

1 July 2024

6.

Establishment of Work Programme 2024 -25

Ward(s):

Portfolios:

1. Report

The purpose of this item is to provide relevant background information for Members so that the Board's work programme can be agreed for 2024/25.

It is important for Members to consider the wide range of potential issues within their remit and which of these they could consider during the year.

The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board is to assist the Council to fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities towards children in care and leaving care by providing strategic direction to ensure they are effectively supported to reach their full potential. A presentation will be provided at the meeting providing more detail about the services that fall within the Board's remit.

In the Corporate Parenting Board annual report 2023/24 the Board set out its priorities for 2024/25 as: -

- Continue to review and evolve the approach to engagement with young people to make engagement meaningful.
- Build relationships with children and young people in care and care leavers and be an advocate for them.
- Attend future events and activities with young people to further develop relationships.
- Challenge services and partners to ensure that young people are receiving the best services and given every opportunity to succeed.
- Monitor the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and associated action plan and set the Boards remit around its priorities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the work programme of the Corporate Parenting Board for the 2024/25 municipal year be agreed.**
- 2.2 A Total Respect training course be organised at the earliest opportunity for all Elected Members.**
- 2.3 That the Board considers member champion nominations to visit residential homes.**

3. Remit

The remit of the Corporate Parenting Board is as follows:

- (1) Provide clear strategic direction in relation to corporate parenting to improve the outcomes and life chances of looked after children and care leavers.
- (2) Ensure that Walsall Council and Partner agencies have a joint commitment to corporate parenting in order to achieve continuing improvements in outcomes for our children and young people in care and care leavers.
- (3) Make a demonstrable commitment to prioritising the needs of looked after children and young people.
- (4) Set objectives for monitoring the work of and evaluating the progress of the Officer level 'Operational – Corporate Parenting Steering Group'.
- (5) Develop and sustain clear linkages with Children in Care Council, 'Council 4 Kids', Walsall Safeguarding Children's Board, Walsall Foster Care Association and Partners to include the Police, the NHS and education providers and others.
- (6) Approve a work plan with clear aims and objectives which reflect the terms of Walsall's Corporate Parenting pledge.
- (7) Monitor progress on outcomes and performance indicators for looked after children.
- (8) Submit reports to the Council, the Executive, Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee or such other body as the Board considers appropriate or necessary.
- (9) Submit an annual report to Council in April each year.
- (10) Listen to, consult with and involve looked after children and care leavers and their carer's in the assessment, development and delivery of services, including inviting them to act as advisers to the Committee on a regular basis.
- (11) Develop knowledge and be aware of the experiences and concerns of looked after children and care leavers.
- (12) Promote achievement and acknowledge the aspirations of children and young people and show ambitions and aspirations for all looked after children and care leavers.
- (13) Champion the provision of Council based work placements and apprenticeships for looked after young people.
- (14) Monitor the effectiveness of the Virtual school.

4. Consultation with Young People

As agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board during the previous municipal year, the work programme will include dedicated engagement sessions with children and young people at the TLC hub. Previous sessions with young people have influenced the items included on the draft work programme.

Board Members may wish to agree to visit residential homes to build relationships with staff and young people. It would be beneficial for feedback on these visits to be received at meetings.

Total Respect training is a national award-winning resource delivered by care experienced trainers. The course gives participants a glimpse of what it is like to be a looked after child, what is like to live within the care system and the difficulties this can create for those young people. In the previous municipal year, the Board considered it of great value for Elected Members to attend this training.

5. Items previously considered by the Board

The Board considered several items during the 2023-2024 municipal year.

- Placement sufficiency strategy.
- Quarterly performance reports.
- Future governance of Corporate Parenting Board.
- Annual adoption report.
- Annual fostering service report.
- Update on Action Plan of actions identified by young people.
- Corporate parenting strategy and action plan.
- Independent Reviewing Officer annual report.
- Protected characteristics for care leavers.
- Health annual report.
- CAMHS report.
- Engagement sessions at TLC.
- Corporate Parenting Board annual report.

A suggested work programme is attached at appendix 1 subject to Member agreement.

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