



# Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference

**Vision:** Every child and young person to have opportunities to fulfil their potential

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Corporate Parenting Panel is responsible for providing the strategic direction and overarching strategic priorities for improving outcomes for children in the care of the borough, and young adults leaving the council's care. The panel exercises effective oversight, scrutiny, and challenges to achieve these outcomes.
- 1.2. The Panel acts in an advisory capacity to the Council, its partners, and committees on matters relating to the Council's children looked after and care leavers.
- 1.3. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has a strategic responsibility for children in care and care leavers, as mandated by legislation and national and local guidance:
  - The Children Act 1989 requires Health, Housing, Education, and Social Care, at a minimum, to collaborate in enhancing outcomes for children in care.
  - The Children Act 2004 imposes a statutory obligation on Local Authorities to actively promote the educational attainment of children in care.
  - The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces corporate parenting principles, which the Council is duty-bound to consider and adhere to.

## 2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. To achieve this purpose, the Corporate Parenting Panel will:
  - Advocate for children in our care and care leavers to ensure that the support provided in the borough effectively meets their needs.
  - Assist in reviewing and monitoring of the Council's policies and strategies affecting children in care and care leavers, with the aim of ensuring their effectiveness and appropriateness.
  - Develop, continuously monitor, and review the Corporate Parenting Strategy

and Leaving Care Strategy, and associated action plans, ensuring alignment with and adherence to the seven corporate parenting principles.

- Promote a co-ordinated and partnership approach to the delivery of Council services as they affect children in care and care leavers and to challenge services where this is not evidenced or effective.
- Advise the Council and its Committees on issues relevant to children in care and care leavers.
- Conduct thorough assessments and monitoring of the well-being, progress, and achievements of children in care and care leavers, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.
- Ensure that arrangements are made for the training and development of councillors (and others as appropriate) on the Corporate Parenting role.
- Receive reports on the discharge of the Council's functions regarding the provision of accommodation for looked after children and care leavers, and to make recommendations to the appropriate body of the Council.
- Review the annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officer service.

2.2. The work of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be informed by and aligned to the corporate parenting principles defined in the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) which state that local authorities must have regard to the need:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

### 3. The Chair and Vice-Chair

- 3.1. The Corporate Parenting Panel will be convened and chaired by the Executive Member for Children's, Young People and Education.
- 3.2. The Vice-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel is **to be determined** and they will chair meetings in the event of the Chair's absence. The Vice-Chair will be alternated between partners on an annual basis.

### 4. Composition

- 4.1. The Corporate Parenting Panel will comprise of:

Chair	Executive Member for Children's, Young People and Education
Vice Chair	<b>To be determined (health representative)</b>
Members	<b>Elected Members</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Chair, Children &amp; Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li><li>2. Executive Member, Adult Social Care &amp; Health</li><li>3. Executive Member, Finance &amp; Governance</li><li>4. Shadow Executive Member, Digital and Customer Services &amp; Shadow Assistant Executive Member Children's, Young People and Education</li><li>5. Assistant Executive Member, Digital &amp; Customer Services</li><li>6. Assistant Executive Member, Public Health, Prevention &amp; Wellbeing</li><li>7. Assistant Executive Member, Growth &amp; Development</li><li>8. Assistant Executive Member, Environment &amp; Operations</li><li>9. Leader 4BwD</li></ol> <b>Council officers</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Strategic Director, Growth &amp; Development (Deputy Chief Executive)</li><li>2. Strategic Director, Children's Services &amp; Education (DCS)</li><li>3. Strategic Director, Adults &amp; Health (DASS)</li><li>4. Strategic Director, Finance &amp; Resources</li><li>5. Director of Health and Care Integration (ICB)</li><li>6. Director, Chief Executive's</li><li>7. Consultant in Public Health</li><li>8. <b>Environment?</b></li></ol> <b>Partner agencies</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Chief Inspector, Lancashire Constabulary</li><li>2. Designated Nurse Children in Care and Care Leavers, Lancashire &amp; South Cumbria ICB</li><li>3. Specialist Safeguarding Practitioner for Children in Care and Care Leavers, Lancashire &amp; South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust</li><li>4. Assistant Headteacher, St Thomas's Centre</li><li>5. Chief Executive Officer, Blackburn Youth Zone</li><li>6. <b>Title to be confirmed, Together Housing</b></li></ol>

- 4.2. Although not members of the Corporate Parenting Panel, the following officers will support the Panel:
- Deputy Director, Children's Social Care (Deputy DCS)
  - Deputy Director, Education & Schools (Deputy DCS)
  - Head of Corporate Parenting & Permanence
  - Head of Partnerships, Intensive Support, Policy & Performance
  - Head of Communications & Engagement
  - Looked After Children Virtual Head & Assessment Officer
  - Corporate Strategy, Engagement & Partnership Manager
- 4.3. The Chair retains the authority to adjust the membership as needed. The Chair may also extend invitations to councillors, council officers or representatives from partner agencies for Panel meetings as necessary.
- 4.4. Active participation of children and young people in the meeting is a priority for the Corporate Parenting Panel. Their perspectives will be actively sought and included in discussions through a dedicated standing agenda item which will allow them to share their lived experiences, contribute valuable insights and provide appropriate challenge and scrutiny from a care-experienced perspective. Every child or young person present for this agenda item will be invited to observe the entire meeting if they choose to do so. This engagement will be facilitated through the council's Voice Groups, Care Leavers Forum and other participation mechanisms.

## 5. Meeting Arrangements

- 5.1. The Corporate Parenting Panel will meet on a quarterly basis.
- 5.2. At all times, the Corporate Parenting Panel will strive to prioritise the participation of children and young people in its meetings by choosing meeting times, methods (in person/remote/hybrid), and venues that accommodate their needs and preferences.
- 5.3. Task & Finish groups could be established for specific areas of the Panel's work.
- 5.4. Children's Services & Education supporting officers are responsible for maintaining a Forward Plan, and for ensuring the Panel maintains focused on the delivery of the strategy and driving improvements for care-experienced children and young people.
- 5.5. The Forward Plan will be reviewed at every meeting. The Panel may agree to request reports on particular matters of their preference or as advised by the Chair.
- 5.6. Agendas and reports will be published at least 5 working days in advance of each meeting via the Mod.gov system. Meeting agendas will be developed and agreed with the support of Children's Services & Education in consultation with the Chair.

## 6. Reporting and Review

- 6.1. The Panel will foster strong collaborative relationships with Council committees and engage with them to provide recommendations as needed.
- 6.2. The Panel will compile and provide a quarterly highlight report to the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This report will encapsulate key developments, achievements, and insights gathered during the specified period.
- 6.3. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and any amendments must be recommended to the Panel for approval.
- 6.4. On an annual basis, the Panel will evaluate its performance and effectiveness and present its findings in a report to the **Executive Board**. If necessary, the report will include recommendations to improve the Panel's ability to fulfil its responsibilities.