

**20 July 2010**

**Corporate Parenting Strategy 2010 to 2013**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Councillor R. Andrew – Children's Services

**Report:**

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 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.

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.

The ultimate aim is to improve the life chances of children and young people who we are responsible for as Corporate Parents.

**Corporate Parenting Vision and Emphasis**

The Corporate Parenting Strategy describes Walsall's approach to Corporate Parenting over the next three years and emphasises that Corporate Parenting is a whole Council and partnership enterprise. The Strategy shows how the Corporate Parenting will monitor performance through management committee functioning in terms of what we want to achieve and how we will operate as a group to do this, focusing on how 'leadership' will 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.

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 and Management Committee as an effective sub-committee of Corporate Parenting Board.

### **Recommendations**

**That:**

- 1. the Panel to endorse Walsall's strategic approach to Corporate Parenting as detailed in the Corporate Parenting Strategy document;**
- 2. the Panel endorse the recommendation made by the Corporate Parenting Board for the Corporate Parenting Strategy to be ratified at Council, and;**
- 3. the Panel recommend for Council to be advised on the appointment of nominated Corporate Champions.**

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Walsall Children's Trust

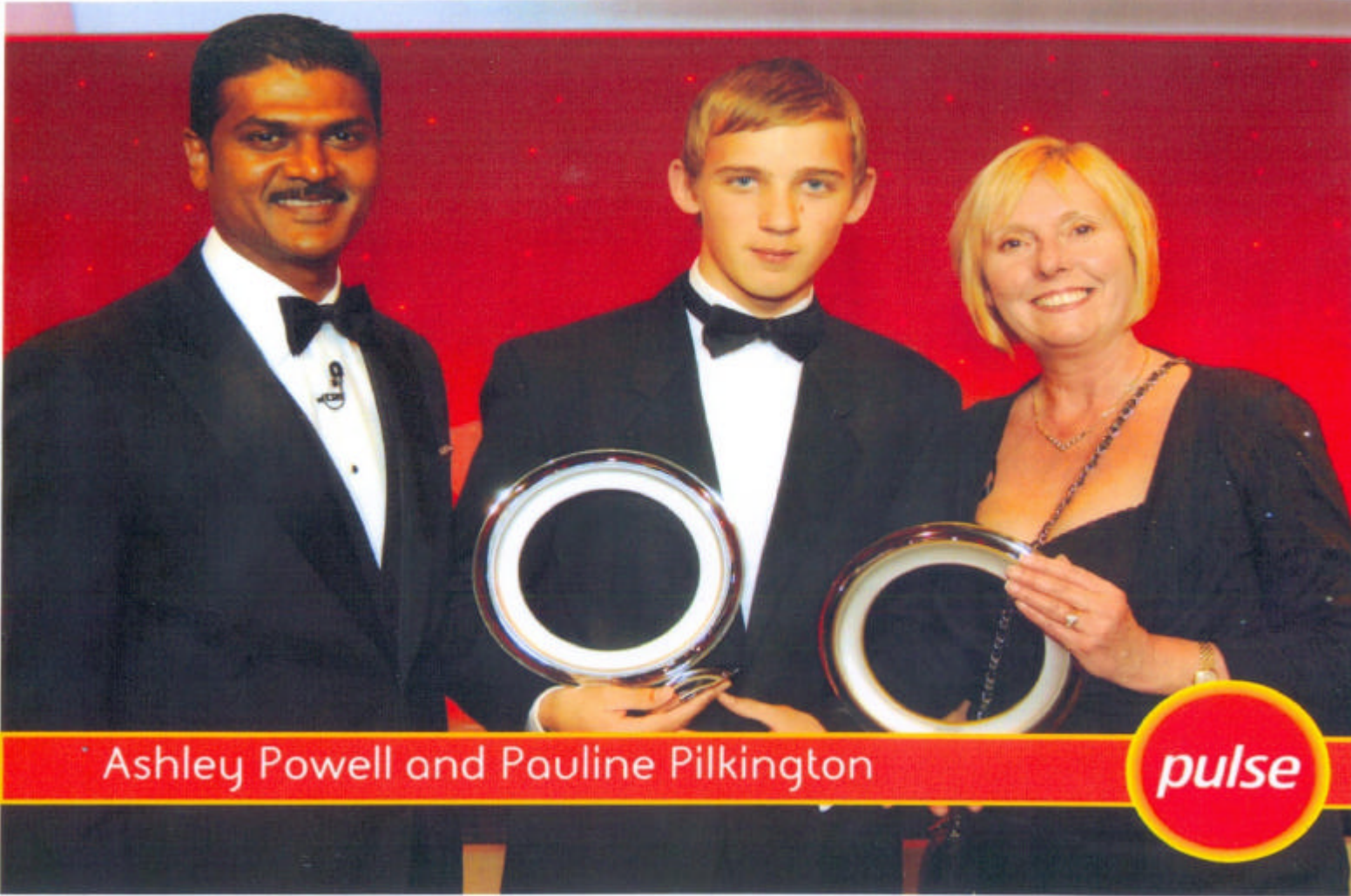
# Corporate Parenting Strategy



'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 Looked After Children 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 assumes 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 Looked After Children and Care Leavers and for placing them at the top of the corporate agenda.

