

Public Document Pack



NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date and Time	Monday, 27th November, 2017 at 2.00 pm
Place	Wellington Room, Ell Court, The Castle, Winchester
Enquiries to	members.services@hants.gov.uk

John Coughlan CBE
Chief Executive
The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UJ

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting may be recorded and broadcast live on the County Council's website. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Filming Protocol available on the County Council's website.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore all Members with a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting should consider whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, consider whether it is appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

3. DEPUTATIONS

To receive any deputations notified under Standing Order 12.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements the Chairman may wish to make.

5. INTRODUCTION TO THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD (Pages 3 - 72)

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services to provide an introduction to the remit of the Corporate Parenting Board and the reasons for its creations.

6. PROTOCOL BETWEEN THE HAMPSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD AND THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD (Pages 73 - 82)

To receive a report from the Director of Children's Services in relation to establishing a protocol between the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Corporate Parenting Board.

7. WORK PLAN

To agree a work plan for future meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.

ABOUT THIS AGENDA:

On request, this agenda can be provided in alternative versions (such as large print, Braille or audio) and in alternative languages.

ABOUT THIS MEETING:

The press and public are welcome to attend the public sessions of the meeting. If you have any particular requirements, for example if you require wheelchair access, please contact members.services@hants.gov.uk for assistance.

County Councillors attending as appointed members of this Committee or by virtue of Standing Order 18.5; or with the concurrence of the Chairman in connection with their duties as members of the Council or as a local County Councillor qualify for travelling expenses.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Corporate Parenting Board
Date:	27 November 2017
Title:	Introduction to the Corporate Parenting Board
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Lin Ferguson, Area Director, Children's Services

Tel: 01962 891623

Email: Lin.ferguson@hants.gov.uk

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 For the Corporate Parenting Board to note the role and remit of the Corporate Parenting Board in line with its Terms of Reference.

2. Summary

2.1. On the 17 October 2017 Hampshire's Children and Family Advisory Panel agreed to the creation of a sub-committee to be known as the Corporate Parenting Board.

2.2. For members ease the original report submitted to the Children and Family Advisory Panel is attached as Annex 1, alongside;

- The agreed Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Board, attached as Annex 2.
- The guidance document '10 Questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children', attached as Annex 3.
- The guidance document 'Corporate Parenting Resource Pack, attached as Annex 4.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

•
Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-assessments.htm>

*Inset in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state*

- (a) why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions.*

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

There is no impact.

3. Climate Change:

These proposals do not have any impact on the environment.

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	17 October 2017
Title:	Establishing a Corporate Parenting Board
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Laura Mallinson, District Manager

Tel: 01962 891623

Email: laura.mallinson@hants.gov.uk

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 It is proposed that the Children and Families Advisory Panel (CFAP) form a sub-committee, known as the "Corporate Parenting Board". The purpose of this paper is to outline the proposed function and governance arrangements for a Corporate Parenting Board (CPB); promoting the best outcomes for our children in care and care leavers. The Board will enable detailed Member led engagement and advice to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on the key area of corporate parenting.
- 1.2 Every County Councillor has a responsibility, as a corporate parent, to act for the children and young people in the council's care as a parent would their own child. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do. Corporate parents have the responsibility to ensure that children in care, care leavers and other vulnerable children are supported well in order for them to achieve their full potential.
- 1.3 Those County Councillors on the CPB will have a particular responsibility to review County Council policies effectively and improve corporate parenting within Hampshire. The CPB will act through recommendations to CFAP and the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, to ensure that all of the services to children in care and care leavers are of a high standard, and to ensure that they are being well supported in all aspects of their life, including:
- support and encouragement to achieve in school;
 - support and encouragement to after their mental health and wellbeing;
 - having opportunities for positive social integration; and
 - enabling the most vulnerable children and young people in society to flourish into the successful adults they can become.
- 1.4 The proposed CPB will comprise three Members of CFAP and three co-opted Care Ambassadors. Other young people who are in care or care leavers and foster carers will be invited to attend as necessary. Regular support and advice

will be offered by Officers as outlined in the terms of reference, attached as Appendix 1.

- 1.5** The Corporate Parenting Board will make recommendations to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services regarding:
- the review and monitoring of outcomes for children in care and care leavers;
 - the steps required to ensure that the views of Hampshire’s children in care and care leavers are listened to and acted upon, including ensuring those views are incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies throughout the County Council;
 - ensuring sufficient resources are available for the ‘Care Ambassadors’ to directly engage with all children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council;
 - raising awareness by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents and the County Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities;
 - raising the profile of the needs of children in care and care leavers through support for a range of actions & events, to recognise their achievement and contribution;
 - ensuring that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents;
 - ensuring that the views of children and young people on the development of services which affect them are regularly heard through the Care Ambassadors, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD).
 - reviewing the children in care/care leavers Pledge annually;
 - ensuring all staff working with children in care and care leavers have the appropriate support and training needs identified.

2 Background

- 2.1** Hampshire County Council is one of the country’s leading local authorities, with many services rated as high performing. Elected Members have a crucial role to play in ensuring that we provide an excellent service to some of the most vulnerable children and young people in society – specifically those children and young people in care or care leavers. Due to their vulnerabilities, we know that these children and young people are at increased risk of poorer outcomes than their peers, they are more likely to have poorer academic outcomes, increased risk of mental illness, increased risk of offending and increased risk of not being in education, training or employment as they transition into adulthood. As a corporate parent, the responsibility is on the Council to ensure that these children have the same opportunities and aspirations as any other young person in order to achieve good outcomes for children, by championing the welfare of children and young people in care and care leavers, drawing on the principle of “If this were my child, would it be good enough?”
- 2.2** Whilst the role of a corporate parent has been introduced since the Children Act 1989, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (s1.1) defined for the first

time in law what corporate parenting should be looking at to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for children looked after and care leavers. This being:

- 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 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.

3 Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

3.1 The proposed Corporate Parenting Board will be a sub-committee of the Children and Families Advisory Panel and will produce an annual report on the progress of its work, specifically to evidence improved outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers.

3.2 The Local Government Association has produced a resource pack for elected members to assist in understanding the role and function of Corporate Parenting Boards; this is attached as Appendix 2. A guide to some questions that may be asked by board members in carrying out their role is attached as Appendix 3.

4 Membership of the Board

4.1 It is proposed that the CPB is made up of three County Councillors appointed by and drawn from the membership of the CFAP on a politically proportionate basis. In addition to this, it is recommended to the County Council that three Care Ambassadors are co-opted to the Board and that Officers will attend to support and advise the CPB, as detailed in the terms of reference (Appendix 1).

4.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Board will be identified by CFAP from the appointed County Council members.

