

## Council – 10 January 2011

### Corporate Parenting Strategy

**Service:** Children's Services

**Wards:** All

#### 1. Summary of report

- 1.1 The attached Corporate Parenting Strategy (**Appendix 1**) sets the vision for corporate parenting in Walsall. It describes a range of care pledges we are making to children and the good practice principles we subscribe to as a council and strategic partnership.
- 1.2 The strategy sets out how we are working to improve positive outcomes for children in care and care leavers. Priority areas include educational attainment, improving placements and stability and enhancing employment, training, education, accommodation and leisure opportunities and experiences.
- 1.3 The ultimate aim is to improve the life chances of children and young people who we are responsible for as corporate parents.
- 1.4 The Corporate Parenting Strategy links with the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) in the following key areas:
  - Target early intervention and ensure safety
  - Promote social Inclusion
  - Improve service delivery
  - Value and support young people
- 1.5 The strategy has two key principles at its heart in order for us to be good 'corporate parents', firstly we need to act as a united council and partnership wide enterprise; and secondly we must collectively act as 'pushy parents' in our shared ambition of raising the aspirations and outcomes for children in care.
- 1.6 The Corporate Parenting Strategy describes Walsall's approach to corporate parenting over the next three years. The strategy illustrates how the Corporate Parenting Board will monitor performance through a management committee focusing on what we want to achieve, how we will operate as group to do this and focusing on strong leadership.
- 1.7 Corporate Parenting Board performance will be held on a 'dashboard tool' to satisfy itself that progress is being made and to hold partners and agencies to account. The focus of the strategy is about personalising service delivery and practice to make it accessible and tangible to 'corporate parents' and most importantly children in care and care leavers.

- 1.8 The action plan which accompanies the strategy is categorised under the key themes for healthy and safe children and sets out specific partnership tasks. Progress will be published in an annual report.

## **2. Recommendations**

That Council note Walsall's approach to corporate parenting and approves the Corporate Parenting Strategy at **Appendix 1**.

## **3. Background information**

- 3.1 The strategy has an emphasis on promoting the role of all elected Members in corporate parenting. A new initiative led by the Children's portfolio holder Councillor R Andrew is to have 'champions' from across the political parties to drive support and accountability. There has been an active process in place for ascertaining which councillors were able to volunteer to become corporate parenting champions. Currently we have excellent member engagement across the following key areas -

- Councillor Rachel Andrew is the Children's portfolio holder and an active champion and Corporate Parenting Board member in support of children in care developments.
- Councillor Alan Paul is a member of the Walsall Foster Panel.
- Councillor Ron Carpenter is a member of the Walsall Adoption Panel.
- Councillor Keith Chambers is a member champion.
- Councillor Eddie Hughes is a corporate parenting champion and Corporate Parenting Board member.
- Councillor Barry Sanders is a member of the Virtual School Management Committee.

- 3.2 In June 2010 the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel set up a cross party political safeguarding working group to look at vulnerable and looked after children. It was led by Councillor Eddie Hughes and supported by Councillor Barbara Cassidy (Labour group) Councillor Doreen Shires (Liberal Democrat group), Councillor Rose Martin (Conservative Group) and Councillor Alan Paul (Conservative group).

- 3.3 The working group agreed that it was important for the role of Members as corporate parents to be developed.

- 3.4 The working group considered a number of potential future roles for Members and will be making specific recommendations to the Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel in their report in January 2011.

- 3.5 The National Children's Bureau has published booklets for developing corporate parenting in councils and suggests ways elected Members can develop positive relationship with children, for example, through the Children in Care Council which is called the Council4Kids in Walsall. Copies of the booklets will be made available to Members through the nominated champions and in Member rooms.

3.6 Member briefing sessions on the role of corporate parenting are available on the shared calendar for member development providing supported learning and information sharing on corporate parenting. This forum amongst other forums could provide a platform for develop proposals which enhance corporate parenting in Walsall.

3.7 Corporate parenting is unique in the sense that we are caring for other people's children and as such Members in their scrutiny, participation, policy, celebratory involvement and champion roles should be:

- ensuring the care settings and experiences are safer than the setting that children are removed from;
- satisfied that the care provided is more than just basic care and should support and enable the child to reach their potential;
- scrutinising whether actions can demonstrate that they make a difference;
- understanding that there is still a big gap in outcomes between children in care and children in the general population.

The council and partners are collectively responsible for:

- Asking: what is happening to our children in care – quantity and quality?
- Considering: would it be good enough for my child?
- Acting: how can the lives and outcomes for our children in care be improved?

To be a good corporate parent it is important to know and recognise what is important to children, for example:

- the loss of family, friends and community continues to matter
- relationships - being cared about not just cared for
- being listened to
- fitting in - not feeling different
- being and feeling safe
- wanting a normal life and a future
- realising children can feel "I never really had that with my mum or dad"
- having a voice within the bureaucracy
- having a confidante – being able to trust

Above all effective corporate parenting is important because it leads to:

- improved outcomes for 'your' children
- good care at an early stage leads to stable placements/ less disruption
- fewer complex needs requiring expensive specialist resources
- value for money
- better performance ratings

#### **4. Resource considerations**

- 4.1 The resource considerations associated with the delivery of corporate parenting on the council and partners are considerable. However, if we apply good inclusion policies for children in care across the council the life chances for them will dramatically improve and at same time the costs will dramatically reduce.
- 4.2 All relevant information and research shows the disproportionate representation of children in care in offending, homelessness, unemployment and mental health outcomes. The championing of children in care by all the corporate parents but particularly Members at a political level can enhance the life chances of these children.
- 4.3 This is increasingly important as the national and local picture indicates an increasing demand on resources in Walsall due to the impact of the recession and Baby Peter. Nationally, the ADCS have reported that there has been a large increase in demand.
- 4.4 At both a national and local level there has been an increase in children who are subject of a child protection plan and children starting to be taken into care by the council.
- 4.5 The Looked After Children social work team have had to adapt to challenges faced by increasing numbers of children in care, workload management demands and complex court proceedings work.
- 4.6 Although, there has been a significant increase in the number of cases allocated to a named worker and an overall increase in children with an updated care plan; some individual cases according to PARIS (electronic record system) are at various times not allocated to a named worker and some individual children in care still need an updated care plan.
- 4.7 Consequently an additional 2 senior managers, 3 social workers and 3 relocated family centre workers are providing additional support in the medium term to drive up statutory compliance, quality and management of discharges.

#### **5. Performance and risk management issues**

- 5.1 As at the 30 November 2010 information from PARIS (Electronic record system) shows that there are a total of 500 children in care.
- 5.2 Of these the breakdown by legal status shows 135 on Interim Care Orders, 236 on Full Care Orders, 46 on Placement/Freeing Orders and 82 voluntary accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and one on an Emergency Protection Order

The breakdown by placement shows that:

- 26 children were placed for adoption,
- 30 placed with their own parents,
- 221 placed with LA foster carers,

- 65 placed with relative/friend foster carers,
- 111 placed with agency foster carers,
- 17 in LA residential homes,
- 22 in independently provided residential homes,
- 8 in independent living placements.

5.3 From data analysis and research linking numbers claiming job seekers allowance to expected rates of children in care we conclude that good social work practice, particularly in child protection planning (CPP), supported by targeted family support in the universal services has diverted children from care.

5.4 The opportunity to discharge children from care is effected by recessionary stress on community and family resilience meaning that families are less able to accept children's return from care. Furthermore social workers may be applying higher thresholds with regard to risks on discharge and we are responsible for an increased number of 16-17 year olds who must remain in care.

## **6. Equality implications**

6.1 Most children live successful and happy lives within their families with little need for external support. Other children live successful and happy family lives with the help of family support to address particular needs or problems.

6.2 For a small number of children however, greater levels of intervention are needed to ensure a child's safety and well-being. In these circumstances the local authority through an agreement with the parents (or guardian) of the child; or through an order made by the court will assume a level of parental responsibility for the child.

6.3 Corporate parenting relates to children where the authority and its partners assume the role of a corporate parent, which in essence means:

- taking responsibility for all children in the care of Walsall council including those children placed externally to Walsall;
- making their needs a priority;
- seeking the same outcomes as any good parent would want for their own child.

6.4 In Walsall, we are keen to make sure that corporate parenting is seen as everyone's responsibility - across the whole corporate body and beyond at the Children and Young People's Partnership Board level.

## 7. Consultation

The Corporate Parenting Board, Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel and children in care have been consulted with regarding the development of the strategy.

### **Background papers - Corporate Parenting Strategy (Appendix 1)**

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Date: 23 December 2010



Walsall Children & Young People's  
Partnership Board

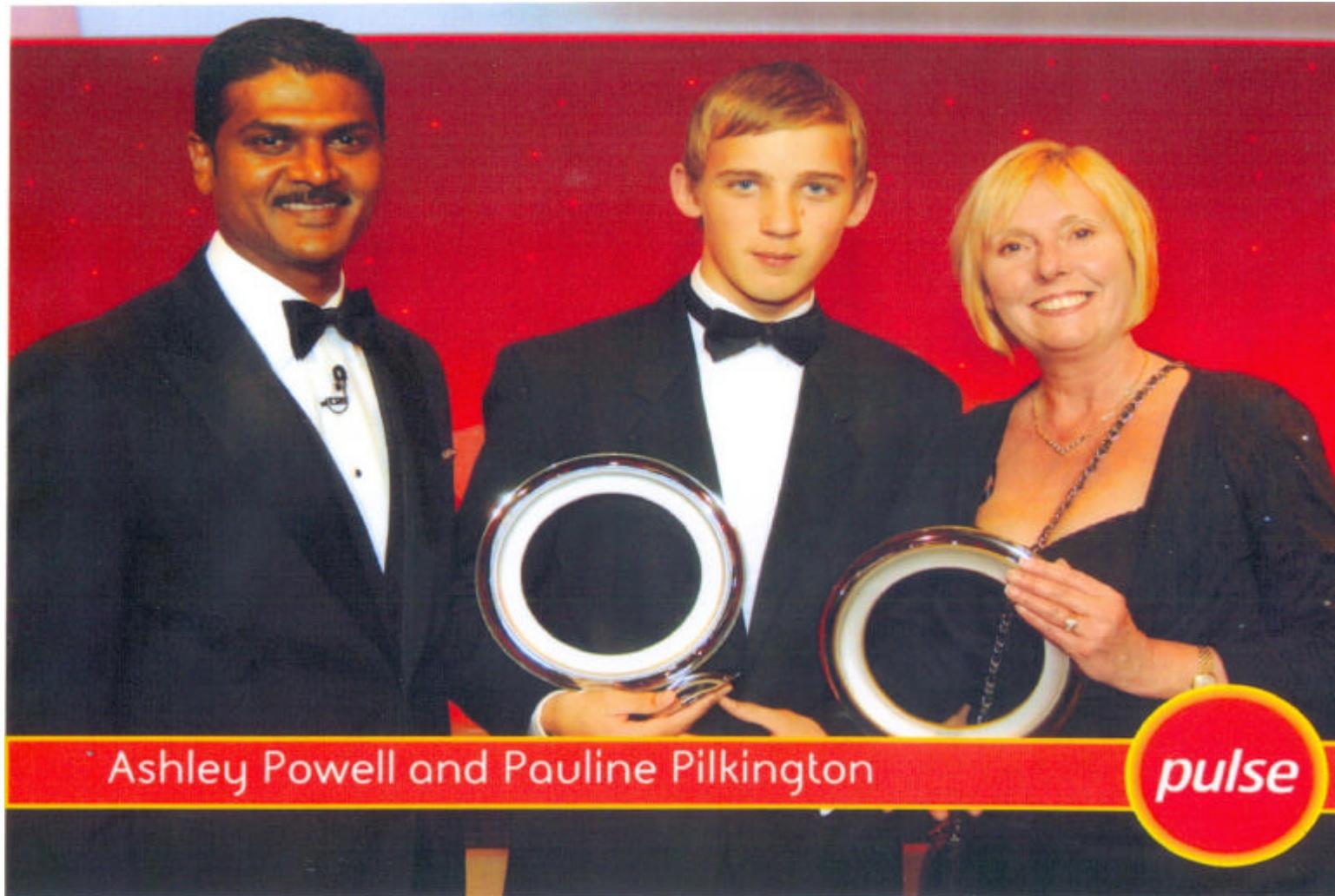
# Corporate Parenting Strategy



'Corporate Parenting – Getting it Right'

2010 to 2013

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13



**Ashley receives a National Award for his work as Chair of the Walsall Council for Kids**

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## Introduction

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy has been developed through a series of workshops and consultations with children and young people, practitioners and partner agencies and has been informed by a robust needs analysis. Our focus is based upon these organisational learning opportunities alongside, our desire to build on the 'successful corporate parenting principles' established within the previous plan. Our key principles are:

- Listening to children and young people
- Providing children and young people with stability
- Narrowing of the gap (positive outcomes) for children in care and care leavers compared with advantaged children
- Providing them with opportunities to fulfil their potential

Most children live successful and happy lives within their families with little need for external support. Other children live successful and happy family lives with the help of family support to address particular needs or problems.

For a small number of children however greater levels of intervention are needed to ensure a child's safety and well-being. In these circumstances the local authority through an agreement with the parents (or Guardian) of the child; or through an order made by the court; will assume a level of parental responsibility for the child.

For these children the authority and its partners assume the role of corporate parent which in essence means:

- Taking responsibility for all children in the care of Walsall Council including those children placed externally to Walsall
- Making their needs a priority
- Seeking the same outcomes as any good parent would want for their own child.

Good corporate parenting must be defined by our ethics, our standards and our collective responsibility for supporting and improving the life chances of children in care and care leavers and for placing them at the top of the corporate agenda. The fact

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that children rely on ourselves for part or all of their upbringing makes them special and distinguishes them from many others and why we are obligated to take action with them and for them as a whole authority enterprise.

We take our corporate parenting responsibilities seriously and similar to how a good parent would act as 'pushy parents', in terms of getting the best outcomes and services for our children. Above all, we have a passion about providing exceptional support to our children and young people to enable them to have ordinary lives or as one of our children put it being 'heroes and heroines' for children's needs.

This strategy has therefore been agreed by Walsall's full Council which marks a clear value statement regarding our aspirations and ambitions for them.

When in the Life of Care Kids

When in the life of care kid

Do you feel safe or do you love messing around

You can go out on trips

You live with a new family

When in the life of care kids

You really have someone to listen to you

You can talk about your old life and then understand

You can go out on day trips with the outreach team

When in the life of care kids

You can be happy and welcome in the arms and the care of the Outreach team

You can go and see pantomimes in a theatre in Wolverhampton's Grand theatre

You can go in the middle of nowhere and there is a place called Ingestre Hall

When in the life of care kids

Outreach understands how you feel

L K Aged 14

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## Vision and Governance

The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets the vision for corporate parenting in Walsall. It describes the range of care pledges we are making to children and the good practice principles we subscribe to as a council and strategic partnership. The strategy sets out how we are working to improve positive outcomes for children in care and care leavers. Priority areas include educational attainment, improving placements and stability and enhancing employment, training, education, accommodation, leisure opportunities and experiences. The ultimate aim is to improve the life chances of children and young people we are responsible for.

This strategy shows how the Corporate Parenting Board will monitor performance through a management committee in terms of what we want to achieve and how they will operate as group to do this, focusing on how will 'leadership' operate. The Corporate Parenting Strategy informs the work of the board. There are 5 'themes' to measure progress against and these themes are addressed over the 6 meetings during the year to keep the strategy active and focused. An annual report will detail progress that will be reported to the Children's Council and through to Cabinet or Council.



Supporting our Foster Carers

Corporate Parenting Board performance will be held on a 'dashboard' tool that the board will use to satisfy itself that progress is being secured and to hold partners and agencies to account. The focus of the strategy is about personalising service delivery and practice to make it accessible and tangible to 'corporate parents' and most importantly children in care and care leavers. The strategy sets out to bring Members into corporate parenting as 'champions' and improvement 'mechanisms' to have a positive relationship and interface with the Children's Council. The strategy also describes the active contribution of the Virtual College to develop integrated service delivery and improved outcomes for young people.

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## Giving Walsall's Children in Care and Care Leavers a Voice

Our strategy sets out to strengthen all corporate parenting roles from a perspective of giving a voice to children in care and care leavers ensuring, that their views are at the heart of what we do. Whether matters relate to the remit of direct services, partner agencies, the Corporate Parenting Board or relating to elected Members, managers, staff or carers actions, our intention is to enhance levels of understanding and accountability. We want to provide the right kind of support and guidance to young people at both a strategic and practice level which makes a positive difference to their lives.

In Walsall we are keen to make sure that corporate parenting is seen as everyone's responsibility - across the whole corporate body and beyond at the Children and Young People's Partnership Board level. We are achieving this by -

- Building on the foundations of good participation involving children in care and care leavers by:
  - Inviting the Council 4 Kids (CK4) to agree Walsall Care Pledges
  - Ensuring that all services and providers are accountable for services they provide to children in care
  - Ensuring that all services and providers show participation with children, individually and collectively, in their service design and delivery
  - Ensuring services are held to account through annual reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board and to the C4K; to measure impact and how corporate parenting feels for children and young people
  - Production of an annual stock-take in partnership with C4K, to be presented annually to Cabinet and full Council
- Introduce a plain parenting campaign to ensure easy to understand language for children in care and the professionals in their lives;
- Undertake a review with carers and children in care of relevant policies concerning what decision making powers foster carers and residential staff have and will publish new clear and concise guidance to all;
- Ensuring that the voice of children drives educational provision and support to achieve economic well-being by:
  - Reviewing the use of PEPs and pathway plans to ensure high quality and high aspiration; and
  - Reviewing at the role of designated teachers and their training needs
- Undertaking a needs analysis to identify the gaps in placements provision and put in place a first-class commissioning plan to meet those gaps

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- Achieve a sea-change in the experience of leaving care by introducing new principles on leaving care before the age of 18 years old and the option to remain with stable foster placements up to the age of 21 years old.

“Being part of the Council 4 Kids has improved my confidence and I feel I have got a lot out of being part of the group. I really enjoyed being a facilitator at the Conference in January” – Chelsea

## The Pledges we make to Children

The Corporate Parenting Board agreed **eight key pledges** for and with children and young people, dedicated to improving the services they receive and their life chances. We will help children to improve their attainment and have good opportunities, similar to children with advantaged home circumstances, through the following pledges:

1. ***To improve the choice of placements available to Children***

(Increasing the number of local foster placements allowing children to have a family experience in their own community)

2. ***To increase children’s opportunities to live in stable and permanent environments***

(*Securing trusting* relationships with carers and early opportunities to live permanently back with their own parents, carers or a new family)

3. ***To create opportunities for children and young people which raise their aspirations***

(Broadening children’s horizons through grammar school clubs, mentoring schemes, university taster sessions and travel opportunities)

4. ***Ensuring children and young people to have good transition plans***

(Providing better support at key stage education, access to Higher Education and more children to go to the best school’s including selective schools)

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5. ***For all children and young people to have good quality pathway and care plans***

(With trusting and consistent relationships with their Personal advisors and/or social workers)

6. ***To provide excellent education, training and employment opportunities for care leavers***

(With strong partnerships EET offers from HE facilities, private, voluntary and partner sectors)

7. ***To secure good standards of accommodation for all our care leavers***

(Which is safe, secure, supported and of suitable quality in line with their peer group who are not care leavers)

8. ***To have better social inclusion for children in care and care leavers***



Ensuring better access and support to participate in leisure, hobbies, friendships, interests and talent groups

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## A Strategy setting out how Walsall Council and Partners will act as excellent Corporate Parents

**The National picture** describes a challenging position for Councils and their partners captured well in the following statement -

"Our goals for children in care should be exactly the same as our goals for our own children: we want their childhoods to be secure, healthy and enjoyable – rich and valuable in themselves as well as providing stable foundations for the rest of their lives. Unfortunately, at the moment our care system fails to enable most children who enter it to achieve these aspirations. For many of the 60,000 children who are in care at any one time, childhood and adolescence are often characterised by insecurity, ill health and lack of fulfilment. This is terribly sad and we can hardly be surprised that it results in many children in care underachieving educationally and getting nowhere near fulfilling their potential as adults.

Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education & Skills in Care matters: Transforming the lives of children and young people in care

These sentiments are supported through A *study Close the Gap for Children in Care* and other *statistics* which paint a stark picture that

- In the best performing council's 83 per cent of children leaving care achieve at least one GCSE or GNVQ; in the worst it is just 16 Per cent; and
- Only one in a hundred children in care was going on to university in autumn 2005, compared with 43 per cent of the under 30s.
- 40 per cent achieve five or more GCSE passes/equivalent at grades A\* -G (compared with 90 per cent of all children) (Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children in Care) (external link);
- Children in care are nine times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion from school (Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children in Care);
- They are nearly three times more likely to be cautioned/convicted (Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children in Care);

and

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- Over a quarter of prisoners were in care as children (Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children in Care).

**Local Solutions** we are aware that low performance in all of the above categories is proving very difficult to shift and where there are improvements they tend to be marginal. Walsall is therefore setting out forward thinking strategies to combat these issues that have proven to be 'wicked issues' for most authorities by:

*Planning services based on facts* which show that even when compared against children with similar levels of SEN, deprivation, and mobility, children in care can do significantly worse; therefore we will –

- Only look after the correct children who will benefit from care, particularly to keep children safe
- Our care leavers only accommodate children where there is no viable family or extended family alternative
- Return children back to their own family home or where possible to another suitable permanent setting as soon as possible
- Ensure that early decisions are taken when it is appropriate and necessary to bring a child into care

*Taking steps to de-criminalise children and young people.* Children in care and care leavers often fare worse and are more likely to be cautioned or convicted of an offence than other children, with around 27% of adult prisoners have spent time in care. Source: Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006.

