

Addendum to Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2019 – 2020

At the end of this reporting period, the world was engulfed by the Coronavirus pandemic. In May 2020 the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) requested an assurance from the CPB subgroups that our children looked after and care leavers were safe, well and thriving during the 'lock down' period in UK.

The following assurances were received via a Teams CPB meeting:

Health & Wellbeing subgroup

- Additional staff have been deployed into the CLA health team and statutory health assessments are being carried out via video conferencing
- There is a backlog of 10 children needing assessments for their adoption process so an additional clinic will be held in June to clear the backlog
- A business case to the CCG for additional capacity has been approved and will include extra emotional and mental health support.

Education subgroup

- Contact with all CLA has been maintained
- Awaiting 998 laptops to support home education
- Online education packages have been purchased and have been well received by sometimes reluctant learners
- There has been an improvement in PEP returns over the last 6 months and work on an e-PEP continues with a target launch date of September 2020.

Voice of the Child subgroup

- Staff and families are being very creative about remaining in contact and CLA reviews and Child Protection conferences continue, digitally
- The uptake for advocates has risen and independent visitors are using creative methods to stay in touch more frequently
- The Care Council group are meeting fortnightly with regular contact in between meetings.

Leaving Care subgroup

- The majority of care leavers in Somerset are coping well during the pandemic through online contact and some face to face visits with workers
- The personal allowance has been increased in line with Universal Credit increases. Also additional food vouchers and packages have been made available
- Transporting young people has been an issue while maintaining social distancing therefore minibuses and people carriers have been utilised.