4.3 The Executive Lead Member for Children's Services will have a standing invitation to attend and observe meetings of the Board.

5 Officer Support and Resources

- 5.1 The Director of Children's Services will be responsible for ensuring that the Board has sufficient Officer support and resources to carry out its functions and may delegate this responsibility as required.
- 5.2 Currently the functions of the CPB are already in existence but come under different strategic pathways. Therefore the CPB will provide a coordinated response to improving the outcomes of children in care and care leavers through the development of effective services

6 Frequency of meetings

- 6.1 It is proposed that meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board are held quarterly, working to an agreed forward programme of business which will be reviewed and amended by the Board as required; led by the views and priorities identified by children in care and care leavers. In reviewing the programme, the Board may request reports on particular matters of their own preference or as advised by the lead officer.

7 Functions of the Board

- 7.1 The agenda and reports for the CPB will be available in accordance with the County Council's Constitution.
- 7.2 The Board will receive regular reports in relation to adoption, fostering, commissioning, children looked after services, care leavers and the virtual school with a view to identify any areas of under performance and recommending any changes.
- 7.3 Through recommendations to the relevant Executive Member or to CFAP, the Board will seek to ensure that the profile of the corporate parenting priorities are incorporated within key plans, policies and strategies of the County Council, including interagency working arrangements. Reports relating to complaints/comments from looked after children or care leavers will be reviewed to enable the Board to assure itself that Officers have dealt with these appropriately and made any necessary changes.
- 7.4 The Board will raise awareness within Hampshire County Council's partner agencies and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a corporate family with key responsibilities.
- 7.5 The Board will raise the profile of the needs and achievements of children looked after and care leavers through support for a range of celebratory events /activities determined by children looked after and care leavers.
- 7.6 The Board will seek to ensure that leisure, culture, further education and employment opportunities are provided and taken up by our children in care and care leavers.

- 7.7 The Board will seek to ensure that the views of children and young people are regularly heard through the CPB to improve care arrangements, educational, health and social outcomes.
- 7.8 The Board will meet with children and young people in care/care leavers, frontline staff and foster carers to enable it to inform CFAP of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- 7.9 The Board will monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations for foster carers / residential workers to provide excellent and high quality care.
- 7.10 The Board will consider the possible role of Member Champions in respect of a number of areas and make recommendations accordingly in the following key areas:
- Housing
 - Employment and training opportunities within council department and with partner agencies
 - Health and emotional well being
 - Educational Attainment and access to Higher Education
 - Foster Carer Recruitment and retention
 - Response to those who go missing
- 7.11 The CPB may agree the appointment of working groups of Members and Officers to provide advice on specific matters within its remit. Such working groups may be appointed for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist.

8 Care Ambassadors

- 8.1 The Care Ambassadors represent the views of children in care and care leavers and representatives will be co-opted by the County Council.

9 Performance Monitoring

- 9.1 The Corporate Parenting Board will regularly analyse and monitor outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The Board's work will be underpinned by a core data set considered at each Board meeting. Additional detailed monitoring reports will be presented in accordance with the agreed work programme.

10 Training

- 10.1 Appropriate training will be provided to members of the CPB as required – this could be training provided by the Care Ambassadors or by Officers or other agencies.

11 Impact that the Corporate Parenting Board has on the performance of the County Council

11.1 The impact of a Corporate Parenting Board will highlight and promote the Council's responsibility as a corporate parent to ensure that the very best care is provided to all of our children in care and care leavers. The introduction of a CPB will raise the profile of children in care and care leavers throughout the whole council.

12 Recommendation(s)

12.1 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel agrees to the formation of a sub-committee known as the Corporate Parenting Board on the basis set out in the report and in the attached draft terms of reference.

12.2 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel agrees to the adoption of the proposed Terms of Reference for the Board.

12.3 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel appoints three Members to the Board, on a proportionate basis and identifies one of them as Chairman and another as Vice-Chairman. In addition, that the Children and Families Advisory Panel appoint a substitute member for each political Group.

12.4 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel recommends to County Council the appointment of three co-opted Care Ambassadors as Members of the Board as set out in the Terms of Reference.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

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DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

The establishment of the Corporate Parenting Board will not have any direct impact on equalities, and any future recommendations of the Board to the Executive Member will be subject to Equalities Assessment at that time.

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No Impact

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

No impact

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

1. The Children and Families Advisory Panel (CFAP) has established a sub-committee, known as the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) to enable detailed Member led engagement and advice to CFAP and to the relevant Executive Member on the key area of corporate parenting.

Membership

2. The CPB shall consist of three elected County Council Members of CFAP, on a proportionate basis, as appointed by that Panel.
3. Three Care Ambassadors to be co-opted to the Board by the County Council, following nomination from an outside organisation where appropriate.
4. Regular support and advice to the Board will be offered to the Board and may include the following:
 - Assistant Director,
 - Area Director,
 - Service lead for participation,
 - Participation Officer,
 - Lead for Children in Care,
 - Service Manager for residential care,
 - The Virtual School,
 - Procurement,
 - the lead Independent Reviewing Officer
 - Health – (Designated Nurse for Children Looked After, CAMHS),
 - Foster Carers,
 - Public Health,
 - The Youth Commissioner and
 - The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB.)
5. Each appointed County Council Member shall cease to be a member of the CPB if he or she ceases to be a member of CFAP or if CFAP removes the appointed Member.
6. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the CPB shall be appointed by CFAP from amongst the three elected County Council Members.
7. A substitute member may be appointed for each political Group as appropriate.
8. The Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services shall have a standing invitation to attend and observe meetings of the Board.

Functions and remit of the CPB

9. The CPB is established to support the work of CFAP in the specific area of corporate parenting. CFAP is constituted to “advise the relevant Executive Member on a number of policy areas”. The CPB is delegated to make

recommendations on matters falling within its remit to the relevant Executive Member. It may also advise and report to the CFAP.

10. The Corporate Parenting Board will make recommendations to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services regarding:
- the review and monitoring of outcomes for children in care and care leavers;
 - the steps required to ensure that the views of Hampshire's children in care and care leavers are listened to and acted upon, including ensuring those views are incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies throughout the County Council;
 - ensuring sufficient resources are available for the 'Care Ambassadors' to directly engage with all children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council;
 - raising awareness by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents and the County Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities;
 - raising the profile of the needs of children in care and care leavers through support for a range of actions & events, to recognise their achievement and contribution;
 - ensuring that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents;
 - ensuring that the views of children and young people on the development of services which affect them are regularly heard through the Care Ambassadors, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD).
 - reviewing the children in care/care leavers Pledge annually;
 - ensuring all staff working with children in care and care leavers have the appropriate support and training needs identified;

Proceedings

11. The CPB shall normally meet four times per year in order to discharge its functions. All meetings of the CPB will take place at a suitable venue, usually in the County Council headquarters in Winchester.
12. The Chairman of the CPB may call an additional meeting of the Board at any time for the purpose of discharging its functions.
13. The County Council Standing Orders as set out in its Constitution shall apply to meetings of the CPB and in particular, those Standing Orders in respect of voting and access to information. The quorum for a meeting of the CPB shall be three, including at least two County Councillors.
14. Meetings of the CPB shall be open for members of the public to attend unless the Board determines that it is necessary to exclude members of the public in accordance with Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 or the Board determines that it is necessary to close the meeting to the public because of a disturbance.

