

**The City of Wolverhampton Council**  
**Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018- 2021**

**Definition**

The City of Wolverhampton Council has a responsibility to children who are cared for by the authority and care leavers as their 'corporate parents'. In simple terms, a corporate parent is intended to carry out many of the roles a parent would. The Council may not be able to provide everything a loving parent can, but they should still be able to provide the children and young people they are responsible for with the best possible support and care.

The Council will encourage council leaders, members, officers and partner organisations to do as much as they can to make sure children and young people feel in control of their lives and able to overcome the barriers they face. This is a high support/high challenge methodology embedded in the council and has an emphasis of working with people, rather than doing things for them or to them. The Council has a strong commitment to corporate parenting making it a priority for everyone in the City from the Managing Director down to front line staff, as well as Councillors and the wider City community, as if they were our own children and young people. In pursuance of this it is important to consider the following three questions:

- Is this good enough for my child?
- Would this have been good enough for me as a child?
- Is this the best that we can achieve?

The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced by the Government in 1998 as part of a drive to improve the lives of children who are looked after by the local authority. The Corporate Parenting responsibility was reiterated and reinforced in 2007 with the release of the White Paper Care Matters-Time for Change and the underpinning legislation, Children and Young People Act 2008. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 now compels local authorities to evidence how they meet the seven Corporate Parenting Principles as they are statutory in relation to looked after children and care leavers.

**The Corporate Parenting Principles**

The Corporate Parenting Principles set out seven fundamental requirements for looked after children and care leavers, as follows:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

**Success will be ....**

**for our children in care and care leavers:**

- To feel that their health and wellbeing is considered as important and that they are supported effectively by those caring for them
- To feel able to share their views, wishes, feelings and opinions freely
- To feel that their views, wishes, feelings and opinions are being actively considered
- To be able to access, and get the best use of services provided for them by the City of Wolverhampton Council and their partners
- To know that the City of Wolverhampton has high aspirations for them and wants the best for them
- To feel safe and stable at home in their relationships, and school or work
- To be supported in preparing for adulthood and living independently

**for our Corporate Parents:**

- To feel confident that they are acting in children and young people's best interests, and promoting the physical and mental health and well-being of children and young people in or leaving care
- To be able to encourage children and young people in or leaving care to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To be able to evidence that professionals have taken account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people in or leaving care
- To feel confident in helping children and young people in or leaving care to gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the City of Wolverhampton Council and its partners
- To feel confident in promoting high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people in or leaving care
- To feel confident in the safety and stability of children and young people in or leaving in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To feel able to help prepare our children and young people in or leaving care for adulthood and independent living.

**How will we make sure this success happens?**

In order to ensure this success for children and young people in care or leaving care, the following questions will be used to scrutinise services and support:

- What more can we do to ensure looked after children and care leavers feel listened to and their views are acted on?
- To what extent are the needs and priorities of looked after children and care leavers reflected in local strategic needs assessments, local service provision, and development plans?

- How can we collectively deliver services to looked after children and care leavers in a way that is joined-up and which supports young people to make a successful transition to adulthood?
- Are the children and young people in our care enjoying happy, fulfilled childhoods and looking forward to their adult lives, with positive foundations and stable relationships? If not, why not and what can we do to address this?
- How can we deliver services to looked after children and care leavers in a way that mirrors as far as possible the way a good parent would support their child?
- How can we deliver services in a way that recognises the unique circumstances of looked after children and care leavers?

The Corporate Parenting Board will use the above questions to monitor, evaluate and ensure the City is achieving the Corporate Parenting Principles to a high standard through an action plan. Both the Corporate Parenting Board and Strategic Group will be directed and challenged by the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' forum (who represent the care population of Wolverhampton), to ensure that the action plan is relevant and making the differences it is designed to achieve.

### **The Role of Partners**

The Corporate Parenting Board and Strategic Group will promote a strong corporate parenting ethos and consider how services can be delivered differently to meet the needs of the care population as effectively as possible. To be successful the Council will recognise, celebrate and promote the importance the role played by its partners in the statutory, private and third sector. The Council alone cannot meet the needs of Looked after Children and Care Leavers and needs to work effectively with partners to implement the statutory Corporate Parenting Principles. Strong partnership working will ensure that this strategy will be adopted by our partners and the resultant action plan will be owned by all sectors.

