Panel will be based on one of the key themes within the Strategy (based on the Pledge), as agreed at the first meeting of each municipal year by the Panel.

Accountability/Governance

- 3.14 The Panel will provide a quarterly report to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel setting out work to deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy. This report will be presented by the SBC Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 3.15 The Panel will provide an annual report on its work to deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy to Cabinet and Council. The report will be presented by the SBC Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 3.16 The SCST Chair will present an annual report to the SCST Board.

Administration

- 3.17 The Agenda for each meeting shall be agreed by the Director of Children's Services as part of an ongoing Forward Work Plan for the municipal year. Administrative support will be provided by Democratic Services, who will arrange the meetings of the Panel, maintain the Forward Work Plan and publish the agendas. The agreed agenda will be despatched by Democratic Services five clear days in advance of the meeting.
- 3.18 An officer from Democratic Services will be responsible for the minutes of the meeting and their subsequent circulation. Attendance at meetings and access to the minutes will be restricted to Members of the Panel and those listed under Voting and Non Voting Members, as set out above. Requests from non-members to view the minutes will be considered based on the request fulfilling a valid 'need-to-know' requirement.
- 3.19 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of the SCST. Any revisions must be endorsed by the Member Panel on the Constitution before approval by Council.