15. Copies of the agenda and any reports for the CPB's meetings shall be open to inspection by members of the public at the offices of the authority. This is with the exception of any report which the County Council's Monitoring Officer determines relates to items which are likely to be determined to include exempt information and result in a resolution at the meeting to exclude the public. Categories of exempt information are set out at Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act.
16. The CPB may agree the appointment of working groups of Members and Officers to provide advice on specific matters within its remit. Such working groups may be appointed for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist.

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10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children

Revised June 2012





Contents

Introduction	4
Key points	5
Jargon busting	6
10 questions to ask:	
1. How well does your authority do in commissioning or providing services for looked after children?	9
2. How well do your children in care do at school, both academically and in terms of other kinds of achievements?	11
3. How good is the health and wellbeing of children in your care?	13
4. How stable and secure are the lives of your looked-after children while they are in your care?	14
5. How well does your authority do at finding appropriate adoptive families for children for whom it is decided this is the right option?	16
6. How well do your foster care arrangements work?	18
7. How good is the standard of residential care provided or used by your authority?	20
8. What support does your authority provide to young people leaving care and how effective is it?	22
9. How effective is your professional workforce of social workers and others responsible for running services for and working with looked-after children?	24
10. What more could be done to fulfil the council's responsibilities as a 'corporate parent'?	25
Case studies	27
References and further information	29

Introduction

This guide has been produced by the Local Government Association in partnership with the National Children's Bureau. It follows on from a previous guide produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) for Local Government Improvement and Development and forms part of a suite of offers for elected members and others working in children's services.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny is an independent national charity which carries out research, supports online networks and provides training, development and events to promote and improve public scrutiny and accountability across government and the public sector.

The Local Government Association has sector-led improvement as a key corporate priority. Councils are the most improved part of the public sector, and local politicians and senior managers lead the transformation of place. A significant sector-led improvement programme is established in children's services with governance provided through the children's improvement board and funding to the board from the Department of Education (DfE).

The National Children's Bureau is a leading research and development charity working to improve the lives of children and young people, reducing the impact of inequalities. It works with children, for children to influence government policy, be a strong voice for young people and frontline professionals, and provide practical solutions on a range of social issues.

The National Children's Bureau has been funded by the Department of Education to develop materials that will support councils in their role as corporate parents. More detailed briefings on specific topics of relevance to corporate parents and self-audit tools are being developed by the National Children's Bureau and will be available shortly. A National Voice, an organisation providing a voice for looked-after children and care-leavers, is also producing 'top tips' for corporate parents on working with their children in care council.

This guide aims to provide clear and succinct advice for scrutiny members and officers on the key issues to cover in a scrutiny review of corporate parenting, as well as jargon-busting, links to further information and case studies.

The ten question areas can be used by overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs) to scope a review that takes an overview of all services relevant to looked-after children, or to focus on an area of particular interest. They can also be used by corporate parenting groups or other elected members to support them in their ability to scrutinise and challenge the service provided by their council to looked-after children.

If corporate parents are to assess whether the standard of care would be good enough for their own children, they need good quality information on which to base their judgements. These questions will provide a framework to structure this information.

Key points

Children in the care of a local authority are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of children in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. At any one time around 65,000 children are looked after in England, although over 90,000 pass through the care system each year. There has been an overall increase in the numbers of children entering care since 2007 and a rise in the proportion who are removed through the intervention of the courts as opposed to coming into care by agreement with parents.

When they are elected, all councillors take on the role of ‘corporate parent’ to children looked after by their local authority. They have a duty to take an interest in the wellbeing and development of those children, as if they were their own. Although the lead member for children’s services has particular responsibilities, the role of corporate parent is carried by all councillors, regardless of their role on the council.

Overview and scrutiny offers a key way in which councillors can fulfil this responsibility, by giving them the opportunity to ask searching questions of a range of service providers and assure themselves that children in the care of the local authority are being well looked after.

Overview and scrutiny also offers opportunities for councillors to hear directly from children looked after by the authority and to ensure that their voices are heard

when considering the effectiveness and impact of services. This should include not just children’s social care, but other services which may have an impact on the lives of children in care (including care-leavers and those on the edge of care), such as housing provision, crime and feeling safe in the community, access to public transport and the quality of schools and leisure activities.

In April 2011 the government introduced new regulations and guidance to improve the quality and consistency of care planning, placement (where and how children are looked after) and case review for looked-after children. It includes statutory guidance on independent reviewing officers, the ‘sufficiency duty’ requiring local authorities to ensure there is enough accommodation locally for looked-after children, as well as guidance on improving their educational attainment. This was part of the implementation of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, and it updated and consolidated previous guidance on the Children Act 1989 and other legislation.

Local authorities are required to collect data about their performance in relation to looked-after children, and to report this to the Department for Education. This data is published annually and, although it is no longer accompanied by targets, provides a useful benchmark for comparisons between an authority’s present and past performance and with that of other authorities.

Jargon busting

‘Looked-after children’, ‘children in care’

The terms ‘looked-after children’ or ‘children in care’ refer to all children under the age of 18 being looked after by a local authority. It includes both those subject to a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (see below); and those looked after by a voluntary agreement with their parents under section 20 of that Act. Once they become looked-after, children may be placed by the local authority with family members, foster carers or in a residential children’s home. The purpose of the ‘care’ system is to look after children where parents are unable to do so, for a variety of reasons. These include situations where parents are abusive or cannot provide adequate care for them, or where there is no parent or relative available, such as asylum seeking children or those whose parents have died.

‘Care leavers’

Care leavers are those who have been in ‘care’ for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 onwards and therefore qualify for services to support them once they leave. This support should be provided up to the age of 21 or until they have completed their education if this is longer.

Care order – Section 31 Children Act 1989

Care orders are made by the court if a ‘threshold of significant harm’ is reached and there is no likelihood of improvement in the standard of care provided for a young person. The local authority then shares parental responsibility with the parent(s) and can make the decisions that a parent would normally make. A care order expires when the young person reaches 18 or when another Order is made placing the child with an alternative family, such as an adoption or ‘special guardianship order’. It can also be discharged by the court before the age of 18 if it is considered that the child would no longer be at risk of harm if they returned home.