### **The Corporate Parenting Board**

The Corporate Parenting Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People with cross-party membership of 10 Councillors. In addition, a care experienced young person and two foster carers are co-opted onto the board. The board meets six times per year to consider and provide clear strategic and political direction and challenge in relation to corporate parenting. This includes satisfying themselves that:

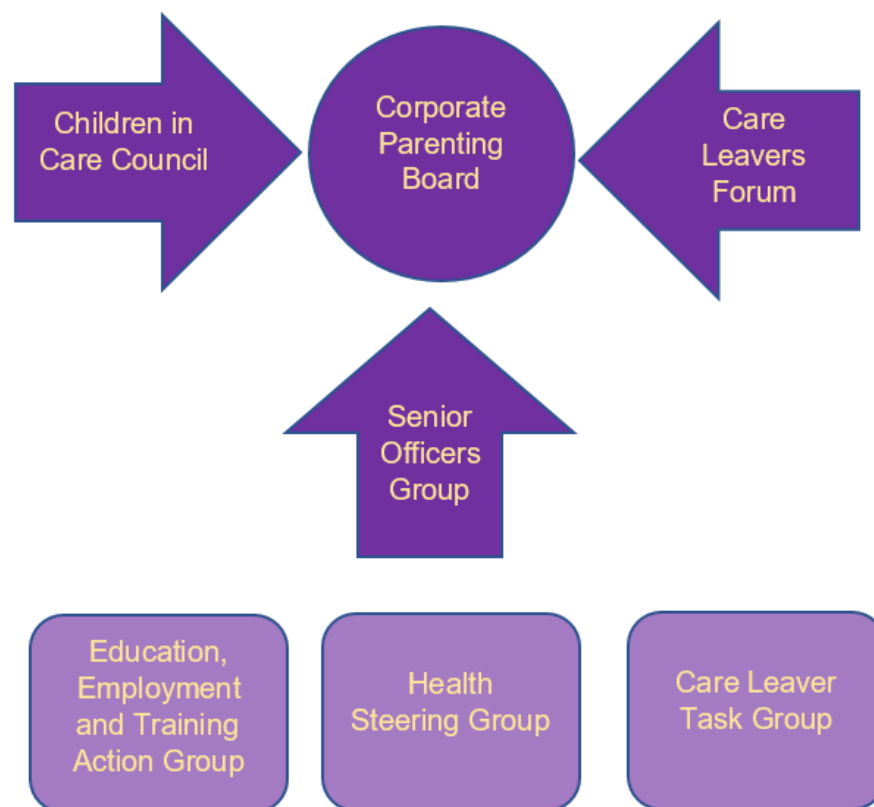
- All Councillors and the City of Wolverhampton Council Service Groups are proactively fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents and making a demonstrable commitment to prioritising the needs of looked after children and young people.
- The City has high ambitions and aspirations for all looked after children and care leavers.
- This includes satisfying themselves that; regular monitoring of the outcomes associated with the seven Corporate Parenting Principles and monitoring the work of and evaluating the progress of the Senior Officers Group.

### **The Strategic Group**

The Strategic Group is made up of colleagues from the Council, Police, Fire Service, Health Services, the Voluntary Sector and other relevant organisations. This group is

chaired by the Strategic Director, People. These colleagues are at an appropriate senior level within their organisation to be able to influence policy and strategy within their organisation to assist with the raising of opportunities and aspirations of our care population in line with the seven Corporate Parenting Principles. The actions and recommendations agreed by this group will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board, the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum.

### **The Governance Structure for Corporate Parenting**



### **Conclusion**

Every year of the three years of this strategy, consultation will take place to ensure the relevance and development of the action plan that supports it. This consultation will be with children and young people in or leaving care and a sample of their corporate parents. Every good parent wants the best for their child, the Corporate Parenting strategy 2018 sets a clear commitment from the Council to its children and young people in or leaving care. In pursuance of this we will consider the following three questions:

- Is this good enough for my child?
- Would this have been good enough for me as a child?
- Is this the best that we can achieve?