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

The fact 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



# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## 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 and 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 inter-grated service delivery and improved outcomes for young people.

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## Giving Walsall's Looked After 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 or the Corporate Parenting Board activities *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's Trust level. We are achieving this by -

- Building on the foundations of good participation involving Looked After Children 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 Looked After Children
  - 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 Looked After Children and the professionals in their lives;
- Undertake a review with carers and Looked After Children 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



# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

- 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)

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

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

(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 Looked After Children and Care Leavers**



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

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

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

**The National picture** describes a challenging position for Council's 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 looked after children 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);
- Looked after children 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

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

- 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 Looked After Children 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 Looked After Children 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

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

We have therefore introduced a new integrated Virtual College which will be a first of its kind, which will accelerate educational attainment and advance transitional and leaving care support. The remit of the existing Virtual School will be extended covering post 16 EET (5 to 21 and 25 in some instances of LDD support) and well as providing a basis for early planning and support.

The Virtual College will strengthen performance by establishing a Virtual College 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 looked after children 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)



## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

*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 has helped us to create suitable children's home setting for our children. With improvements to skills, training and qualifications and careful review of each home's 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 not receiving sufficient support.



## Local Issues

The national context set 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 Looked After Children 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 Looked after Child is appropriate and increases 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 becoming Looked After Children, unless becoming a looked after child 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 child protection plans (CPP), as the local picture tells us that if CPPs are high conversions of CPP to LAC are likely to follow which increases the LAC population. Our commissioning priorities are therefore geared towards providing targeted long term support to those children and families who have been identified as being 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 Looked After Children 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.

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

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 numbers of children who achieve 5 GCSE'S grade A – C is a key priority. Currently attainment predictions for Looked After Children, are showing we have **20.8%** Looked after children 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 Looked After Children in real terms and with the transition to the Virtual College performance in these areas will be targeted for greater improvement over the next 3 years.

Other key performance priorities targets in keeping with key strategies include, 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 number of Agency Foster Placement 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
- Maintain and promote positive friendships and interests

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

- 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 looked after children

- **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 Looked after Children 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 looked after children 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.**

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

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 in Walsall Children's Trust 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 Looked After Children 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 Looked After Children. 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, Looked After Children 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 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 LAC in foster care usually leave their placement at around 18 years old. In accordance with Care Matters, Walsall recognises these facts and is reviewing it's provision to take forward initiatives to achieve a sea-change in the experience of leaving care. This would make allowances for Looked After Children who have established familial relationships with their foster carers to continue.

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

*Value & support our Young People.* In Walsall, Looked After Children 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 Looked After Children genuinely shapes the care and support received Walsall starts from an encouraging position and should seek to build on and strengthen in this across the wider Children's Trust.

However, the message from Looked After Children 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 Pledge for Walsall (With a children's version). The Pledge underpins all of Walsall's most fundamental commitments to Looked After Children and establishes the vision for all services that work with Looked After Children, and consequently the Strategies and Service Plans. The new Pledges outlines, the priorities for making sure Corporate Parenting is the best it can be in Walsall.

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# 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 Looked after Children and Care Leavers
- Shape services based on the experience of LAC and care leavers
- Make sure that Corporate Parenting is seen as everyone's responsibility;
- Build on and strengthen the foundations of good participation of LAC
- 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 LAC drives educational provision;
- Ensure placements for Looked After Children 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 LAC 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

## Acknowledgments

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



# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

## EXEMPLA OF ACTION PLAN OF ENJOY & ACHIEVE



**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."*

	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Priority &amp; Targets</b>	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<b>Plans ref</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Progress to Date July 2010</b>
<b>Enjoy and Achieve</b>	<b>Achieve Stretching National Educational Standards</b>	To ensure the highest possible attendance at school with good punctuality	Walsall will have a no exclusion policy for looked after children.	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. Draft Attendance policy to be sent to strategic leads for consultation by 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2010. policy to be launched at next multi agency training in July 2010
			The introduction of a 'Guest move' protocol to enable children/young people to move school if in their best interest.		Karen Dainty	Guest protocol in place. Being piloted with 3 young people

## CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

<b>Enjoy and Achieve</b>	<b>Achieve Stretching National Educational Standards</b>	<p>To ensure sustainability, Looked after children 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 looked after children 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>	Karen Dainty	<p>29 young people currently receive one-to-one tuition through 'Creating Chances', 'Narrowing the Gap' and their personal education allowance</p> <p>low numbers of looked after children and young g people are participating in activities/provision through the NEET Tap</p> <p>11 young people are attending The Queen Mary High School project</p> <p>14 young people have regularly attended Queen Mary's Grammar School Homework Club</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 Operation 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 looked after children</p>	Karen Dainty	<p>Foster carers/ residential staff and link social workers will continue to be invited to all training for designated teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential staff are currently transporting children/young people not in residential homes to the QMHS project due to a lack of availability of foster carers</li> </ul>

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2010-13

	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	
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