



Corporate Parenting Board

3 July 2014

Time 5.30 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Oversight
Venue Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Membership

Chair Cllr Val Gibson (Lab)
Vice-chair

Labour

Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Susan Constable
Cllr Jas Dehar
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Martin Waite

Conservative

Cllr Christine Mills
Cllr Patricia Patten

Liberal Democrat

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

Contact Carl Craney
Tel/Email Tel: 01902 555046 or carl.craney@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Address Democratic Support, Civic Centre, 2nd floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

Website <http://wolverhampton.cmis.uk.com/decisionmaking>
Email democratic.support@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Tel 01902 555043

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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence (if any) |
| 2 | Declarations of interest (if any) |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting (12 March 2014) (Pages 1 - 6)
[For approval] |
| 4 | Matters arising
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014] |
| 5 | Dates and Times of Meetings - 2014/15 Municipal Year
[To note that at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 4 June 2014 it was agreed that meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board would be held on the following dates commencing at 17:30 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 September 2014;• 19 November 2014;• 21 January 2015 and• 11 March 2015 <p>It is RECOMMENDED that the dates and times of the meetings be noted subject to the meeting scheduled for 3 September 2014 being cancelled, a replacement meeting being held on 11 September 2014 and an additional meeting being held during October 2014 on a date to be agreed]</p> |
| 6 | Role and remit of the Corporate Parenting Board (Pages 7 - 48)
[To receive a presentation and guide on the role and remit of the Corporate Parenting Board] |
| 7 | Work Programme 2014/15 (Pages 49 - 52)
[To consider the proposed Work Programme for the 2014/15 Municipal Year] |
| 8 | Children in Care Council
[To meet with representatives of the Children in Care Council and to discuss matters of mutual interest] |
| 9 | Exclusion of the public and press |

[To pass the following resolution:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information on the grounds shown below]

Part 2 - exempt items, closed to the public and press

- 10 **Members visits to establishments**
[To receive details of any visits to establishments undertaken since the last meeting]
- 11 **Performance Monitoring - Looked After Children (LAC)**
[To receive a report on the Performance Monitoring data in respect of the Looked After Children service][TO BE CIRCULATED]

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Corporate Parenting Board Minutes – 13 March 2014

Attendance

Members

Cllr Val Gibson (Chair)
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Mrs Christine Mills
Cllr Mrs Patricia Patten
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Martin Waite

Staff

Steve Cox	Interim Head of Looked After Children – Community
Lorraine Millard	Designated Senior Nurse Safeguarding Children, Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group
Darren Martindale	Team Manager and Virtual Head for LAC - Community
Dr Chitra Ramalingham	Designated Doctor LAC / Medical Advisor for Adoption and Fostering
John Welsby	Assistant Director, Children and Families - Community
Carl Craney	Democratic Support Officer - Delivery

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1. **Apologies for absence**
An apology for absence was received from Cllr Philip Page.

Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed Councillors and Officers to the meeting. She invited Councillors and Officers to introduce themselves. Introductions were duly made.

2. **Declarations of interest**

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre declared personal interests in any matters pertaining to Matters pertaining to Woodthorne School (Chair of Governors), Central Learning Partnership (Heath Park, Moseley Park and Woden Primary Schools) [Director], City of Wolverhampton College (Governor) and Graiseley Primary (Governor).

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting (27 November 2013)**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2013.

5. **Health Care Service Annual Report**

Lorraine Millard presented the Health Care Service Annual Report for the period September 2012 to August 2013 and explained that the report had been scheduled to be presented in September 2013 but resulting from a vacancy in the post of Designated Senior Nurse Safeguarding Children this had not been possible. The report had been prepared for presentation to the November meeting but had been withdrawn in view of the amount of business to be conducted at that meeting. She assured the Board that an up to date report would be presented to the September 2014 meeting.

With reference to paragraph 3.8.3, Cllr Paula Brookfield queried the figures in respect of uptake rates and with reference to paragraph 4 questioned who was responsible and accountable for ensuring that assessments were undertaken. Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre enquired as to steps being taken to address issues relating to undertaking assessments of Out of City placements. Lorraine Millard and Dr Chitra Ramalingham explained the figures relating to uptake rates and undertook to ensure a more detailed explanation would be included in the 2014 report. In relation to responsibility and accountability they reported that, ultimately, the duty lay with the Council. It was acknowledged that the delay that occurred in reporting on referrals compounded the problem together with the capacity of the Looked after Children (LAC) Health Team.

Cllr Paula Brookfield requested an update on the position with the Business Case to increase staffing in the LAC Health Team. Lorraine Millard advised that this had been presented to the relevant forum on 11 March 2014 and that the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust were working together to address the capacity issue.

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre enquired as to whether the mental health of LAC was a priority issue for General Practitioners (GP's) having regard to their role as Commissioners of services. Lorraine Millard reported on the training provided to all GP practices in the City in relation to both mental health and safeguarding issues for LAC, on the good working relationship between the LAC Health Team and the Children's and Adolescent Mental Health

(CAMHS) Team. She reminded the Board that strategic guidance had been issued by the Department for Education in 2012 for Levels 1, 2 and 3, with specialist advice being provided for those GP practices with responsibility for Level 3 patients. With regard to Out of City placements she advised that the health assessments were being treated as a priority and were being completed as a matter of urgency. Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre expressed concern as to when specialist service was received despite how quickly a referral may have been made by the respective GP. Dr Ramalingham explained that a referral via a GP would not always be necessary as this could be requested through CAMHS or the Designated Nurse or through a Foster Carer.

Steve Cox assured the Board that contact between a LAC in an Out of City placement and their original GP was often maintained, that Wolverhampton did not have a waiting list for referral to CAMHS and of the "Strengths and Difficulties" system which could be accessed by Carers'. Furthermore, a Psychologist visited all Care Homes used by the Council on a monthly basis. He also confirmed the strong working relationship between the Council, the LAC Health Team and the Black Country Partnership NHS Trust. Assessments for Out of City placements were also followed up by independent Fostering Agencies contracted to the Council.

Cllr Paula Brookfield sought an assurance that the medical records for LAC in Out of City placements were not lost in transfer between GP's and also any delays which occurred in registering for a new GP following an Out of City placement. Lorraine Millard and Dr Ramalingham advised that whilst gaps in the records might occur the records were not lost in the system and that at each health assessment the details of the GP were requested and documented to ensure each child was registered with a GP.

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre welcomed the information in the report pertaining to the reduced conception rates of LAC and Care Leavers but requested additional comparative data with the national picture. Steve Cox reported that the City had a high rate of teenage conception of non LAC and was rated amongst the highest in the country but with LAC it had one of the lowest rates nationally. Dr Ramalingham undertook to ensure that comparative data would be included in the 2014 report.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and that the report in respect of the period September 2013 to August 2014 be presented to the meeting of the Board in September 2014.

6. **Future Aspirations for Education of Looked after Children in the City**
Presented a report which outlined the proposed improvements to education support for the Council's LAC. He also appraised the Board on the new conditions of grant published by the Department for Education in relation to Pupil Premium with effect from 1 April 2014 and on the recommendations which had been made by the Children's Services Management Team (CSMT) in connection with the allocation of these monies. John Welsby explained the composition of the CSMT.

Cllr Paula Brookfield welcomed both elements of the reports but expressed concern with regard to the use of the Pupil Premium insofar as to whether the needs of all the LAC could be offered given that those needs could differ widely. Dr Michael Hardacre echoed the comments of Cllr Paula Brookfield and cited examples of best practice elsewhere in the country where, for example, football coaching and dance lessons had been offered to LAC who did not require additional educational support. Darren Martindale explained that there was clear guidance available from the Department for Education on what the Pupil Premium could and could not be used for. Cllr Paula Brookfield cited an example of where bricklaying lessons had been offered to LAC who wished to pursue that particular career rather than receiving additional academic support and commended the adoption of a flexible approach to the use of those monies.

Cllr Rita Potter suggested that there was a need for a demonstration of receiving Value for Money from the use of the Pupil Premium and enquired as to how this was monitored currently. Darren Martindale assured the Board that this was monitored against the individual Personal Education Plans. Dr Michael Hardacre commented that Ofsted was also conscious of the need to monitor use of Pupil Premium funds.

Resolved:

1. That the proposals for the future education support for Wolverhampton's LAC and the formation of a Board of Governors for the Virtual School be approved;
2. That the proposed allocations of the Pupil Premium, i.e. £900 to be allocated to the respective school with the remaining £1,000 to be retained by the Council for use in partnership with the relevant school in order to benefit the particular LAC, linked to the respective Personal Education Plan be supported.

7. **Performance Monitoring – Looked After Children**

John Welsby presented Performance Management Information based on an extract from high level information from December 2013. He explained that the Balanced Scorecard did not yet focus on LAC but work was ongoing in this respect. He advised that at present the LAC population in the City was 770. Cllr Paula Brookfield enquired as to whether there were any trends such as by age group. John Welsby reminded the Board that this type of analysis was currently being undertaken by the LAC Scrutiny Inquiry but advised that the figures had been increased recently by a number of large sibling groups entering into care.

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre referred to the information relating to “Vulnerable Young People in education, Employment or Training – Care Leavers” and

enquired as to the steps being taken in relation to the 14 Care Leavers who were not currently in education, employment or training (NEET). John Welsby reported that the Community Directorate Management Team (CDMT) had requested a report on each of the 14 young people recorded as NEET. He explained that in a number of cases there were legitimate reasons for these cases, such as acting as a full time carer, while in some cases EET had since been arranged. The CDMT had also requested a regular report against this indicator.

With regard to the Briefing Note which had been circulated previously in relation to the forthcoming Ofsted Inspection, John Welsby encouraged Councillors to contact him if they required any additional information.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and that the Balanced Scorecard with regard to LAC be presented to the first available meeting of the Board.

9. **Exclusion of the press and public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information contained in paragraph 1 of the Act, namely information relating to any individual.

10. **Members Visits to Establishments**

The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson, reported on visits she had undertaken to Windmill Lane and Wergs Road Residential Homes.

Cllr Rita Potter reported on a visit she had undertaken to the Red Gables Residential Home.

Resolved:

That the reports be received and noted.

11. **John Welsby, Assistant Director, Children, Young People and Families**

The Chair, Cllr Val Gibson reminded the Board that this would be last meeting of the Board to be attended by John Welsby, Assistant Director, Children, Young People and Families as he would be retiring from the Council shortly. She paid tribute to the sterling work he had undertaken during his employment with the Council and expressed her personal thanks to him for his help and assistance following her appointment as Cabinet Member for Children and Families. Other Councillors expressed their thanks and appreciation to John. John Welsby responded appropriately.

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Children and Young People

Corporate Parenting Conference 30th November 2010



Corporate Parenting

Everyone's Responsibility!

Wolverhampton
City Council





“As the Corporate Parent of children in care we have a special responsibility for their well being. Like any good parent, it should put it’s own children first. That means being a powerful advocate for them to receive the best of everything and helping them to make a success of their lives.”

(DCSF)

Looked after Children



- Looked After = Care Order or Accommodated
- Approx 61,000 LAC nationally.
- Children become looked after for a wide range of reasons.
- The disparity between the outcomes for Looked after Children and their peers remains unacceptably wide.

So what's Corporate Parenting?



- The term Corporate Parenting was first introduced in 1998.
- Care Matters-Time for Change 2007 clarified LA's & partner agencies' Corporate Parenting responsibility.
- Children and Young People Act 2008
- “For children who are looked after, your council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parent would give to their children. You should do your utmost to make sure that children in care get a good start in life” (Dobson 1998)

Some examples of what Corporate Parenting could look like in practice.



- Procurement build into all contracts that any companies working for WCC or Partners will offer work experience to Looked after Children or prioritise Care Leavers in apprenticeship roles
- Colleges offer specific mentoring programmes for LAC and Careleavers.
- Housing establish a designated link in housing for fostering services.
- Planning consider Corporate Parenting responsibilities when a new children's home is being proposed.
- ICT Services offer ICT support sessions to Looked after Children and their carers.

Why is effective Corporate Parenting important?



- Firstly and most importantly improved outcomes for 'your' children.
- Better value for money.
- Better performance ratings.

The role of our partners



- Whilst primary responsibility sits with the Council it is vital that we recognise the importance of our Partners in the statutory, private and third sector.
- Wolverhampton City Council alone can not meet the needs of Looked after Children and Care Leavers and needs to work effectively with our Partners to demonstrate our Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
- The current draft strategy is a Wolverhampton City Council document, however it is hoped that it will be adopted by our Partners and the resultant action plan is held across all the sectors.

Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities



“Have service's understand us better.”

A Corporate Strategic Commitment

- **South Gloucester Council** have adopted a policy which support the needs of employees who become approved as foster carers for the council, through the extension of paid and unpaid carers leave.
- **Westminster** negotiated with council departments to provide work placements for young people in the same way as relatives may give children opportunities within the ‘family firm’. A number of the placements have led to young people being offered apprenticeships or permanent employment. This was adopted by many Partners of the authority.

Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities



“Focus on the positive things we do”

Ensure the Positive Active Participation and Involvement of all Looked after Children

- **Lambeth Council** have developed a website with looked after children and young people which enables the council to communicate effectively with all their LAC and care leavers and also consult with them. www.get2know.org.uk
- **Telford & Wrekin Council** ensure that all Elected Members and officers undertake Total Respect training to enable them to have a clear understanding of what care is like for young people.

Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities



“Help us to make achievements”

“Help us to spend time with children who aren’t in care”

- **Improved access to universal services for all Looked after Children and care-leavers**

- **The London borough of Sutton** provide free leisure passes to all their looked after children and their foster carers.

- **Telford & Wrekin Council** have established a system for each Looked after Child to be issued with their own library card when coming into care, this card can then move with the child through their placements. Events were also held to encourage engagement for foster carers and LAC.

Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities



“Keep siblings together & give us more contact with siblings.”

“Let us make choices about school.”

“Give us more information and support about sexual health.”

- **Improve outcomes for Looked after Children in Health, Education, Placements and Transitions**

- **Sefton Council** have developed a personal health record, known as the ‘Health Fax’, a record of health and also contains health promotion information and could be used as a diary.
- The evaluation of Quality Protects programme, Year 4, found that where councillors were active as Corporate Parents, there was progress on school absences and exclusions as well as improvements in joint working between education and social services.

Corporate Parenting Strategic Priorities



“Keep siblings together & give us more contact with siblings.”

“Let us make choices about school.”

“Give us more information and support about sexual health.”

- **Improve outcomes for Looked after Children in Health, Education, Placements and Transitions**

- **Portsmouth** has opened two new children’s homes for children with challenging behaviour which had an integrated professional family placement scheme and two satellite projects for individual young people with exceptionally challenging behaviour
- **South Gloucestershire**, who held the Beacon Status for Corporate Parenting, ensures that maximum points are awarded to care leavers who become a priority status to be housed when leaving our care.

Aim of today



- That delegates will have a clearer understanding of what Corporate Parenting is, how it relates to their role and how they can demonstrate their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
- That delegates will have the opportunity to comment on the draft Corporate Parenting strategy.
- That delegates will consider the Corporate Parenting strategic priorities and begin to develop actions that will feed into the comprehensive action plan.



Any Questions?



“My Story” Film

The LAC participation team worked with a group of young people to create a film about their experience of being looked after.



Tea & Coffee

Workshop One



- Please consider **Priorities One and Two.**
- **A Corporate Strategic Commitment**
- **Ensure the Positive Active Participation and Involvement of all Looked after Children**
- Think about how your service areas/organisations can meet these priorities.
- Develop actions as a group using the action plans in your pack.



Lunch!



The LAC 607

Young people in care share their views.



- Please consider Priority Three.
- Improved access to universal services
- Think about how your service areas/organisations can meet these priorities.
- Develop actions as a group using the action plans in your pack.



Tea & Coffee

Workshop Three



- Please consider Priority Four.
- Improve outcomes for Looked after Children in Health, Education, Placements and Transitions
- Think about how your service areas/organisations can meet these priorities.
- Develop actions as a group using the action plans in your pack.

How can we share the message?



Using the post it notes on your table please
give us three ways we can communicate
the Corporate Parenting agenda
to your colleagues.

It would be useful if you could put your name
and or service area/organisation.



Closing Remarks and Finish

Members Full Guide - Corporate Parenting



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1. Corporate Parenting - The Responsibility Of Members

“As the corporate parents of children in care we have a special responsibility for their well-being. Like any good parent, it should put its own children first. This means being a powerful advocate for them to receive the best of everything and helping them to make a success of their lives”.

DFES 2006

a. What is Corporate Parenting?

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 Local Authorities. In essence, it is a simple, yet very demanding expectation placed on Local Authorities. Corporate Parenting means that Wolverhampton City Council has a legal and moral duty towards its Looked After Children to provide the kind of support that any good parent would provide for their own children. Corporate Parenting emphasises that it is the City Council as a whole and not just the Children & Young People’s Service that has the responsibility for every child it looks after.

That responsibility ultimately of course rests on Members - in fact the concept of Corporate Parenting was first established by the Secretary of State for Health in 1998 when he wrote to all Members of each Local Authority alerting them to their responsibilities in this regard. The concept has been strengthened by subsequent communications from central government and found expression in Every Child Matters and The Children Act 2004, and more recently Care Matters - Time for Change and the CYP Act 2008.

b. What are the Implications of Corporate Parenting for Members?

The requirements of corporate parenting mean that every Member, on top of any other specific areas of interest or responsibility, is accountable for the welfare of the children looked after by us. While some Members will carry specific responsibilities for children and young people, all Members should therefore at least consider the following questions:

- How much do we know about the children for whom we are responsible?
- Am I satisfied that appropriate arrangements have been made by the Council to fulfil our responsibilities?
- How does my particular area of interest consider the needs of Looked After Children in its decision-making and delivery of services?
- What else could different parts of the Council do to support Looked After Children.

The basic question that all Members need to ask is “Are we doing for our Looked After Children what we would expect any good parent to do?” This is a simple question with massive implications for the Council which has at its disposal enormous influence and resources covering many aspects of the lives of Wolverhampton residents - as a good parent, how can we best use those to benefit our Looked After Children?

c. Who are our Looked After Children?

At any one time, Wolverhampton looks after more than 550 children and young people. They range in age from 0-17 and may be looked after by us by agreement with their parents or by warrant of a court order. The reasons why children need to be looked after vary, but fundamentally children become looked after because their families are unable to look after them. This may be owing to a variety of issues:

- There may be a short term crisis (e.g. single parent needing to go into hospital);
- there may be longer term concerns (e.g. where parents neglect or abuse their children);
- there may be a child whose need their family cannot meet (e.g. a severely disabled child);
- or there may be a major breakdown in relationships within the family (e.g. between a teenager and their parents).

Before a child become looked after, social workers are committed to exploring other less intrusive options such as finding family members/close friends who may be willing to care for a child.

Children can be looked after for short or long periods of time and may be looked after in foster homes or residential children's homes. If it is clear that a child is not going to be able to return home, social workers will try to identify the best "permanent" option for a child to see them through into adulthood. In most cases this will be in a family setting, such as a foster home or for younger children, adoption will often be the preferred option. In some cases where children are looked after via a Care Order made in court, social workers may decide that family circumstances have improved so much that a child can return home - in these cases, even though the child lives at home, the Local Authority retains its corporate parenting responsibilities, for as long as the order is in place.

d. Leaving Care

The requirement for Local Authorities to act as a good parent extends to young people who were looked after in their later years of childhood and have now left the care system. In Wolverhampton we have responsibility for around 180 care leavers. Young people in this position leave care sometime between their 16th and 18th birthdays, depending on their circumstances. The statutory responsibilities towards these "care leavers" naturally reduces as they move into adulthood, but in some cases, our responsibilities as a parent, extend well into a young person's early 20's, upto 25, if they remain in further or higher education. With regard to Care Leavers, our corporate parenting obligations relate in particular to matters such as:

- Are we supporting Care Leavers in achieving educationally?
- Are we doing what we can to ensure Care Leavers have jobs?
- Are we ensuring that our Care Leavers have somewhere decent to live?

Clearly, many parts of the City Council have much to contribute in answering those questions as they have in relation to the questions asked of us in relation to all the Looked After Children entrusted to our care.

2. Being On Corporate Parenting Panel – Some Key Roles

While all Members have a duty to ensure that the Council fulfils its responsibilities to its Looked After Children, Members appointed to the Corporate Parenting Panel have particular responsibilities to oversee this area of Council responsibilities. To enable them to do this, they will be presented with relevant information, be asked to comment on policy and practice issues and be given the opportunity to have direct contact with Looked After Children and the staff caring for them.

a. Information

The Council's performance in relation to Looked After Children is measured against certain key performance indicators while we also establish additional local indicators from time to time. Key monitoring information is made available on the intranet and is available to Panel Members in the form of a Balanced Scorecard. Some of the key indicators, and the thinking behind them, are outlined below to assist Members in scrutinising the information available to them. There will often be historic performance information and targets set to assist Members in judging the information.

i) Numbers of Children in Residential and Foster Placements:

There are two key issues at stake here: firstly it is preferable in most cases that we find family placements for children who cannot live with their own families and therefore we would want to see more children in foster placements than residential; secondly it is usually preferable for children and a much better use of resources, for children & young people to be in local in-house resources.

ii) Children In Other Placements

If a child is not able to live with his or her birth parents, then if possible we will place with adults known to them - relatives or friends. If a child has little or no chance of returning to her or his birth family then we will try to secure a permanent new family preferably through adoption - although adoption becomes less likely as children get older and would be rare for children over 10. Thus we would want to see "healthy" numbers of children placed with relatives or placed for adoption. You will get to know what a "healthy" figure looks like over time as you see the figures month-by-month.

Sometimes if circumstances change, a child on a Care Order can be returned to her or his birth parents, so it is normal to have a small number of children recorded in this category however, in these cases you would expect to see the Authority returning to court to discharge unnecessary Care Orders and so this figure should rarely rise significantly where practice is consistently good.

v) Participation in Reviews

Every Looked After Child is entitled to an independent review of the plans being made for them on a regular basis. Children four and over should have the chance to contribute to these reviews directly or indirectly - how successful are we in this?

vi) Timeliness of Reviews

A Looked After Child should have their plan reviewed every 6 months at least.

vi) Stability of Placement

It is going to be difficult for a child in care to be happy or to do well at school if they keep being moved from placement to placement. We measure the percentage of our Looked After Children who move 3 or more times in a year. We also measure how many children in long term care have been in the same placement for the last two years (or have moved into a permanent adoption placement).

viii) After Care

Once a young person leaves care, we have an obligation to offer ongoing advice and support. If Care Leavers go to university, our obligations are more extensive. We cannot meet any of our obligations if we lose touch, so we keep track of how many care leavers are still in touch at 19. We do also keep track of how many Care Leavers are in education, training or employment at 19.

ix) Family Placement

As noted, we prefer to see Looked After Children placed in families. Virtually all our children under 10 would be in families, so we measure how many 10-16 year olds are in family placements.

x) Well being of Looked After Children

We are not just responsible for where Looked After Children live, but for their whole welfare. Looked After Children are entitled to an annual health and dental check, to have an agreed Personal Education Plan and to have an appropriate education placement with which they are actively engaged. We therefore monitor our performance in all these areas.

xi) Other

Other pieces of information are included on the Balanced Scorecard (e.g. the number of Looked After Children) while other information can be made available on request (e.g. ethnic/age/gender breakdown).

b. Policy & Practice

Policy and procedures applying to Looked After Children are to be found on the Intranet and are included in the Children and Families Procedures Manual. However as this manual is only reviewed every 2 - 3 years, new legislation or new developments often demand new policies. These tend to be approved via the Children & Families Management Team and referred through to the Senior Management Board and Lead Member as appropriate. Where such new or revised policies impact significantly on Looked After Children, then they are likely to be referred to Corporate Parenting Panel for comment.

c. Direct Contact

Members sitting on the Corporate Parenting Panel are expected to familiarise themselves more directly with different parts of the service the Local Authority provide for Looked After Children. Members of the Panel are asked to visit services directly in order to familiarise themselves with current realities and most importantly, to satisfy themselves that services are working well and appropriate systems are in place. As such visits may bring Members into direct contact with children and young people, Members are required to complete a satisfactory enhanced CRB check prior to undertaking such visits.

It is possible for Members to visit unannounced, however in the first instance it is better to arrange to meet the relevant manager who can then induct you into that particular team or service. Support will be offered both in arranging the visits and on the visit itself by the Corporate Parenting Officer. When visiting residential units, it is vital to remember that this may be a child's



long term home - you are visiting their home ground and need to be mindful and respectful of this. You should take the advice of managers or staff in relation to any young people present and of course observe basic sensible child protection practices; thus while Members will want to hear the views of young people, Members should avoid meeting alone with a young person behind a closed door and should never agree to speak with a young person in their bedroom - you may wish to check what bedrooms in a unit look like, but this should only ever be done in the company of a staff member and with the permission of the young person. If you are not known at a unit, do not expect to be admitted if you do not have any identification with you.

Below are the range of services you may have the opportunity to engage with:

a) Mainstream Residential Units

Wolverhampton runs a number of small residential homes for 12 - 17 year olds and has also commissioned units from a private provider. The units tend to be 4 bedded although some may also have flatlets attached for older young people being prepared for moving into their own accommodation. One unit tends to receive new admissions to care who stay until a longer term placement is found, other units tend to have more stable populations where young people may live for a year or more.

b) Short-Break Units

Many families struggle to cope with the demands of caring for disabled children, the challenge may be behavioural, such as children with severe autism or be very physically demanding such as older children who are immobile. To support these families we are able to provide short breaks (e.g. a weekend or a week during the holiday season) for the children. We have two residential units providing this service. For the time they are with us, these children have Looked After status (although we do not include them in calculating our Looked After population or in the general Looked After Children's performance measures outlined above).

c) Social Work Teams

Most new referrals come through our Duty & Assessment Team, based at the Civic Centre. This team may bring children into the care system in emergencies and on a daily basis is making decisions about whether children referred to it are safe at home or whether action, such as removal to care, needs to be taken. If you are linked with this team, your focus needs to be on whether that decision-making process is operating safely for children and young people.

Children and young people coming into care will tend after the initial contact to be dealt with by either the Disability Team or by one of three locality teams. These teams are responsible for ensuring that proper plans are made for children coming into care.



Children and young people who are likely to remain in care long term will be the responsibility of one of two Looked After Children teams. These teams are responsible for ensuring that Looked After Children are in safe, caring placements, that good plans are in place for their future right into adulthood and that their health and educational needs are all met. You may want to ask staff and managers how they are ensuring these things - have all their Looked After Children had health checks for instance and how do managers know that this has happened?

There is also a fostering team and an adoption team. While these teams do have some direct responsibilities for Looked After Children, their prime roles are to recruit, train and support foster carers or adopters and to ensure that we have enough foster and adoptive placements to meet the needs of our Looked After Children. You may want to explore how managers oversee targets for recruitment, or how they ensure that foster carers or adopters are regularly visited and supported by their staff or how they are trying to recruit foster carers or adopters for Looked After Children who are black or Asian - or what support is in place for foster carers or adopters who may be caring for children from ethnic backgrounds different to their own.

3. Wolverhampton Foster Care Association

All current Foster Carers and those newly approved by Wolverhampton City Council fostering panel become automatic members of our Foster Care Association. Wolverhampton FCA is a registered charity which works to support the needs of foster carers across Wolverhampton.

4. Corporate Parenting Strategy

Wolverhampton Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy for Looked after Children demonstrates the Council's commitment to furthering the life chances of every child and young person in its care. It sets out our vision for Wolverhampton City Council and its partners for Corporate Parenting for the next 3 years 2011-14. It aspires to improve the outcomes of Looked after Children and Care Leavers, narrowing the gap between them and their peers, by providing effective support which enables them to reach their full potential. The overall aim of the Strategy is to reinforce the corporate responsibility of the whole Council and its partner agencies through commitment to the development of policies, initiatives, services and budget prioritising.

The strategy sets out 4 key priorities; these four areas have been identified for development over the next three years and have been restricted to an achievable amount. Actions have been developed to address these priorities in the Corporate Parenting Action Plan which is expected to be a live document and will be reviewed annually.

In recognition of the importance of the Looked after Children's participation in the shaping of services, the framing of the strategic priorities has been based on priorities identified by the young people themselves.

Priority One

"Have services understand us better."

A Corporate Strategic Commitment

In order to achieve the aspirations we must hold for children and young people who are looked after, a whole Council approach is required with practical support offered by all services within the Council. Wolverhampton City Council and its Partners will strive to ensure that all services understand their responsibilities as a Corporate Parent and how they can meet these. The Council and Partners will strive to breakdown stereotypes and stigmas associated with their Looked after Children. Corporate Parenting will be demonstrated through a Council wide and Partners commitment to a range of initiatives aiming to improve outcomes for Looked after Children and Careleavers.

Priority Two

"Focus on the positive things we do"

Ensure the Positive Active Participation and Involvement of all Looked after Children

Care Matters highlighted the importance of young people's participation in shaping the services that support them. It is essential therefore that as (corporate) parent's we communicate effectively with our Looked after Children. Whilst there have been developments in the active involvement of Looked after Children including the creation of a Children in Care Council and appointment of two participation workers, it is recognised that significant progress still needs to be made.

Priority Three

“Help us to make achievements”

“Help us to spend time with children who aren’t in care”

Improved access to universal services for all LAC and care-leavers

It is recognised that Looked after Children often struggle to access universal services such as play and youth services, leisure and sport provision and those provided by the third sector. Care Matters reports that nationally over 50% of young people who are looked after have difficulties accessing positive activities. It is important that universal services look at how they can adapt or offer additional support to enable LAC to access their provisions.

Priority Four

“Keep siblings together & give us more contact with siblings.”

“Let us make choices about school.”

“Give us more information and support about sexual health.”

Improve outcomes for Looked after Children in Health, Education, Placements and Transitions

These four areas have been identified as key areas for development over the next three years both by professionals and young people consulted. Despite significant advances at both a local and national level, the outcomes for Looked after Children are still significantly poorer than for those who live at home. The educational attainment of Looked after Children continues to sit considerably below that of children who live at home both nationally and locally. Nationally children often enter the care system with a worse level of health than their peers and their longer term outcomes remain worse. The Department of Health reports that 45% of Looked after Children were assessed as having a mental health disorder, rising to 72% of those in residential care. The Fostering Network suggests that nationally there is currently a shortfall of 10,000 foster families. The Centre for Social Justice state that care-leavers are far more likely to end up in jail, on drugs, on the streets, or to be teenage parents than their peers. For example, 27% of the prison population, and half of all prisoners under 25, were in care.

5. The Council's Pledge

While the Lead Member for Children & Young People and members of the Scrutiny and Corporate Parenting Panels need to take specific interest in Looked After Children, as noted at the beginning of this document, corporate parenting is a responsibility that falls on the whole of the Council, its Members and Officers.

One of the key expressions of this is the pledge made by Wolverhampton City Council. The pledge is our promise to all our young people in care and care leavers about the type and quality of service they can expect to receive. It covers all areas of young people's development and requires a whole Council approach to deliver.

The Corporate Parenting Panel therefore need to scrutinise what the whole of the Council, Members and Officers, is doing to meet the terms of this pledge.

The Council has massive resources at its disposal; the Corporate Parenting Panel is charged with ensuring that these resources are deployed to the benefit of Looked After Children. There is no other group within our City towards whom the Council has such extensive responsibilities - the responsibilities of a parent and, as the numbers are limited, there is no reason given the will to do so, why the Council's resources should not be effectively deployed to make a real difference to the lives of these most vulnerable our of citizens.

For a hard copy of the pledge contact Jenny Cockcroft, Corporate Parenting Officer (01902) 553001 or jenny.cockcroft@wolverhampton.gov.uk

6. Corporate Parenting - Pledge

Wolverhampton's Pledge

We have made promises to all our Looked after Children and Care Leavers and this pledge tells you what they are.

We are writing down our promises so you will know what we should be doing.

"We will be good corporate parents"

This means:

Across the Council and our Partners the needs of all of our Looked after Children and Care Leavers will be a priority.

Helping everyone that works in the Council and our Partners to understand their responsibility to you and all Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

Helping to promote a positive image of all Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

Celebrating your achievements every year.

Offering you a 'Role Model' (Years 9-11) and work experience to all our Care Leavers.

"We will help you to get the best education"

This means:

Making sure you have a place at a school that is right for you and give you every support to stay there.

Making sure that pre-school children are able to receive high quality early years education.

Involving you in regular PEPs that encourage you to have high ambitions and help you get the best results.

Giving you access to a computer and the internet to help your learning.

Providing additional support including 1:1 tuition when you need it.

"We will help you to be fit and healthy"

This means:

Having a specialist nurse to help you with any health problems and make sure your carers are keeping you healthy.

Having access to an expert to support your emotional health when you are finding it hard to cope.

Staff and carers will be trained in health issues such as relationship and sexual education so that can support you better.

Having a health plan with regular health assessments including dental and opticians.

Helping you to access sport and leisure activities.

“We will help you to have your say”

This means:

Providing you with opportunities where you can tell us what you think and together we can plan for all Looked after Children and Care Leavers. Fully involving you in decisions made about your life, including making sure you are actively involved in your review.

Involving young people in the recruitment and training of staff responsible for delivering services to Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

Working with young people to develop a website that will share up to date news and information with you.

Making sure you can have an advocate to talk with if you have any issues or problems.

“We will give you somewhere safe and happy to live”

This means

Giving you high quality carers who can meet your individual needs.

Where possible we will let you live with your brothers and sisters.

Supporting you if and when you are able to return to your family.

Providing training to your carers so that they understand specific issues that affect you and other Looked after Children.

Making sure if you move that you have bags or suitcases and that your belongings are never put in a black bin bag.

“We will help you have fun!”

This means:

Encouraging you to access a wide range of positive activities including some just for Looked after Children and Care leavers.

Helping you and your carers to know what is going on in your local area.

You will not miss out on holidays because you don't have a passport or other travel documents (providing you are entitled to these).

So you can have worry free sleepovers we will make sure all staff and carers understand the policy.

Celebrating your birthday and special occasions with you.

“We will help you see the people important to you”

This means:

Making sure you have regular contact which happens when you expect it to, as long as it's safe.

Giving you fun and interesting places to have contact.

Offering you different methods to have contact with your siblings including phone, post and internet (when it is safe to do so).

Helping you to stay in touch with your friends.

Providing you with an independent visitor if you want one.

“We will help you prepare for your future”

This means:

Providing you with support until you are 21 or 24 if its agreed you need support in education, employment or training.

Helping you to find somewhere safe and suitable to live.

Supporting you to develop independent living skills and prepare you for the world of work.

Supporting you to make choices about your future including University, Apprenticeships or Further Education.

Helping you to get a provisional driving licence.

“We will provide you with the best service possible”

This means:

Having a qualified social worker who visits you regularly and listens to you.

Not changing your social worker unless it is absolutely necessary and if they do we will make sure you get a chance to say goodbye.

Having a Safeguarding Review manager who will listen to you and make sure people do what they say they are going to do.

Listening to you about when you want your meetings and who you want there.

Making sure you are able to make a complaint if you are not happy.



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Corporate Parenting Board

3 July 2014

Report title	Corporate Parenting Panel Programme 2014-15
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Families
Wards affected	All
Accountable director	Sarah Norman, Community
Originating service	Looked after Children's Service
Accountable employee(s)	Darren Martindale: COPE Team manager / Virtual School Head 01902 551039
Report to be/has been considered by	Emma Bennet & Cllr Gibson

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposed work programme for 2014/15.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To outline a 2014-15 work programme for the Corporate Parenting Panel, which enables the panel to fulfil all statutory requirements and the council to fulfil its Corporate Parenting Responsibilities. The programme also aims to align the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel with that of the Children in Care Council.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Wolverhampton City Council and its Partners have a legal and moral duty towards all of its Looked after Children and Care-leavers to offer them the kind of support a good

parent would provide.¹ This requires the active engagement of all service departments of Wolverhampton City Council, Elected Members and Partners (Corporate Parenting). The Corporate Parenting Panel Programme provides the essential framework to enable elected members to provide support and challenge to the council's Corporate Parenting Programme. This also includes dates for elected members' visits to Wolverhampton residential homes for LAC.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

3.1 Proposed Corporate Parenting Board Programme – 2014-15 Corporate Parenting Board Meetings

Date	Activity
3 July 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial meeting / CP Board Programme 2. Up-dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reminder of CP/ safeguarding roles and responsibility • Information on residential home visits 3. Meeting with Children in Care Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main item: review and update of the Pledge
3 rd September 2014 (dated to be amended to 11 th to be confirmed at meeting)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaving Care 2. Adoption 3. Corporate Parenting Strategy Refresh
October (additional meeting)	Meet with foster carers
19 th November	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health of LAC 2. CAMHS 3. IROs / Safeguarding
14 th January 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virtual School Report 2. Fostering (Including: Foster Care Support Service)

¹ Children Act 1989, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Every Child Matters 2003 & Children Act 2004, Care Matters 2007, Children & Families Act 2014

	Foster Home Review)
19 th March	1. Residential 2. Participation

Proposed Members' visits to Children's Homes

The following dates have been agreed with the residential homes, on which CP Board members could visit:

Thursday 17th July – Stafford Road 3.30pm

Friday 8th August – Merridale Street West 3pm

Friday 19th September – The Wergs 4pm

Friday 10th October – Brooklands 4pm

Friday 21st November – Upper Pendeford Farm 4pm

Friday 5th December – Red Gables 4pm

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 This report has no financial implications.

[DK/26062014/B]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no known legal implications to this report

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 This plan aims to significantly improve equality of opportunity for LAC, who are a very disadvantaged group. No other groups will experience any loss of opportunity as a result of this plan, and mechanisms for impact assessment are built in to the processes described.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 The Corporate Parenting Officer has recently resigned and the Assistant Corporate Parenting Officer leaves her post at the end of August. It is vital that these officers are replaced as soon as possible. A business case has been approved by Emma Bennett for both of these posts and the recruitment process is being taken forward by Darren Martindale as a matter of urgency..

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 There are no background papers