Children ‘at risk’ of harm

These are children where there are concerns that they are suffering or are likely to suffer harm through abuse or neglect. Children considered ‘at risk’ have a ‘child protection plan’ which should be regularly reviewed.

‘Children in need’

Children in need are a wider group of children and young people who have been assessed as needing the help of services to achieve a reasonable standard of health or development. They have a ‘child in need plan’ to address the difficulties identified in the assessment

Interim care order – Section 38 Children Act 1989

If the local authority is concerned that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer ‘significant harm’, they can apply to the court for an ‘interim care order’, which is a time-limited order renewed while care proceedings for the child continue through the courts.

Emergency protection order section 44 Children Act 1989

An ‘emergency protection order’ removes a child into accommodation provided by or on behalf of the local authority and is granted by the court (or magistrate outside court hours) if there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant immediate harm. It is to be used only where the child is thought to be at immediate risk and for a maximum of eight days, although this can be extended by the court for a further seven days. It allows the child to be cared for in a place of safety whilst further enquiries are made.

The pledge

Each local authority is required to develop a ‘pledge’, setting out its commitments to the children in its care. The Care Matters Initiative envisaged the pledge as a key communication tool between children and young people and the authority responsible for ensuring they receive the parenting they need. Every child and young person’s care or pathway plan should reflect how the commitments made in the pledge will be delivered for that individual child and it is monitored by the local ‘children in care council’ (see below).

Regulation 33 visits

These are the scrutiny visits that have to be made at least once a month to children’s homes in order to quality-assure the service being provided. This includes checking that the home is compliant with regulations, that the environment is suitable and seeking the views of staff and residents. Where an authority operates its own children’s homes, councillors may be involved in undertaking these visits.

Children in care councils

The Care Matters Initiative created the expectation that local authorities should to set up a ‘children in care council’ to represent the views of looked-after children and to enable them to be involved in developing services. There should also be mechanisms in place for involving young people in care in the recruitment of key staff members, such as the director of children’s services. The local children in care council is also responsible for helping to develop and monitor the implementation of the pledge.

The ‘sufficiency duty’

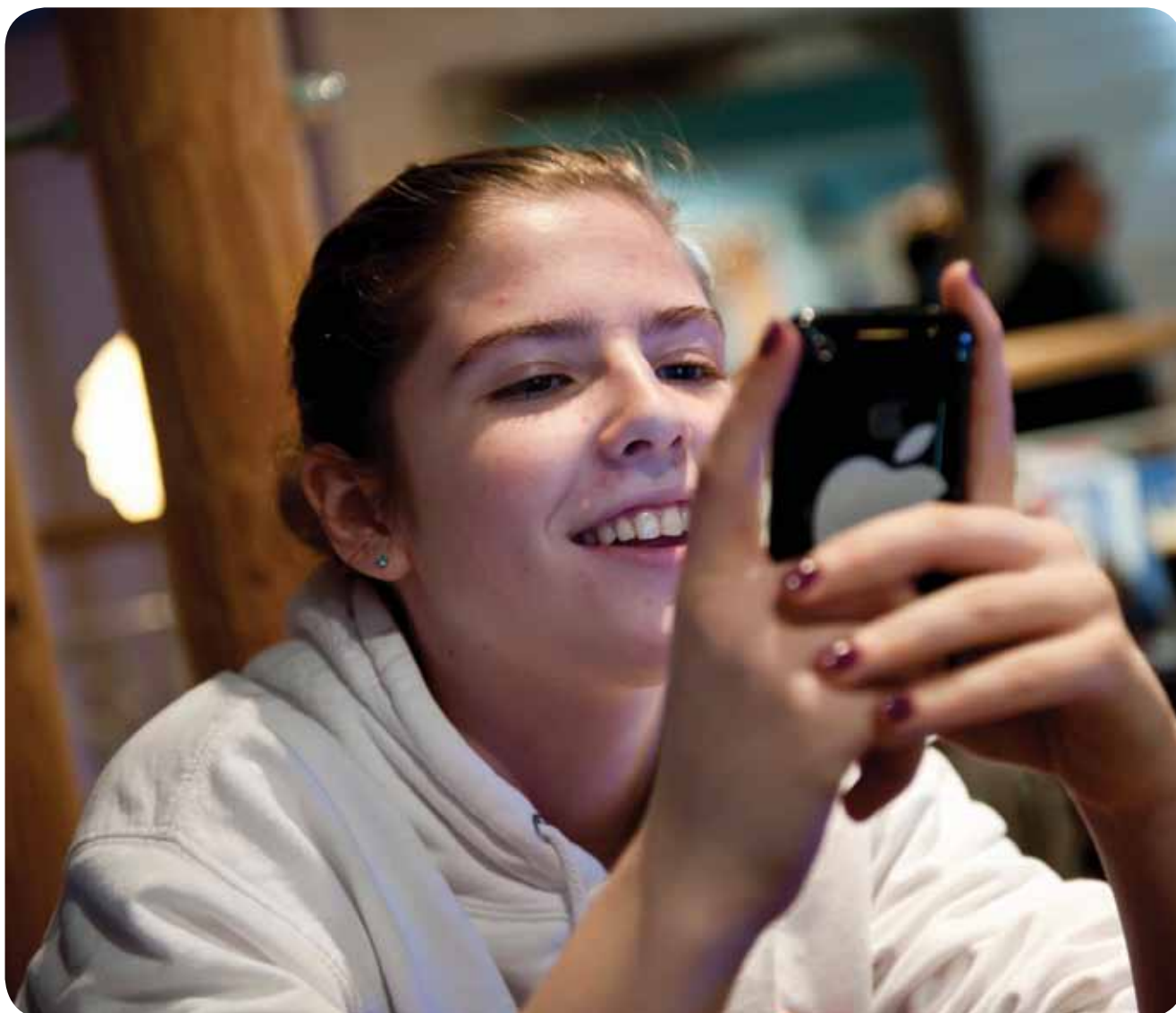
This is a duty placed on local authorities under 22 (G) of the Children Act 1989 (amended by the 2008 Act) to ensure there is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of their looked-after children. Sufficient accommodation must be provided “where reasonably practical” (lack of resources is not considered a barrier), and having “regard to the benefit of having a number of providers and a range of accommodation”.

Commissioning

The process by which an authority decides what level and type of services it wants in order to meet identified needs, and seeks providers of those services, often through a competitive process. Increasingly this is done jointly, for example with the local health service, and in the context of looked-after children should be based on an analysis of their needs. Commissioned services should be monitored and evaluated, and constantly reviewed to make sure they are continuing to meet changing needs.

