

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Wednesday 10th January 2024

PRESENT – **Councillors**, Sylvia Liddle, Jackie Floyd, Vicky McGurk, Julie Gunn, Brain Taylor, Elaine Whittingham, Matthew Jackson, Mustafa Desai, Julie Slater

OFFICERS –

Joanne Siddle – Strategic Director, Children Services
Imran Akuji – Head of Partnerships, Intensive Support, Policy & Performance
Martin Kelly – Strategic Director, Growth & Development
Mark Warren – Strategic Director, Adults & Health
Dean Lanton – Strategic Director, Finance & Resources
Andrea Sturgess – Head of Communications & Engagement
Emma Ford – Deputy Director Social Care
Corinne McMillan – Director, Chief Executive's
Emma Ford – Deputy Director, Children's Social Care (Deputy DCS)
Michelle Holt – Deputy Director, Education & Schools (Deputy DCS)
Suzanne Kinder – Head of Corporate Parenting & Performance
Charlotte Hesketh – LAC Virtual head & Assessment Officer
Catherine Taylor – Consultant in Public Health
Hannah Allen – Chief Executive Officer - Blackburn Youth Zone
Louise Hartley – Specialist Nurse for CIC and Care Leavers – LSCFT
Nicola Hulme – Assistant Headteacher - St Thomas' Centre (PRU)
Sue Turner – Training facilitator LGA
Shelly Sarwar – Governance Support Officer

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, Cllr Julie Gunn (Executive Member, Children's, Young People & Education) welcomed all present in the meeting and introduced herself.

All attendees introduced themselves to the group and apologies were received from Cllr Shaukat Hussain. Apologies were also received from Clair Richardson, Kirsty Cleary, and Elizabeth Clarkson

The Chair advised the members that this was the first inaugural meeting and the formal name for this panel had not been decided just yet and requested suggestion from all the members. Cllr Julie Gun informed the members that now we have merged two committee meetings, and we want to be inspirational and challenging. Members were informed that this Inaugural meeting was planned to be a training session, so that all members develop a good understanding of corporate parenting.

RESOLVED – The update be noted.

2. Declarations of interest:

RESOLVED - There were no Declarations of interest received.

3. LGA Corporate Parenting Training Session:

Su Turner (Founder and Director -Shaping Governance) introduced herself and delivered the training to the panel following a proactive and interactive approach throughout the session. The training slides were presented to all the members whilst Su explained the contents, gave examples, welcomed input and shared experiences from members.

Programme structure

Module 1

Overview of Corporate Parenting Roles, Responsibilities, and framework for effective corporate parenting

Module 2

Practical session Content to be decided from: Championing and Aspirations
Embedding the voice of children Meetings and monitoring.

Overview – Legislation, Policy, and Guidance

Key points

What is Corporate Parenting?

All councillors and council employees have a unique responsibility to be 'corporate parents' to children they look after and their care leavers.

"All children need love and stability in order to thrive. A strong corporate parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about those children and care leavers as if they were their own."

Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers.

What is a Corporate Parent?

"A shared responsibility with all officers and members of the local authority to act as effective and caring corporate parents for looked-after children, with key roles in improving their educational attainment, providing stable and high-quality placements and proper planning for when they leave care".

Children in Care and Care Leavers

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.

- A child remains a looked-after child until:
 - The return home.
 - Are adopted.
 - Turn 18
- Councils are required to support care leavers until 25.
- Each child has a Care Plan, which is overseen by an Independent Reviewing Officer - who monitors the care plan and challenges the council.

Cared for Children (to March 2021)

- 80,850 children are cared for in England.
- 56% males, 44% females
- Reasons for being looked after:
 - 66% abuse / neglect
 - 22% acute family distress (illness/death/dysfunction)
 - 3% child disability
 - 3% parental illness or disability
 - 5% absent parents
 - Only 1% are in care because of their own behaviour.

The Corporate Parent role

- Is key to improving the outcomes for children in care.
- Must offer everything that a good parent would including stability.
- Responsible and accountable for the wellbeing and future prospects of children in care.
- Must address both the difficulties which children in care experience and the challenges of parenting.
- Should ensure that children have a chance to shape and influence the parenting they receive.

