

Council meeting – 22nd February 2010

Notice of motion – Council recognition of its duty as Corporate Parents

Service Area: Childrens Specialist Services

Wards: All

1. Summary of report

- (a) The term looked after children is applied to a child for whom the Authority is providing accommodation, either by a court order or in agreement with the child's parent or carer. A child may become looked after as a result of problems facing their parents or as a result of abuse or neglect. All agencies within a local authority have a responsibility and a role to play, how they do this is detailed in Walsall's Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- (b) Every child needs a good parent who looks out for them, speaks out on their behalf and responds to their needs. For children in care this is a statutory role for local authorities, all local councillors and council officers share the corporate parenting responsibility

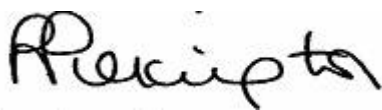
2. Background information

The roles of Council's Executive and Scrutiny functions were stipulated in the Department for Education and Skills publication "if this were my Child" (A Councillors Guide to Being a Good Corporate Parent

Walsall has 498 children looked after by the local authority in a variety of settings from foster homes, local residential units, private fostering agencies and private residential units. All the evidence demonstrates that looked after children have a greater chance of poor health, lower educational achievement and higher rates of teenage pregnancy. A disproportionate number of adults in prison have been looked after as children.

In Walsall we have made significant improvements in the care and stability we offer our looked after children. We have been very successful in placing children for adoption and have seen an increase in the number of children who have been placed successfully with family and friends carers. Education attainment is improving and school attendance for looked after children in Walsall is significantly better than comparator authorities and the national average.

Signed:



**Interim Executive Director
Children's Services**

Date: 12th February 2010