Independent reviewing officers (IROs)

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires local authorities to appoint a named IRO for each looked after child. Their role is to oversee the child's care plan, monitor the case and challenge the local authority if the plan is not meeting the child's needs or is not being implemented effectively. The IRO must communicate directly with each child they are responsible for to establish the child's wishes and feelings and ensure that these are taken into account.



1

How well does your authority do in commissioning or providing services for looked after children?

Policy context

As corporate parents, members need access to information to enable you to identify how well your authority is doing in relation to outcomes for your looked-after children, and to any areas for improvement. National performance data will enable you to assess how well your local authority is doing in comparison with others. It is also useful for analysing trends within your own authority.

Ofsted inspections provide an independent perspective on the quality of your service.

As part of the sector-led improvement programme for children's services, the Safeguarding Children peer review is on offer to all authorities. This peer review can be tailored to the requirements of individual authorities and can have a focus on looked-after children. It is important that scrutiny members participate in the peer review process in their authority and also consider the findings of the peer review team. This will provide valuable insight from a 'critical friend' perspective.

Whatever these sources of information tell you, there is always a need for additional local mechanisms for you to judge whether the quality of care provided would be good enough for your own child. Statistics alone are not enough: it is important to ask questions of those responsible about the factors that affect your authority's performance, and to seek qualitative

information about the experiences of the children themselves.

The circumstances and needs of looked-after children vary widely, with some children just spending a short period in care during a family crisis while others effectively grow up in care. Each child must have a 'care plan' that sets out the long-term plan for the child and the action that needs to be taken to provide them with good quality care.

Questions to ask

Who are your looked-after children in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religious or cultural background and disability, and what needs and challenges does this profile present?

- Do you have a system for seeking feedback from looked-after children and care-leavers about the services they receive?
- Do you receive a copy of the annual report from the IRO service, and is it used to identify gaps in services?

The services provided must meet the identified needs of the children, while offering 'value for money'. Members need to ensure that arrangements for commissioning services are effective.

- Do arrangements for commissioning services involve all relevant council departments and other agencies?
- How will any changes in local health service structures, for example the move to GP commissioning, impact on any joint commissioning arrangements?
- Does your local joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) include information on the needs of your looked after children and care-leavers?
- Do you have mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness of the services you commission, based on outcomes?

Cost comparisons can be one indicator of how your authority compares with others, for example:

- What is the cost of your residential provision by comparison with other areas?
- How much do you spend on out-of-area placements for looked-after children? Is this rising or falling?

London Borough of Enfield developed a commissioning strategy for looked-after children which had the reduction in the number of children placed in residential care as one of its aims. The implementation of this strategy has been effective in this aim, reducing the numbers of looked-after children in residential placements from 17 per cent in 2004 to 6.5 per cent in 2010. This has ensured that more of the most complex young people can benefit from a family setting. The financial efficiencies achieved have been reinvested into preventive services to allow more children and young people to be cared for within their own families¹.

¹ <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/vulnerablechildren/vipdetails.aspx?lpeid=381>

2

How well do your children in care do at school, both academically and in terms of other kinds of achievements?

Policy context

A better education for children in care (Social Exclusion Unit 2003) identified five reasons why looked-after children may underachieve in education

- their lives are characterised by instability
- they spend too much time out of school
- they do not have sufficient help with their education if they fall behind
- primary carers are not expected or equipped to provide sufficient support and encouragement for learning and development
- they have unmet emotional, mental and physical health needs which impact on their learning.

Statutory guidance makes it clear that corporate parents must tackle this, and have high aspirations for the children they care for.

”Though some do well, the educational achievement of looked-after children as a group remains unacceptably low. That is why the Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children Act 2004) places a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children.”

The way in which local authorities should fulfil this duty is set out in Promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children: statutory guidance for local authorities (DCSF 2010), with a specific section for corporate parents. Responsibility is shared by all schools, including free schools and academies, and the schools admissions code describes the priority governing bodies must give to looked after children.

Personal education plans (PEPs) are completed for all looked-after children within ten days of becoming looked-after and are part of the care plan. There is a joint responsibility for the PEP between the child’s school and the local authority children’s service.

Ensuring looked-after children have the right support to be able to participate fully in school life, and that their school career is not disrupted by constant placement moves can make a big difference. Looked-after children tell us that they value education and want support to do well.

In one authority looked-after children often missed out on after-school activities and trips because of delays in getting permission from social workers and their managers. As a result of the scrutiny review which brought this to light, the authority changed the system so that social workers could delegate the decision to foster carers, ensuring that looked-after children were not missing out.

- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their education and aspirations?

Celebrating the non-academic achievements of children in care and enabling them to benefit from all the opportunities school can offer is also important. Children in care should be cared about and not just cared for.

Questions to ask

- What results are achieved by looked-after children compared with other children at local schools, and with looked-after children in other authorities?
- How well are children placed outside your local authority area doing at school?
- What plans does the council have to raise the educational attainment of looked-after children?
- Do you have a 'virtual school head', designated teachers and designated school governors in place? How effective are these arrangements?
- How are individual children and young people supported to achieve, both within and outside school?
- How are children supported to continue in further and higher education?
- How do schools' admissions policies treat looked-after children, for example are they able to attend the same school as other children in their foster family, and how many looked-after children get into the highest performing schools?
- Do all looked-after children have a PEP and are these audited for quality?

In one authority a young person was unable to attend an after-school photography course because for two years no-one would buy her a camera: when this came to light during a scrutiny review, councillors intervened and got action taken to sort it out.

- Are looked-after children able to participate in after-school activities and enjoy learning and achievement in all its forms? If not, what are the barriers?
- Does your council have a way to celebrate the achievements (whether sporting, academic, musical, attendance, personal bests) of looked-after children, and are councillors given regular updates?
- Do you monitor the numbers of looked-after children excluded from school, and do you know what alternative provision is available for them?

3

How good is the health and wellbeing of children in your care?

Policy context

Looked-after children and young people share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but they frequently enter care with a worse level of health due to the impact of poverty, abuse and neglect. Evidence suggests that looked-after children are nearly five times more likely to have a mental health disorder than all children.

As with educational attainment, there is statutory guidance on Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children (DCSF 2009). This applies to local authorities, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities but consideration will need to be given to the impact of the NHS reforms.

The health needs of each looked-after child must be assessed within four weeks of a child becoming looked-after and should form the basis of their health plan. As with the PEP, this feeds in to the child's care plan.

Local authorities are also required to make sure that a 'strengths and difficulties' questionnaire is completed to assess for emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Questions to ask

- What proportion of children's health assessments and dental checks are carried out on time?
- Is there a designated doctor and nurse for looked-after children?
- Are looked-after children a priority group for getting access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and how long are waiting times for referrals?
- As an at-risk group, what access do looked-after children and young people get to services to help with substance misuse, sexual health and teenage pregnancy?
- What support is given to foster carers and young people themselves about promoting healthy lifestyles?
- Do you receive regular reports on the health needs and outcomes of looked-after children?
- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their health needs and priorities and how well they are met?
- Is this evidence about outcomes and experiences used to inform the commissioning of services?

4

How stable and secure are the lives of your looked-after children while they are in your care?

Policy context

When children and young people enter care and are placed either with foster carers, in residential homes or even at boarding school, they risk losing regular contact not only with family members but also with friends or other significant people in their lives.

This is exacerbated if the 'placement' has to be out of the area, perhaps because of a lack of local foster families or children's homes. If the placement breaks down, they may have to move again, causing yet more anxiety and disruption. Yet children themselves tell us that stable and supportive relationships are crucial if they are to thrive in care.

Ensuring placements are stable and work well for children and young people is therefore key to their wellbeing. The 'sufficiency duty' requires local authorities to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of its looked-after children, and they must demonstrate how they are fulfilling this responsibility. To do this, there must be a good understanding of who your children are and what they need.

Every council has to collect data on how far placements are from the child's home and the number of placements that children experience but the quality of the care offered must also be taken into account. It is not good enough to place a child in a stable placement, within the local authority boundary, if the child is unhappy there.

There are important links with safeguarding: children who come into care should do so at a point where their experiences have not been so damaging that they cannot settle.

Questions to ask

How stable are your placements? How many children move placements three or more times during a year or remain in the same placement for two or more years?

- What do you know about the children who experience changes of placement?
- What are the needs of children that require them to be placed out of the area of the authority?
- If additional services were provided either by the local authority or by partner agencies, could they be looked after within the area of the local authority?
- How are you fulfilling your 'sufficiency duty'?

- What choice and information do children and young people have about their placements, for example, do they get to meet potential foster carers or visit children's homes before they go to live there?
- If children have to move placement, what arrangements are made to keep them at the same school, for example transport?
- Are you satisfied that children are supported to maintain relationships with people that are significant to them?
- What do looked-after children say about their placements?

As a result of one authority's scrutiny review, a looked-after children and care leavers' drop-in centre was developed, to provide a safe space for looked-after children and young people to go to find out information and meet support workers and others in one place.



5

How well does your authority do at finding appropriate adoptive families for children for whom it is decided this is the right option?

Policy context

If a child or young person's birth family have completely broken down or it has been decided that they will never be able to care for the child safely, the best option for a long-term stable family environment may be adoption. The law governing adoption is in the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which aligned adoption practice with the 1989 Children Act, making the welfare of the child the paramount consideration.

The government has recently announced An Action Plan on Adoption (DfE 2012) to increase the numbers of children being adopted from care, and to speed up the process. The measures it proposes include considering the suitability of adoption for children at an earlier stage; streamlining bureaucratic processes that can lead to delay and encouraging a broader range of potential adopters. This includes the relaxation of expectations about matching the ethnicity of children and adopters if this will cause delay.

These changes will be accompanied by stronger systems for holding local authorities to account, with a new framework for inspection and a new 'adoption scorecard'. This will indicate how each local authority has performed in relation to placing children for adoption and in responding to prospective adopters.

It is important not to forget that there are other ways of securing a permanent home for children within the care system. For some, family and friends may be able to care for them if the right support is available. For others, particularly older children, adoption may be unsuitable but foster carers make the commitment to offer the child a permanent home. These alternative routes to permanency can be secured legally through arrangements such as 'residence orders' or 'special guardianship'.

South Tyneside Council routinely places over 12 per cent of its looked-after population for adoption and is one of the best performing councils in placing them within one year of the decision being made. This has been achieved through the use of 'concurrent planning' in which, if children are not rehabilitated to their birth family, they are adopted by their foster carers².

² <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/vulnerablechildren/vlpdetails.aspx?lpeid=363>

Questions to ask

- What percentage of children have a permanence plan by their second review?
- What percentage of children are placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision to adopt and are subsequently adopted?
- How long does it take to make the decision to place a child for adoption, particularly for new-born babies?
- What is the profile of your children in care compared with prospective adoptive families, and if there is an imbalance, what steps are being taken to address this?
- How are sibling groups treated and what steps are taken to ensure they stay together, whether in adoption, fostering or residential care?
- What is the profile of children waiting for a permanent placement and what are the barriers to finding them a home?
- How long does it take to respond to prospective adopters and what are their views on how they have been treated?
- What do children and young people, for example in your local children in care council, say about adoption processes?



6

How well do your foster care arrangements work?

Policy context

Nationally, the proportion of children in care placed with foster carers as opposed to children's homes or other placements is about two thirds. Fostering is generally seen as a preferable option because it enables children and young people to live in a family environment.

Foster carers can play a valuable role in stabilising and caring for children from disrupted backgrounds for both short and longer periods of time, but nationally there is a shortage of people willing to take on the role. In the 1990s, independent or private fostering agencies developed and there is now a mixed economy. The way in which foster carers are supported, the fees they receive and their access to information may all play a role in making them feel valued, ensuring that they in turn can value and support the children they look after in the most effective way. The extent to which they hold delegated responsibility for day-to-day decisions on matters such as 'sleep-overs' or school trips can make a difference to their role satisfaction and the child's sense of belonging.

The Foster Carers' Charter sets out the expected commitment that foster carers and local authorities will make. It is designed to be used locally to develop a shared understanding and to encourage challenge.

Some 'family and friends' foster carers are approved only for a specific child, where they have an existing relationship and the local authority has decided that it is in the child's best interests to stay with them.

'Private' foster placements are those where the child's parents have made the arrangement directly with the foster family. The local authority should be informed in these situations so that they can check the suitability of the arrangement and monitor the care being provided.

Dreamwalls project in Southampton provides 'time-out' breaks for foster carers and has reduced by 95 per cent the proportion of foster carers leaving fostering. The cost equated to £674.43 per child per year, and 182 children received the service. Using the social return on investment (SROI) method of calculating value and benefits as well as costs, there was a £1.63 return for every £1.00 invested in the project.

Questions to ask

- Do you have a sufficient pool of suitable foster carers locally to meet the needs of children needing placements? If not, what steps are being taken to address this?
- What support is given to your foster carers, including family and friends carers, and how easily can they access it, both for themselves and the child in their care?
- What do foster carers themselves say about the support they receive, including out-of-hours support and about their relationships with social workers and other professionals?
- Are there clear arrangements for delegating responsibility to foster carers for day-to-day decisions?
- Is there more 'in-kind' support that would facilitate and make the fostering role easier, such as bus passes, access to leisure centres etc?
- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their experience of fostering?
- What is the turnover of foster carers and do you know the reasons why carers leave?



7

How good is the standard of residential care provided or used by your authority?

Policy context

For some children, a placement in a children's home may be more suitable than a foster home. For example, they may find it difficult to cope with family-based life as a result of their experiences, or because of a strong sense of loyalty to their birth family.

DfE has a challenge and improvement programme for children's homes to support good practice. As part of the programme, it produced a data pack to enable local authorities to examine and compare their use of children's homes (DfE 2011)³. Some local authorities operate children's homes themselves but 76 per cent of placements are in the private or voluntary sector. About nine per cent of looked-after children are in residential care and most are over the age of 12. The placements are more likely than foster care to be out of area. Interestingly, some authorities use residential care much more than others.

Councillors have said that taking part in 'Regulation 33' visits or other arranged visits to homes can really bring to life what it is like to live in residential care, although they have to be carried out with sensitivity. Ofsted inspects residential homes and these reports (along with the reports from Regulation 33 visits) should provide a source of information and assurance to scrutiny about the standard of care provided there.

Questions to ask

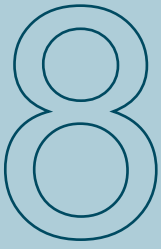
- What is the profile of the children placed in residential care by your authority?
- Who provides the residential placements used by your authority and what is their Ofsted rating?
- What are the outcomes of children in residential care compared to the rest of your looked after children?
- Do you have any children placed in 'secure care'?
- How is the experience of children placed in residential care outside the authority monitored?
- How does your use of residential care compare with other similar authorities?
- If your authority operates its own children's homes, what are the arrangements for undertaking Regulation 33 visit and how effective are these?

³ <http://tinyurl.com/82p2qda>

- What do looked-after children and young people themselves say about their experience of living in residential care?
- How are any complaints about standards of care in residential homes and issues such as bullying dealt with? How many are there and what happens as a result?

In Kirklees, looked-after children can access the KicK (Kids in care Kirklees) website. From here they can go on a virtual tour of all the residential homes by watching a video made and narrated by looked-after young people who live there, to tell them what it's like. The website also enables them to 'rate' their reviews and foster placements online, as well as read, listen to and watch first-hand accounts of children and young people's experiences of care.





What support does your authority provide to young people leaving care and how effective is it?

Policy context

For many young people, leaving care can be daunting: they are expected to be independent at an earlier age than their peers, in spite of the additional difficulties that many face. Care leavers are over-represented in prison populations and the unemployed, demonstrating that the experience of being in – and leaving – care still does not prepare young people well for adult life. If looked-after children followed the same paths as other children into further education, training and jobs, it could save the economy £50 million each year.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 sets out local authorities' responsibilities to develop a 'pathway plan' within three months of every looked-after child's 16th birthday to help them towards independence, with the support of a personal adviser.

Young people cease to be looked after at the age of 18, although some may choose to leave before this. The local authority continues to have responsibilities towards them at least up to the age of 21 and longer if they are receiving education or training. Young people eligible for adult services, such as those with a disability, are also entitled to extended support as care leavers.

Statutory guidance on local authority responsibilities towards care leavers is contained in Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations: Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (DCSF 2010). Support may be financial, practical and emotional.

The Staying Put programme enabled children in 11 pilot authorities to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18, replicating the experiences of most families. The evaluation was broadly positive⁴, particularly in enabling the young people to remain in education.

In Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, scrutiny called representatives from Job Centre Plus, the council's Revenues and Benefits and Care Leavers Services to a hearing following concerns expressed by care leavers about distress caused by late payments of benefits. The NCH Bridges Project reported that since the intervention of scrutiny, delays in processing benefits for care leavers were much reduced. As well as reducing the further risk of social and financial exclusion to vulnerable care leavers, there was also a reduction in the number of emergency payments to care leavers.

⁴ DfE (2012) Evaluation of the Staying Put: 18 Plus Family Placement Programme: Final report

Questions to ask

- How many care leavers is your authority still in touch with a year after they have left the care of the authority? How many are they in touch with after three years?
- What do you know about the outcomes of the children who were formerly in your authority's care?
- How many formerly looked-after young people are NEETs (not in education, employment and training)?
- What support do young people leaving care receive to access housing, tenancy support, employment, access to benefits, further and higher education and training?
- Do you make any provision for young people to stay in their placement beyond the age of 18?
- What do former looked-after children and young people themselves say about their experience of leaving care and the support that is or was provided?

In one authority a specialist scrutiny group on corporate parenting enabled looked-after young people to feed views directly to scrutiny. As a result of this group, the 'care leavers grant' (given to all young people leaving care to buy things for setting up home when they left care) was increased from £750 to £1000. Young people said £750 wasn't enough, members agreed and although officers were initially reluctant, comparison with other authorities showed that the grant level was low, so it was agreed to increase it.



9

How effective is your professional workforce of social workers and others responsible for running services for and working with looked-after children?

Policy context

It is essential that each child has an individualised care plan based on a thorough assessment of their needs, and this is the responsibility of their allocated social worker. Many authorities have struggled to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of suitably qualified social workers to do the difficult job of working with vulnerable children. This can be a key cause of poor performance but will also have an adverse effect on the experiences of the children and their carers. Children find it distressing to have frequent changes of worker and can feel uncared for as a result.

The IRO service is important both in terms of its ability to challenge individual instances of poor practice and to have an overview of the effectiveness of care planning across the authority. The IRO may be the most constant figure in some children's lives.

While senior officers are responsible for managing staff and services, members can play an important role in checking that there is a skilled and stable workforce in place. Although social workers are key, other council officers should also be aware of their responsibilities to looked-after children, such as those in housing departments, environment and leisure services, education, legal services and the public health service.

Questions to ask

- What are the levels of social work vacancies, turnover, stress-related sickness, use of agency staff and ratios between newly qualified and experienced social workers and what action are management taking to address these?
- What continuity of social worker support is there for looked-after children and what are the case loads carried by social work staff?
- What proportion of social workers' time is spent doing face-to-face work with looked-after children as opposed to paper work and could this be improved?
- What does the annual IRO report say about the effectiveness of care planning in the authority and is action taken to address any weaknesses that it identifies?
- Are there enough opportunities for social workers to develop their skills and to engage in reflective learning?
- Is there evidence that staff from across the authority and other partners are working together to deliver what looked-after children need?
- What do looked-after children and their carers say about their experience of engaging with social workers and other professionals?
- Are looked-after children and young people involved in recruitment and development of services?