We are therefore forging strong working links with the Youth Offending Service to work in a restorative justice way with children and are also investing in social pedagogy training for care workers. These approaches help strengthen relationships with staff and carers leading to a reduction of incidents that involve the Police. Furthermore, the Corporate Parenting Service is a member of the Youth Offending Performance Board which ensures that children in care and care leavers benefit more from Youth Support Services, Information, Advice and Guidance and prospect (careers) services. Better support is also agreed with key partners including the Police, Court Service and Probation to better prevent children in care and care leavers receiving cautions and conviction and the prospect of offending in the future.

*Introducing new performance systems.* National trend information is suggesting the gap between children in care and other children gaining 5A\*- grades has not narrowed but has begun to widen as the reforms to drive up the attainment of all children increases. Furthermore, at the age of 19 only about 1 in 5 of care leavers move into further education and only about 6% in higher education compared to 38% of all young people participating in one or the others. Source : Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006

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We have therefore introducing a new schemes to accelerate educational attainment and advance transitional and leaving care support. There will be an increasing focus on covering post 16 EET (5 to 21 and 25 in some instances of LDD support). In addition there will be an emphasis for early planning and support.

We will strengthen performance by establishing a management committee that reports performance to the Corporate Parenting Board. The goal here is to support effective challenge in schools, services and alternative providers to ensure that the achievement and attainment of all children in care is effectively targeted, prioritised and monitored. The committee will receive reports from senior Virtual College staff, education managers and managers from identified service areas on the following:

- teaching and learning including both curriculum support and curriculum extension activity
- achievement and attainment, including target setting
- attendance
- exclusion
- enrichment activities and programmes
- employment and training opportunities
- staffing and workforce development
- legislation and statutory guidance

*Providing targeted advice, guidance and support.* National statistics tell us that young women aged 15 to 17 who have been in care are 3 times more likely to become teenage mothers than others of their age we will be providing extra support, advise and guidance to all children especially girls and young female care leavers. Source: Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006.



Through carers and key-worker roles, school programmes and partnership with Walsall's Teenage Pregnancy Service and voluntary programmes such as Walsall Street Teams; our young people will be supported appropriately. The shift towards Virtual College status, with priority and target setting capability, will ensure that targeted and timely support is given to vulnerable children as a preventative measure. (Source: Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006)

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*Creating a sea change of opportunity for care leavers.* The national picture shows over 30% of care leavers are not in education, employment or training at age 19 compared to about 13% of all young people Source: Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006

The development and strengthening of our 16 – 19 and beyond strategy is central to improving outcomes for our care leavers in the areas of accommodation, education, employment and training. We are creating strong partnership with all sectors to form alliances, networks and opportunities. We are continuing to host career events for care leavers with all partners to explore the ‘endless possibilities’ open to them and explore ways to better meet need through partnership summits

*Responding positively to implementing National Care Standards.* The national picture was that only around 25% of care homes are meeting 90% or more of the National Minimum Standards and that qualifications levels of staff tend to be poor and only 23% of residential care staff are qualified to the expected standard for these settings. Source: Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006

Focused efforts in our residential services and capital programmes have helped us to create suitable children's home setting for our children. With improvements to skills, training and qualifications and careful review of each homes Statement of Purpose, we are now ranked as having a good residential home with 2 (40)% of our homes ranked as outstanding. We will make further improvements, particularly a new build of our respite home (improving range of short term breaks) over this next period in keeping with our pledges to children.

Nationally fostering services have faced similar problems with over a third fail to meet National Minimum Standards on suitability to work with children and one in four failing to meet the standard on providing suitable carers. Source: Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care 2006

We have restructured services to improve the ratio of qualified staff and strengthened our safeguarding arrangements. We are focusing on recruiting more local carers and ensuring our carers are well supported, trained and fairly remunerated. We have also been successful in providing good levels of placement stability which has minimised placement breakdowns. A continual key target is to ensure that as many children as possible are in the right placement for them or that they are receiving sufficient support.

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## Local Issues

The national context set out in the previous section and similar trends illustrate the complexity of the task we and our partners face and what our strategy sets out to remedy. Ensuring that we have the correct number of children in care and that their length of stay is well managed are fundamental aspects of the strategy.

We recognise that care is not necessarily good for all children and for vulnerable children, unless becoming a child in care is appropriate and increase children's life chances. Bringing a child into care may result in worse outcomes over the longer term. Our approach is to provide care where needed to safeguard children and to ensure that children do not languish in care.

Our operational focus is geared towards preventing those children with a child protection plan (CPP) becoming children in care, unless becoming a child in care it is determined as being in their best interests. In these circumstances the priority is to secure a permanency plan in the shortest possible timescales starting and where appropriate, with a rehabilitation plan back to their own families where children have strong attachments.

Our strategy makes the crucial link with CPP, as the local picture tells us that if CPPs are high, conversions of CPP to children in care are likely to follow which increases the children in care population. Our commissioning priorities are therefore geared towards providing targeted long term support to those children and families who have been identified as been on the edge of care. This approach achieves a number of distinct advantages as follows:-

- Ensures more children and families are kept together and supported
- Ensures more children are safeguarded in the longer term in their own families
- Breaks generational cycles of children becoming looked after
- Restricts quality care to children who most need it

Local trends have seen a substantially higher proportion of children in care admissions aged "5 to 10", compared to previous years. With this in mind and the charts illustrating that those aged "5 to 10" on admission have historically had much longer length of stays, our current priority is to target this age group for concentrated permanency planning. In general terms admissions, age cohorts and length of stay patterns will be regularly monitored through our performance and activities and outcome forums.

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A feature of feedback from practitioners indicates lower confidence in Walsall's progress against the "achieve economic wellbeing", and more confidence in progress against "enjoy and achieve". Given the strong link between the "achieve" element outcome and the chances of securing economic wellbeing in life, Walsall has put in place strategic actions to improve upon this. We will review the use of PEPs and pathway plans to ensure high quality and high aspiration, and will at the same time look at the role of designated teachers and their training needs.

In terms of our performance management driving up educational attainment, particularly the number of children who achieve 5 GCSE'S grade A – C is a key priority. Currently attainment predictions for children in care are showing we have **20.8%** predicted to achieve 5 A\*-C GCSE (including English & Maths) and **12 (25%)** A\*-C GCSE not including English and Maths, which are closely aligned. The real performance drive in this next period is supporting the 40% of children predicted to achieve 5 D\*-G GCSE (including English & Maths) to reach a grade C or above with intensive support and reaching the remaining 34% of children who will gain no qualifications or 1 GCSE grade A –C. Our Virtual School has improved the educational attainment of children in care in real terms and the partnership will have a focus on supporting care leavers education and training over the next 3 years.

Other key performance priorities targets in keeping with key strategies include, the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation currently standing at 88.2 % rising to 95% by 2011; care leavers in EET standing at 67% rising to 74 in 2011 and reducing the number of agency foster placements from 112 to 105 in 2011.

### **Becoming great Corporate Parents by adopting 'Good Practice Principles'**

The Walsall Corporate Parenting Strategy embraces the principles of Care Matters and complies with statutory frameworks for standards and performance. Our underlying approach to corporate parenting is based on standards for good parenting for those children and young people cared for and supported by Walsall. The following principles are central to the strategy:

- Use of plain language
- Improve the skills of carers and parents
- Improving housing and support for families and young people
- Ensuring the views and wishes of children and young people are properly represented in care and pathway plans

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- Maintain and promote positive friendships and interests
- That all parents and young people have good access to information

These principles are reflected in a series of good evidenced based practices as follows;

- **That children should not be looked after where a better alternative exists**

Walsall continues to operate a preventative strategy which will be strengthened by targeting children on the edge of care for support on a continuous basis. This approach ensures that care is only used for children who need high level intervention.

- **For most of our children better outcomes can be achieved through caring and supporting children and young people locally to Walsall**

Training and support to our local foster and residential carers is a priority in the strategy enhancing their role as carers particularly in decision making for children. We will recruit and retain more foster carers through better marketing, commissioning, and support structures.

- **That all children will be given the support they need to overcome their disadvantage and realise their potential.**

The corporate parenting role will be strengthened by carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and/or Quality Audits on selected procedures including PEP's and Care Plans. Key policies will be reviewed to explore a new option's to remain in foster care till 21 and to introduce a system for veto on fixed term school exclusions for children in care

- **That the route to success in adulthood will be by assessing a good education with good qualifications.**

Designated teacher and head-teacher roles will be reviewed and strengthened in response to what children in care and care leavers say in relation to their education. School Governors will be asked to play a far greater role in supporting the attainment and well being of children in care within their schools.

- **Once children leave the care of Walsall they are able to live a self supported and independent adult life in settings where they are able to achieve, stay safe and be healthy.**

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The Walsall Strategic Partnership (Including Supporting People) will improve support to care leavers as a vulnerable group particularly in relation to the quality and choice of suitable accommodation and floating support. Good transition plans aim to ensure that care leavers are integrated into education, employment and training opportunities, leisure and friendship networks and a healthy lifestyle which is supported and monitored.

## Planning for Children

The Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) is a statutory requirement of the Children's Act 2004 and is the single over-arching strategy that provides a common direction for all our strategies. The plan shows how all the partners on Walsall Children and Young People's Partnership Board are working together to improve outcomes for children and young people. The main priorities set around relating to corporate parenting priorities are:

*Target early intervention to ensure safety.* Placement and guidance in educational stability are crucial in to ensuring children in care are supported to be the best they can be in life. The Care Matters places new responsibilities on Councils to ensure sufficient and appropriate placement choice for children in care. Walsall is undertaking a needs analysis of its looked after population in order to identify the gaps in placements provision and put in place a commissioning plan to meet those gaps. This will not only ensure that Walsall meets its new sufficiency duty, but also will improve placement stability.

*Promote social inclusion.* In Walsall, children in care and their foster carers have expressed the view that regulation or lack of certainty about regulations around in decision making about aspects of the life is problematic, including, but not exclusively, overnight stays or attendance on school trips. Instances are quite often those where any other parent would assume the right to make the decision, but the absence of clarity or aversion to risk gets in the way. Walsall will therefore publish clear and concise guidance to all to comply with the Walsall plain parenting campaign.

*Improve Service delivery.* It is well-known that the longer a young person is able to remain in placement, in particular post-18, the better the chance there is of that young person finding and remaining in education, employment and training. Children and young people develop strong relationships and emotional attachments with those who care for them. It is a striking fact also that the average age young people leave home is 24 years, yet children in foster care usually leave their placement at around 18 years old. In accordance with Care Matters, Walsall recognises these facts and is reviewing its provision to take forward initiatives to achieve a sea-change in the experience of leaving care. This would make allowances for children in care who have established familial relationships with their foster carers to continue.

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

*Value & support our Young People.* In Walsall, children in care participate and engage with their corporate parents in a variety of ways, reflecting the diversity of age, capability and preference of individual young people and their representatives on the C4K. While there can be no complacency around ensuring the voice of children in care genuinely shapes the care and support received Walsall starts from an encouraging position and should seek to build on and strengthen this across the wider Children and Young People's Partnership.

However, the message from children in care is clear on two issues that are core to effective participation and engagement:

- They do not know who their corporate parents are and what they're supposed to do; and
- They want to know what happens as a consequence of their participation and engagement.

As such, Walsall has taken action to achieve a step change the culture of language by inviting the C4K to review a set of new pledges for Walsall (with a children's version). The pledges underpin all of Walsall's most fundamental commitments to children in care and establish the vision for all services that work with them, and consequently the strategies and service plans. The new pledges outline the priorities for making sure corporate parenting is the best it can be in Walsall.

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## Where do we want to get to?

*Summary of our vision of the future state of corporate parenting experienced by our children and young people*  
Between 2010 and 2013 we want to;

- Deliver and extend a range of good services
- Deliver on our pledges to children and young people
- Improve life chances by achieving much improved outcomes for children in care and care leavers
- Shape services based on the experience of children in care and care leavers
- Make sure that corporate parenting is seen as everyone's responsibility;
- Build on and strengthen the foundations of good participation of children in care
- Introduce a plain parenting campaign to ensure that the language used to describe corporate parenting is accessible and easy to understand
- Review policies concerning what decision making powers foster carers and residential staff have
- Ensuring the voice of the children in care drives educational provision;
- Ensure placements for children in care are the best they can be and ensure good quality local placements
- Achieve a sea-change in the experience of leaving care.
- Tackle social health care inequalities experienced by children in care and care leavers
- Introduce a Virtual College to drive performance, particularly, employment, education and training (including HE and university access)

## How will we get there?

*Summary of the key changes*

- Development of a virtual academy
- Improving quality of social work practice
- Develop extended services for 0-25
- Develop a pledge criteria across all children and young people, staff, carers, partners, board members and elected members

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## **Acknowledgments**

In completing this strategy special thanks are given to the Walsall Council4Kids, Walsall Corporate Parenting Board, Care Matters Partnership, Walsall Outreach Team and Virtual School (SERCO)

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## ACTION PLAN

**ENJOY AND ACHIEVE** (lead officer: Karen Dainty, Children's Services, Serco)

### Pledges

*"To enable students to achieve their academic potential through the provision of targeted and appropriate educational support.*

*To enable students facing challenges to fulfil their potential through a range of supportive intervention strategies.*

*To enable students to access enrichment activities of all types that will enhance their personal and educational development."*

	Aims	Priority & Targets	Strategic Actions	Plans ref	Lead Officer	Progress to Date November 2010
Enjoy and Achieve	Achieve Stretching National Educational Standards	To ensure the highest possible attendance at school with good punctuality	Walsall will have a no exclusion policy for children in care.	C & YP plan	Frank Barnes	Welcome Centre for KS1/2 pupils established at Phoenix School. Secondary Behaviour & Attendance Partnerships in operation. Reorganisation of Short Stay Schools completed.
			Attendance policy to be produced to put procedures in place so that carers do not take children/young people on holiday in school time	Virtual School Strategic /operational plan	Karen Dainty	New 'duty to co-operate' in the Children's Trust for schools as Statutory Partners. Attendance policy agreed and distributed to Operations Managers, Team Managers and Social Workers. From September to October half term 6 young people have lost 18 school days lost due to holidays.
			The introduction of a 'Guest move' protocol to enable children/young people to move school if in their best interest.		Karen Dainty	Guest /Managed move protocol in place

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

<b>Enjoy and Achieve</b>	<b>Achieve Stretching National Educational Standards</b>	<p>To ensure sustainability, children in care must be prioritised and included in all projects which are available to enhance their educational and social experiences and improve outcomes</p>	<p>A senior member of the Virtual school attend WIPES, Aim Higher, service meetings to raise the profile of Children in Care and advocate their participation in projects.</p> <p>Head of Quality and Effectiveness to identify and allocate a CSIA and SIP to the virtual School</p>		<p>Karen Dainty</p>	<p>Personalised programmes have been put in place for those young people in Key Stage 4 at risk of becoming NEET and who are displaying challenging behaviour.</p> <p>14 girls in years 3 – 6 attend Queen Mary High School project on a weekly basis.</p> <p>10 young people have regularly attended Queen Mary's Grammar School Homework Club. Transport is still an issue.</p> <p>Children's Service Improvement Advisor and School Improvement Partner allocated to the Virtual School in June 2010</p>
		<p>To increase the active involvement of foster carers/residential staff, social workers in all aspects of C&amp;YPs education.</p>	<p>In partnership with Operational Managers The Virtual School will deliver 3 x training sessions annually for foster carers/residential staff and link social workers</p> <p>To meet with operational managers to identify strategies which will engage carers, residential staff and link social workers in supporting enrichment activities for Children in Care</p>		<p>Karen Dainty</p>	<p>Foster carers/ residential staff and link social workers will continue to be invited to all training for designated teachers</p> <p>As a result of the consultation in May 10, bespoke training programmes have been put in place for carers and included in their training calendar. The Virtual School were advised 1 week prior to training in December that the session had been cancelled due to poor take up.</p>

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

						Staff from the Virtual School Residential and Family Placement Service are currently transporting girls not in residential homes to the QMHS project due to a lack of availability of foster carers
		Receive continuous education throughout all placements arrangements and that they will not move during years 10 & 11 unless there are exceptional circumstances	Senior members of the Virtual School to meet with Family Placements/commissioning to look at current IPAs and request for placement moves so that all educational information is gathered before the move takes place		Karen Dainty /Louise Watts	

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

**BE HEALTHY** (lead officer: Jayne Clarke, WCH)

## Pledges

*“For children and young people to achieve their optimum physical and mental health and well being.*

*For young people to be ready for healthy adult living when they leave care.*

*For children and young people with specific health needs to access the care and support they need from health services quickly and easily”.*

	Aims	Priority & Targets	Strategic Actions	Plans ref	Lead Officer	Progress to Date November 2010
Be Healthy	Physically Healthy	In partnership with the NHS, look to develop a programme to positively tackle Teenage Pregnancies and Conceptions	<p>Targeted work through TLC health advisor to offer sexual health advice for all entering the TLC service which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Full initial health assessment</li> <li>▪ Offer bespoke health promotion programmes regarding lifestyle choices</li> <li>▪ Offer Chlamydia screening &amp; pregnancy testing</li> </ul> <p>Utilise Young People’s Health Advisors regarding sexual health (Lifestyle services)</p> <p>Access for vulnerable young people via identified schools into the Teens and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teenage Pregnancy Strategy</li> <li>• NSF for children, young people and maternity services achievements (2007-2009) and forward Plans (2010-2012)</li> </ul> <p>Teenage Pregnancy Team (NHS Walsall)</p>	<b>Lesley Clare</b>	<p>Health Advisor in post since March 2010</p> <p>All YP transferring over to TLC have a comprehensive health assessment</p> <p>Links with Residential Unit and ‘Drop in’ to offer health promotion advice and activities</p> <p>Chlamydia screening &amp; pregnancy testing offered</p> <p>Smoking cessation offered</p> <p><b>To date:</b></p> <p>9 mothers 16-19 years age</p> <p>8 pregnancies 16-19 years age</p> <p>1 pregnant 15 year old</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>YP from Residential Unit (Spindle Tree) attending programme</p>

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

		Tots Programme			
	To improve access to universal health services for looked after CYP and onward 'fast track' referral when indicated  Aim 90% CYP to have an up to date health assessment annually	For children's services and children in care health team to develop robust systems of information transfer so that CYP receive high quality assessments of health needs (inclusive of dental and optical review)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Assessment Procedure for LACYP ( NHS Walsall 2009)</li> <li>• Walsall NHS Dental Protocol</li> <li>• Statutory guidance on Promoting the health and well being if Children in Care (DCSF/DOH 2009)</li> </ul>	<b>Jayne Clarke</b>	System in place regarding review health assessments working well.  To date 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct-30 <sup>th</sup> Sept = <b><u>95% achieved</u></b>
	Timely notification to the children in care health team of CYP entering care to enable 4 week target of initial health assessment to be completed (100%)	Children's services to forward required paperwork to children in care health team within 5 days of CYP entry into care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Assessment Procedure (NHS Walsall 2009)</li> <li>• CP Strategy</li> </ul>	<b>Debbie Silvester/Karen Johnson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YTD 62% notified within these timescales</li> </ul>
	80% if initial health assessments to be completed within 4 weeks of entering care	Ensure eligible children (8 weeks-16years) have an initial health assessment within 4 weeks to enable personal health plan to feed into the first Statutory Review	Health Assessment Procedure (Walsall NHS)  Statutory Guidance (as above)	<b>Jayne Clarke</b>	Q1 =100% seen in time Q2= 57%  (October =57%/Nov=62%  Exception Report- due in part to late receipt of paperwork (consent) and clinic cancelled

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

	<p>Ensure that all carers are provided with the information to support children in care and YP to be healthy</p> <p>(Inclusive of all foster carers- newly registered and existing/ residential staff)</p>	<p>Children in care health team to undertake rolling programme of health awareness training. Induction Programme bi-annually</p> <p>Annual Healthy Care Programme delivered over two days in conjunction with children's services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling programme in place and training delivered to target</li> <li>• Health information placed in foster care magazine to ensure that carer's are kept up to date with good practice guidance</li> </ul>
	<p>Promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness around the health needs of children in care with residential staff</p>	<p>Children in Care and YP health team to have regular contact with units at least monthly to provide support, information and training on general health needs and health promotion sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Guidance 2009</li> <li>• Nice Guidance LAC 2010</li> </ul>	<b>Jayne Clarke</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health team have named responsibility for individual residential Units within Walsall.</li> </ul>
	<p>To seek CYP views on the enhanced health service offered and ensure they have access to a range of health information</p>	<p>Ensure web page on the Virtual School website is kept up to date with health team details and health information. Team to have input into Team A magazine Via the council 4 Kids forum to seek their views on health issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Matters</li> </ul>	<b>Jayne Clarke</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual School website has a link to 'Teen life Check'</li> <li>• Regular input into Team A magazine and representation on the Council 4 Kids council</li> </ul>
	<p>Ensure CYP equipped with health information (past medical/family history) pertinent to them and in a format which is appealing</p>	<p>Revitalise the format of the 'Health Fax' and gain young people's suggestions on how to improve the format</p> <p>Make general format generic in to enable it to be circulated to CYP placed out of borough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care matters</li> </ul>	<b>Named Nurse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and workshop completed</li> <li>• Health Fax has been updated In response to YP's views</li> <li>• Information generic to enable out of area YP access</li> </ul>