Key pieces of Legislation & guidance

- Children Act 1989
- Care Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017 – defined 7 Corporate Parenting Principles
- Children and Family Act 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Adoption Act 2006
- Children Act 2004
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

Key Policy and Guidance

- Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers 2018
- Putting Children First: Delivering Our Vision For Excellent Children's Social Care 2016
- Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence 2016
- Children and Young People Plan
- NICE Quality Standards
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Safeguarding procedures
- Ofsted

Corporate Parenting Principles

The Children and Social Work Act 2017...explains this further with 7 Corporate Parenting Principles

- 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; and
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

Corporate Parenting, Framework, roles and responsibilities

Corporate Parenting Framework

- Councillors, Officers, and Partners
- Corporate Parenting Board
- Corporate Parenting strategic Group
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy
- The Priorities for CiC and CL
- Children in Care Council
- Regulation 44 visits Children's Home Regulations 2015
- Sufficiency duty
- Virtual Head Teacher
- Independent reviewing officer
- Carers

Who is a Corporate Parent?

- Specialist: Lead Members and Directors of Children's Services
- Targeted: Corporate Parenting Panel and Scrutiny Committees have additional responsibilities
- Universal: Every councillor and officer of the local authority

The Corporate Parent – all of us

- All should be aware and have a shared responsibility for ensuring needs of looked-after children are met
- Be aware of profile and needs of children in care in the authority
- Understand the impact of council decisions on children in care and care leavers
- Receive information about quality of care and services for children in care and care leavers
- Champion the needs of children in care and care leavers in their area, ensuring other councillors and officers act as corporate parents
- Focus on wellbeing and development
- Show same interest for looked-after children as if they were their own child
- Quality and effectiveness of the system

Leadership of children's services

DCS and Lead Member together hold statutory responsibility for the effectiveness, availability, and value for money of the local authority children's services.

Targeted roles

1: Cabinet and Executive Councillors

Executive councillors' key decision makers for council and community

2: Corporate Parenting Panel

Champion the corporate parenting role across the authority and partners

3: Scrutiny Councillors and Committees

Champion the corporate parenting role across the authority and partners

4: Management Team and Senior Officers

Sets the tone of how directorates view the importance of Corporate Parenting

5: Partners

Children Act 2004, Councils have a duty to promote 'cooperation' between 'relevant partners', such as Police, the NHS and Education Providers

Summary

- Being a Corporate Parent is the most important role of a councillor, officer, and partners
- It's not about knowing who the children are; but championing their needs in your work.

- Legal framework - but a moral duty too to 'care for' and 'care about' children in care and care leavers.
- Think of it as being like a corporate Grandparent caring, one step removed;
- Corporate Parenting is a role for all and importantly all of the time in all you do – constantly ask 'would it be good enough for your own child?'

Good Corporate Parents?

The Children's Commissioner tells Children in Care that councils are a good Corporate Parent if they:

- Provide stability for children in care;
- Give children in care choice;
- Plan well for your care;
- Take an active role in their lives and care;
- Listen and that children feel listened to;
- Make children in care feel safe;
- Ensure that children in care know their rights;
- Ensure that children in care are treated the same;
- Show the same level of aspirations and hope for care leavers;
- Show that they are ambitious for children in care.

Signs of effective corporate parenting

1. Demonstrated a strong cross-party commitment to children in care, by championing their rights, having high aspirations for their achievement, monitoring children's progress and challenging outcomes.
2. Clearly understood its role and the responsibilities of the council and partners towards children in care, and planned for and prioritised their needs, resulting in a greater focus on improving.
3. its role and the responsibilities of the council and partners towards children in care, and planned for and prioritised their needs, resulting in a greater focus on improving outcomes; Actively engaged with their young people, for example, through the children in care council, and have effective and regular links with senior management and councillors.

RESOLVED – That Su Turner be thanked for delivering the training and the training be noted.

4. LGA Ratification of Terms of Reference Terms of Reference

Imran Akuji (Head of Partnerships, Intensive Support, Policy & Performance) updated all the members that he would like to amend the terms of reference and will send a draft Terms of reference to full panel for their consideration and input.

RESOLVED – The update be noted.

5. Any Other Business

The Chair confirmed the date for the next meeting as 25th March 2024 and thanked everyone for attending.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed.