

Introduction to the Corporate Parenting Board



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Training Aims

- **Brief History of the Board**
 - **Role**
 - **Membership**
 - **Remit**
- **Children in Care Council explained**
 - **Corporate Parenting Strategy**

Why do we have a Board

Duty

The council has a duty to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of each child they look after'. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for looked-after children and young people, and care leavers. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven principles

Whilst not a statutory requirement, most local authorities establish a Corporate Parenting Board to assist the Council in continuing to fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities.

The leadership and commitment of Elected Members in their role as Corporate Parents is of critical importance in achieving good outcomes for children and young people in care.

The 7 Corporate Parenting Principles

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven principles that we need to follow:

1. To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
5. Seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
6. For those children and young people to be safe and stable in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

Role of Elected Members

All Elected members, when elected to represent their ward, becomes a corporate parent as part of their role.

When a child or young person cannot live with their birth family for whatever reason and becomes looked after, parental responsibility transfers to the local authority; this is referred to as corporate parenting.

As corporate parents for our most vulnerable children – those who are looked after by the local authority, or those who have left local authority care , the whole Council, as their corporate parent, has a responsibility to ensure that we have the same aspirations and interest in their progress as any parent would have for their own child.

Current Arrangements

Council – May, 2018

- Established the Corporate Parenting Board as a politically balanced, non decision making meeting of Council to provide clear governance, responsibility and accountability;
- Chaired by Portfolio Holder;
- Chair of Children’s Scrutiny a member of the Board
- Serviced by Democratic Services

Role

To assist the Council fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities towards children looked after and leaving care by providing strategic direction to ensure they are effectively supported to reach their potential.

Membership

7 Members of the authority as determined by the Council to include:

- The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Chair);
- The Chair of Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chairman shall be the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. The Vice-Chairman will be appointed at the Annual Council meeting for the municipal year.

Advisors to the Board:

Director of Social Work

Director of Customer Engagement

CCG - Designated Nurse for Children in Care

Head of Virtual School

Substitution

Substitute members may be nominated to the Committee in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Council procedure rules (Part 4).



Remit

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board shall:

- (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'.

Remit continued

- (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 Pledges.
- (7) Monitor progress on outcomes and performance indicators for children in care and those who have left care.
- (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.

Remit continued

- (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.

The Children in Care Council

The Corporate Parenting Board works closely with the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum. Both groups involve children and young people who are currently in our care or have left the care of the local authority.

They help to advise members and officers in Walsall about their experiences of the care, what is important to them and shape and influence the services they receive.

A participation action plan is in development and will be ready for presentation at the next Corporate Parenting Board for your consideration. It is also proposed that if members are in agreement we review the effectiveness of how the Board engages with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' forum and make proposals for what this may look like moving forward.



The Children in Care Council

So how do we do this in Walsall?

The CICC meets twice per month with the Children's Champion. This gives them a unique opportunity to get to know other care experienced young people and to share stories and experiences to help them understand the world around them and move forward. They enjoy attending the CICC and speak positively about this bespoke opportunity to connect with each other. We invite and welcome guest speakers. All YP that attend feel the group and attendees is very important to them.

Many different teams, managers and professional make contact with the Children's Champion to ask for the voice of the CICC. We get involved with lots of important projects and help inform and influence decision making at all levels.

The Children in Care Council

For example:

- Interview Panels
- Feedback on processes, forms and ways of working eg Health and IRO's
- Designing and developing the set up of new residential homes
- Training for professionals; social workers and foster carers
- Reviewing the core offer
- Developing other parts of the council such as SEND, Health and SFS

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024

- During 2020 we talked to our looked after children and care leavers about their expectations of us as corporate parents. Through these conversations we developed a promise to our young people. In implementing our corporate parenting strategy, we need to be mindful of Our Promises and do the utmost to act by them.
- Taking account of the **Seven** corporate parenting principles and Our Promises we have made to young people; we have identified **Five** priorities for our corporate parenting strategy.

Our promise for young people 5-11 years



The Promise Younger children 5 – 11 years

Sometimes children are not able to live with their parents and so they may need to be placed in our care. When this happens, there are a number of things that we will do to make sure that you are safe and well cared for. We call these our 'promises to you'.

Education

- We promise to help you to play and learn at a school that is right for you
- We will help you join clubs and after school activities near to where you live
- We will help you to make friends
- We will tell you how well you are doing and let you know how proud we are of you

Keeping you safe

- We promise to make sure you live somewhere safe where there will always be someone to take care of you
- We will make sure you can keep things that are important to you like your favourite toys.
- We will make sure you always have someone that you can talk to when you are feeling sad
- We will listen to what you like and don't like

Keeping you healthy

- We will make sure you stay well and can see a Doctor when you are poorly
- We will help you to eat healthy food and drinks that will make you grow big and strong
- We will help you to be happy and feel good about yourself
- We will help you to play safely outside and enjoy exercise

Keeping in touch

- We promise to help you to understand the reason why you are in care and will keep a story of your life for you to look at
- We promise to help you keep in touch with your family and friends, if it is safe to do so.
- We will help you stay in touch with Foster Carers and friends if you want to and will tell you if this can't happen
- We will make sure that you have a social worker that you can talk to

Our promise for older children 12- 15 years

The Promise Older children 12 - 15 years



Every child in our care will be treated fairly and respected as individuals. We will always seek to do everything we can to support and inspire you to be the best you can be. Through everything we do, we will help you to develop strong and meaningful relationships with your family, friends, carers, teachers and social workers so that you are given the very best support available.

Education and Training



- We promise to make sure that you have the best education possible and help you to plan for your future
- We promise to help you to enjoy new experiences and develop your own interests and hobbies
- We promise to celebrate your achievements and tell you how proud we are of you
- We promise to try and make sure that you don't have to change school
- We promise to make sure that you get all the help and support you need to learn, achieve and succeed

Keeping you safe



- We promise to provide you with a safe and comfortable place to live
- We promise to listen to you and involve you in decisions that affect your life.
- We promise to help you feel safe, both in and out of your home.
- We promise to encourage and support you to express your views
- We promise to provide you with a trusted adult that can help you if you are feeling worried
- We promise not to do anything that will make you stand out as a child in care

Keeping you healthy



- We promise to support and encourage you to have a healthy lifestyle
- We promise to make sure you are cared for by people who can keep you safe and healthy and will teach you how to learn to look after yourself as you get older.
- We promise to help you to access a range of leisure activities
- We promise to listen to any health issues you may have and will help you to get the support you need

Keeping in touch



- We promise to help you to understand the reason why you are in care
- We promise to help you keep in touch with your family and friends, if it is safe to do so.
- We promise to respect you as individuals and listen to what you want
- We promise to help you keep a record of important events, achievements and people in your life that are important to you
- We promise to help you take part in things you want to do such as school trips and fun activities

Our Promise for young people aged 16 to 25 years

The Promise Older children and Care Leavers aged 16-25

By listening to our care experienced young people, we have developed a list of 'Promises' that form our Pledge to you as children in our care. A pledge is an important part of running a service for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. It tells Children and Young People what we promise to do for them as their Corporate Parents.

Education, Training & Employment



- We promise to help you with your education and with finding the right employment and training opportunities.
- We promise to encourage and support you into college or university and give you clear information about the support you can expect.
- We promise to ensure that you have opportunities for work experience and employment such as apprenticeships and traineeships.
- We promise to support you to have different experiences and access to activities that may interest you

Keeping you safe



- We promise to help you to decide where you want to live and will help to keep you safe and comfortable
- We promise to help you to stay with your foster carers if this is possible.
- We promise to help you to manage your money and ensure you have financial stability ready for your future
- We promise to help you to get important documents like passports and driving licence
- We promise to pay for your council tax, even if you live outside of Walsall Council
- We promise to provide you with opportunities to build your confidence so that you are able to make your own decisions about your safety

Keeping you healthy



- We promise to help you to access health services and have access to your health passport
- We promise to go with you to health appointments and support you if you need it
- We promise to help you to access local leisure facilities to help you keep fit and well.
- We promise to make sure you have someone to talk to or can access support with your mental wellbeing

Keeping in touch



- We promise to help you to keep in contact with people that are important to you
- We promise to celebrate your achievements with you
- We promise to respect you as individuals and have high aspirations for your future
- We promise that you will always have someone to contact



Walsall Council



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Our five priorities (1)

1. Influence and Involvement

Children and young people are at the heart of service design, delivery and evaluation

2. Safety and Permanency

All of our children and young people will be safe from harm, with stability provided through secure homes and excellent carers.

3. Mental and Physical Health and Wellbeing

We will educate our young people to encourage a happy and healthy lifestyle, making sure that professionals work together to ensure that all their health needs are met.

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Our five priorities (2)

4. Education and Employment

We will champion our young people and help them succeed in education and training, supporting lifelong learning and the pursuit of their interests.

5. Transitions and Independence

Our young people will be prepared for the world of work and supported to become active citizens when they leave care. They will be prepared for independence in the best way possible.

Our proposed plan has key actions

- Key reports to the Board
- Increase the involvement more young people to shape and influence services.
- Respect Training is in place.
- Review our Sufficient Strategy.
- Review our Staying Put Policy.
- Continued focus on Permanence and it is robust.
- Continued focus on the health and emotional wellbeing of our children in care and care leavers.
- Continued focus on education and employment of children in care and care leavers
- Continued focus on transitions and independence