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

		To prepare young people for independence and ensure they are equipped with the information and resources to make healthy lifestyle choices	TLC health advisor and Named Nurse to work proactively with young people in these areas Offer an initial assessment on transfer into TLC service to assess health risks and behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care Matters</li> <li>LAC Nice Guidance 2010</li> </ul>	<b>Jayne Clarke</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In place and linking in with universal health provision</li> <li>TLC advisor to undertake a comprehensive assessment of health needs when YP moving in to independent living accommodation (Dec/Jan 2011)</li> </ul>
		Raise awareness around the adverse effects of substance misuse and impact this can have on lifestyle choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TLC Health Advisor to work in partnership with Personal advisor and specialist services (T3) to identify those YP at risk screened following the initial health assessment (following transfer into TLC service)</li> <li>Develop Personal Health Plans and provide bespoke support and advice which meets identified needs</li> <li>TLC health advisor to utilise YPHA substance misuse to offer awareness raising programmes in a variety of settings across Walsall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSF</li> </ul>	<b>TLC Health Advisor</b>  <b>Bob Heighway</b>  <b>T3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protocol in place to ensure all YP entering TLC service (health advisor picking up at 15 ½ years to ensure smooth transition from school health) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>T3 worker attends TLC Drop in</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		Ensure there are clear referral pathways into specialist services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TLC health advisor and staff with T3 and CAMHS to meet on a regular basis to review trends and that referral processes meeting needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care Matters</li> <li>CYPP</li> <li>NSF for CYP and Mat services</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings in place approx 6 weekly</li> </ul>
		Ensure children in care and YP emotional needs are met and ensure timely referral into specialist services as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness across all professionals involved with looked after CYP around the emotional health needs.</li> <li>To undertake the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire regarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAMHS Strategic Implementation Plan</li> <li>DfE requirement</li> </ul>	<b>SDQ Steering Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding secured form PCT Commissioners –March 2011</li> <li>Administrator (Children in Care Health Team) in place to facilitate carer return with joint working from Children's</li> </ul>

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

		required	<p>care assessment of emotional well being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide baseline measurement of emotional health needs of children in care and YP population</li>   <li>• Evaluate findings of SDQ (2008/9-2010)</li> </ul>	(LA re carer score)	<b>WCH Public Health Department</b>	<p>Services to ensure improved response rate (link worker/social worker)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Plan in place to address governance issues highlighted in previous cohort</li>   <li>▪ Public Health in process of analysing data</li> <li>▪ Report to be published early next year re usefulness of SDQ screening and whether leading to improved emotional health and well being (presented to CP Board)</li> </ul>
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# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

**STAY SAFE** (lead officer: Elaine Storey, Children's Services)

**Pledges**

*"To work in partnership to ensure that we do all we can to keep children and young people safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation.*

*To coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. See also WSCB Work Plan. Free from discrimination and harassment.*

*Full utilisation of advocacy services to enable children and young people to contribute directly to conference and review process."*

	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Priority &amp; Targets</b>	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<b>Plans ref</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Progress to Date November 2010</b>
<b>Stay Safe</b>	<b>Have Security, Stability and are cared for</b>	Ensure that the child always has a named Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who consistently chairs all their reviews and who meets then before their review	Established workload management system to ensure proportionate allocation- principles of consistent chair for previously children who previously had a child protection plan and consistent chair for related children	Care Planning Regulations 2010	Amanda Owen	All children in care have an identified IRO before their 1 <sup>st</sup> review, who consistently chairs their subsequent reviews.
		Ensure that the child is offered an advocate who can attend their review and/or represent their views	Advocacy Contract specifies service to children in care and provision of an advocate at their reviews and dedicated linked advocate to residential units	Advocacy service for Black Country Contract	Amanda Owen	Tendering process undertaken in respect of re-provision 2011-2014  A checklist has been updated to include question about whether an advocate has been offered when SW books date for first review

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

<b>Stay Safe</b>	<b>Have Security, Stability and are cared for</b>	Ensure that children have an opportunity to be seen alone and their views are clearly understood and inform care planning	Implementation of IRO Action Plan pending review of IRO Service by DfE (January 2011)	Care Planning Regulations 2010	Amanda Owen	Development of IRO Action Plan-January 2010
		Ensure that children and young people have regular reviews that are person-centred & that their care plan reflects legal, safeguarding, educational, health, emotional, social, cultural, contact and identity needs	Performance Management Framework reports on timeliness of reviews and consultation/participation indicators.	Care Planning Regulations 2010 & Care Matters	Amanda Owen	Balanced scorecard developed for Safeguarding Service for January 2010
		Ensure that if child or young person is missing from care, there are processes to locate them and support their return to a safe environment  IRO's chair missing from care meetings to address the needs of children and young people who runaway and inform the response to future services provided	Implementation of Missing Children Strategy -WSCB	Care Matters  Working Together 2010  Supplementary Guidance 2009	Margaret Gough	Missing Children strategy re-launched-September 2010  CARE Panel established in September 2010 from YPSE-broadening scope to include children missing education/trafficking between local areas. This informs Practitioner Panel and High Risk Panel chaired by Detective Inspector  WM Regional merging of Runaways and Trafficking for informed local and Black

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

						Country response- October 2010
<b>Stay Safe</b>	<b>Have Security, Stability and are cared for</b>	Communicate the anti-bullying strategy across the schools in Walsall	Implementation of anti-bullying strategy work plan lead by anti-bullying steering group	Anti-Bullying Strategy 2009-2011	Tony McGregor	Safeguarding Advisers for Education and Early Years appointed  Work plan implemented in 2010
		Raise concerns with Team Manager where immediate action is required to safeguard from harm and prevent a possible breach of human rights &  Instigate informal and formal conflict resolution procedures	Implementation of Safeguarding and Review Team Plan	Safeguarding Service Plan	Amanda Owen	Traffic Lights RAG rating of all reviews to identify practice issues and escalate- implemented in July 2009 and reviewed in May 2010 to make it more responsive  implemented for Disabled Children's Team –November 2010
		Offer consultation and advice to children in care's teams on care planning and safeguarding issues.	Implementation of Safeguarding and Review Team Plan  Delivering on Getting Right Action Plan and Service Standards	Getting Right Action Plan and Service Standards	Amanda Owen	IRO deliver advice/ consultation at regular surgeries held in Corporate Parenting Service- implemented May 2010

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING (lead officer: Bob Heighway, Children's Services)

### Pledges

*"We will promote leaving care young people and unaccompanied asylum seeking young people into education, employment and training by working in close collaboration with partner agencies both internal and external to the Council.*

*We will continue to work with relevant agencies to achieve financial stability for all care leavers and unaccompanied Asylum seeking young people.*

*A wider range of suitable accommodation will be developed with partner agencies to meet the needs of Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People.*

*By working with our partners in Adult Services we will implement seamless transition processes for young people with disabilities".*

	Aims	Indicators & Targets	Strategic Actions	Plans ref	Lead Officer	Progress to date November 2010
Achieve Economic Well-being Increase the numbers of Children in Care and Care Leavers in EET		<u>PRIORITY</u> To achieve 74% of care leavers in employment, education or training.	Implementation of PSA Action Plan	Children and Young People's Plan 2010/11.  Transition & Leaving Care Team Action Plan	R. Heighway  K. Robinson	Achieved 66% in quarter one April to June 2010
		<u>ACTION</u> Care leavers to be offered work experience placements with WMBC under the Positive Action Scheme.  To establish a data base of NEET which can be exchanged between agencies with jointly agreed actions for individual NEET.	Implementation of 'Summit Plan' agreed between Education Walsall, Walsall Council, Walsall College and Connexions.  Possible work placements with Council contractual partner Tarmac.		R. Heighway  K. Robinson  R. Heighway  K. Robinson	So far five young people have begun 12 month paid work placements with the local authority. A further two young people are due to take up placements.  Initial discussion with Tarmac representatives.

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

<b>Achieve Economic Well-being</b>	<b>Increase the numbers of Children in Care and Care Leavers in EET</b>	Increase the number of work experience opportunities available.	Participation in the From Care 2 Work project. (DCSF/NCAS) which is helping the authority develop the employability of care leavers and increase the number of work experience opportunities available with both national and local employers, and the local authority itself.	Children and Young People's Plan 2010/11.  Transition & Leaving Care Team Action Plan	R. Heighway  K. Robinson	Work plan prepared to implement project, progressing towards quality mark.
		Participation in a TLC/EET networking group and the Walsall Improving Participation and Engagement Team Group, to increase joint working between TLC and other agencies.			R. Heighway  K. Robinson	Connexions PA's deployed to TLC, and a service level agreement with Walsall College.
		To ensure unaccompanied asylum seeking children are assisted in accordance with legislation.	TLC staff attends regional stakeholder events. Links have also been made with other authorities, UKBA and WM Leaders Board.		R. Heighway  S. Blick	UASC are attending college courses, have access to the same services as care leavers, legal representatives and support throughout the immigration process.  Achieved 91.7% in quarter one. April to June 2010
		To ensure that care leavers have access to suitable accommodation. Target 95%	Implementation of PSA 16 care leaver's action plan.	Children and Young People's Plan 2010/11  Transition & Leaving Care Team Action Plan.	R. Heighway  S. Blick	Four new providers are available.  Meeting arranged with strategic housing to discuss all issues and agree on action plan.

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

<b>Achieve Economic Well-being</b>	<b>Increase the numbers of Children in Care and Care Leavers in EET</b>		Work with strategic housing and the Children's Commissioner to increase the range of suitable accommodation and to minimise the use of bed and breakfast/homeless persons accommodation.		R. Heighway S. Blick	
			Improvement of working practices with providers in terms of contracts standards, targets to achieve comprehensive monthly reports with measurable outcomes.		R. Heighway S. Blick	Commissioning Officer appointed, meetings being held with providers.
			Through supporting people have developed a partnership with Accord to provide 'floating support' to enhance placement stability under the promoting independence programme.		R. Heighway S. Blick	Support being given to 12 young people.
			Foster care placements are extended under short-term agreements to create supported lodgings placements.		R. Heighway S. Blick	Initial discussion held with Children's Services Commissioner. Next step to seek the views of Family Placement Service.

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

<b>Achieve Economic Well-being</b>	<b>Increase the numbers of Children in Care and Care Leavers in EET</b>	<p>Promotion of financial stability for care leavers and UASC</p>	<p>Involvement in a benefit pilot with Job Centre Plus.</p> <p>TLC has put systems in place with both Walsall College and Job Centre Plus to promote second chance learning.</p>	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2010/11.</p> <p>Transition &amp; Leaving Care Team Action Plan</p>	<p>R. Heighway</p> <p>S. Blick</p>	<p>Improvement in access to welfare benefits.</p> <p>Profile of care leavers and UASC as a vulnerable group raised within the Benefits Office.</p> <p>Result of pilot may lead to a national change of policy.</p> <p>Young people have been enabled to continue to receive welfare benefits whilst in education and training beyond age 19.</p> <p>TLC has been approached for good practice advice by other local authorities.</p>
			<p>Maintenance of a stable support policy for those wanting to complete higher education.</p> <p>Improve the awareness of higher education to care leavers and UASC's.</p> <p>To promote eligibility and support of employment and support allowance for care leavers with learning difficulties.</p>		<p>R. Heighway</p> <p>S. Blick</p>	<p>Policy review on an annual basis. Needs review annually.</p> <p>Liaison with health to address medical certificate issues.</p> <p>Discussion with the benefits office.</p> <p>Achieved a greater understanding of financial policy support with higher education establishments and with education colleagues.</p>

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

		<p>Transition planning for looked after young people with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities receiving services is thorough, timely and regularly evaluated to ensure smooth transition to adult services and further education, employment or training</p>	<p>Multi agency working parties have met on different aspects of the transition process.</p>	<p>Children and Young People's Plan 2010/11.</p> <p>Transition &amp; Leaving Care Team Action Plan</p>	<p>R. Heighway</p> <p>R. Mann</p>	<p>An agreed transition procedure.</p> <p>A new transition referral form.</p> <p>An information leaflet for Children in Care/young people with disabilities.</p>
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# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION (lead officer: Debbie Silvester, Children's Services)

### Pledges

*"The positive action scheme will be prioritised, developed and embedded to provide trainee opportunities within the council for Leaving Care Young People.*

*The mentoring programme will be further developed.*

*A more coordinated and effective approach to assisting our young people in developing employment skills will be initiated to better prepare them to compete in the job market".*

	Aims	Indicators & Targets	Strategic Actions	Plans ref	Lead Officer	Progress to date December 2010
To develop self confidence, self esteem and Social skills and reduce isolation and loneliness	Engagement in decision making is actively encouraged	All children in care and young people will be encouraged and supported to participate in a hobby, interest or activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification through individual discussions with the child/young person.</li> <li>• Foster carers to be encouraged to support children and young people in developing their hobby, interest or activity.</li> <li>• Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer to actively pursue through the care planning process</li> <li>• Work with children and young people to identify the key barriers to accessing public, private, and voluntary activities</li> <li>• Work with sport and physical activity leaders to raise awareness or provide a key resource for working with our children in care population.</li> <li>• Provide clear information on opportunities that are available</li> <li>• Target support to enable encouragement</li> </ul>	Children and Young Person's Plan	D Silvester (SW) K Dainty (PEP)  Louise Watts  D Silvester E Storey  Integrated Services  Integrated Services  Integrated Services  Integrated Services	

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

<b>To develop self confidence, self esteem and Social skills and reduce isolation and loneliness</b>	<b>Engagement in decision making is actively encouraged</b>	<p>Are provided with opportunities to develop into responsible citizens through the involvement in volunteering, youth work and informal education.</p> <p>Children and young people are actively encouraged to participate in the training of Foster Carers, Social Workers and partner agencies and the recruitment of staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with respective providers to identify and develop opportunities</li> <li>• Ensure that children and young people are represented on youth opportunity / Capital Fund Panel and supported to access these funds and develop decision making skills.</li> <li>• Recruitment practices will ensure that children and young people are considered in the recruitment of staff who directly work with them or make decisions on their behalf.</li> <li>• Identify appropriate opportunities for children and young people to be involved.</li> <li>• Provide training and support to develop confidence and enable participation.</li> </ul>	<p>Children and Young Person's Plan</p> <p>Walsall Youth Service Action Plan</p>	<p>K Robinson</p> <p>J Nokes J Thomas</p> <p>L Koc</p> <p>L Koc</p> <p>L Koc</p>	
		<p>100% of children and young people are actively consulted in decisions made about their lives</p> <p>Virtual School website to be accessed by 75% of students and to be kept up to date</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful recording of the child's views in care planning, pathway planning, PEP's</li> <li>• Every child and young person to have a care plan/pathway plan and PEP that is reflective of their individual needs and maximises potential.</li> <li>• The numbers of children and young people involved in the C4K to be actively increased</li> </ul>		<p>D Silvester E Storey K Dainty</p> <p>D Silvester E Storey K Dainty</p> <p>K Dainty</p>	