10

What more could be done to fulfil the council's responsibilities as a 'corporate parent'?

Policy context

Although elected members will not all have the same level of involvement with the service for looked after children, they all share responsibility for satisfying themselves that is good enough. As former Secretary of State Frank Dobson MP's original letter to all councillors about their role as corporate parents, launching the Quality Protects Programme said:

“Elected councillors have a crucial role. Only you can carry it out. You can make sure that the interests of the children come first. You bring a fresh look and common sense. As councillors you set the strategic direction of your council's services and determine policy and priorities for your local community within the overall objectives set by government.”

This is as valid today as it was then. All councillors should be made aware of their responsibility as a corporate parent, and what this means in practice. As part of this process, it is crucial to ensure that councillors can hear directly from looked-after children about what matters to them. This could be through informal discussions, visits by elected members to children's homes or involving looked-after children when reviewing services.

It is not only councillors who are corporate parents. Council officers across the council (not just in children's services departments) share in the responsibility and other partners also have a duty to cooperate to ensure looked-after children's needs are met.

Questions to ask

- Does your council have an effective structure for the governance of corporate parenting, including councillors?
- Do looked-after children know who their 'corporate parents' are? What do they
- say about what they expect from local councillors and others acting as their 'corporate parents'?
- Do all members receive mandatory training on their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents when they are elected and is this refreshed during their term of office?

- Are there appropriate opportunities for elected members to meet and listen to looked-after children and young people, and to celebrate and praise their achievements when they do well?
- Is there an active children in care council which regularly meets with elected members and others in authority (across the council and other partners) to express the views and needs of your looked-after children?
- Is the children in care council happy with the way in which its views influence policy and practice?
- How are children and young people's complaints responded to and what is learnt from them?

One authority has encouraged councillors to 'adopt' a residential home in order to encourage greater responsibility for, and interest in, each home by elected members and provide continuity between visits. These members could be important witnesses to any scrutiny inquiry.



Case studies

London Borough of Newham

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission carried out a review of the council's new approach to corporate parenting – in particular its targets to reduce the number of children in its care, and improve provision for those who remain in care. The commission endorsed the families directorate's investment of intensive resources into those families with children on the edge of care, at an early stage alongside the immediate removal of children where there are risks to their safety, followed by a permanent placement wherever possible. The commission made a number of recommendations, including increased support for foster carers, and closer working arrangements with partnership agencies. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/7ko94k2>

Cheshire East Council

The Children and Families Scrutiny committee undertook a review of fostering services. They identified a need to improve systems and recommended a number of measures to improve the experience of foster carers. They also stated that, in line with the corporate parenting strategy, all corporate policies must consider their impact on looked-after children. The review also suggested related topics for review, such as the 16 plus service. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/6v4kr3r>

Buckinghamshire County Council

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review 'Maximising the potential of looked-after children' – examining issues affecting educational attainment of looked-after children in the county, including post-16 and their ability to participate in other aspects of school life. Recommendations focus on support at transition stages and support for foster carers to enable them to better support the children they look after. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tiny.cc/g1dt6>

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Rotherham Looked-After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel has undertaken two reviews of corporate parenting. The most recent review made a number of recommendations in three main areas:

- looked-after children council and pledge
- governance arrangements
- training and guidance to elected members.

The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tiny.cc/6pfck>

Hartlepool Borough Council

The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum undertook an investigation into the provision of support and services to looked-after children and young people. It took evidence from a range of stakeholders including children and young people, frontline staff and carers. It also invited a presentation from a neighbouring authority. A detailed profile of the looked-after population was undertaken to inform the investigation. It arrived at a number of recommendations for improvement. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/7fzanrz>

Bracknell Forest Council

The council has a specific overview and scrutiny panel that regularly monitors the performance of the children, young people and learning department mainly through review of its quarterly service reports (QSRs), inspection reports and the children's social care statutory complaints report. The QSRs enable the panel to question executive members and officers in detail about trends, pressures and priorities. Specific areas considered recently have included the stability of foster care placements. The report is available in the CfPS library: <http://tinyurl.com/6r4dpgr>



References and further information

Key legislation and guidance

Children Act 1989

<http://tiny.cc/qrzro>

Adoption and Children Act 2002

<http://tiny.cc/lf98m>

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

<http://tiny.cc/951i3>

Care planning, placements and case review regulations (England) 2010 and statutory guidance

These documents specify the current requirements for care plans, including health and education plans, placement decisions and monitoring, and case reviews. They consolidate previous regulations and guidance, providing a central source of reference for local authorities' work with looked-after children and can be found on the DfE website: <http://tiny.cc/7xt9g>

Promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children: statutory guidance for local authorities (DCSF 2010)

Statutory guidance setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners in relation to the education of looked-after children. <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/promotingtheeducationalachievement.pdf>

Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children (DCSF 2009)

Statutory guidance setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners in relation to the health of looked-after children. <http://tinyurl.com/yaevzg2>

Resources

Welcome to corporate parenting – a councillor development learning resource

A booklet and audio CD was produced by Kirklees, Bradford and Calderdale Councils working with a group of looked-after young people.

Contact: Angie Aspinall, Councillor Development Officer, Kirklees Council, angie.aspinall@kirklees.gov.uk or 01484 416 930
<http://tinyurl.com/726mylr>

Improving educational outcomes for looked-after children and young people, and improving the emotional and behavioural health of looked-after children and young people

Two useful knowledge reviews containing detailed evidence of what works, produced by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children's Services (C4EO), September 2010, available on www.c4eo.org.uk

Putting corporate parenting into practice: developing an effective approach

Materials to support corporate parents, by Hart, D and Williams, A National Children's Bureau and currently being updated.
www.ncb.org.uk

LILAC

LILAC is a project run by a National Voice. It involves care experienced young people in carrying out assessments of how well services involve and consult with their children and young people, and delivering training on participation and the LILAC standards. www.lilacnv.org

What young people from CiCCs say... ten top tips for corporate parents

Suggestions from children in care councils about how corporate parents can work most effectively with them

ANV (forthcoming)

Must knows for lead members in children's services – Local Government Association

<http://tinyurl.com/726mylr>

3. How do you know your council is serving the most vulnerable children and young people well?

[Top tip three \(PDF, 8 pages, 554 KB\)](#)

4. How do you know your council is being effective in keeping children and young people safe?

[Top tip four \(PDF, 8 pages, 528 KB\)](#)

Data profiles for local authorities – LG Inform. Register through the LGA website.
www.local.gov.uk

Improvement support

Information on children's improvement board

<http://tinyurl.com/892zfcu>

LGA support for members

<http://tinyurl.com/7bzpoxd>

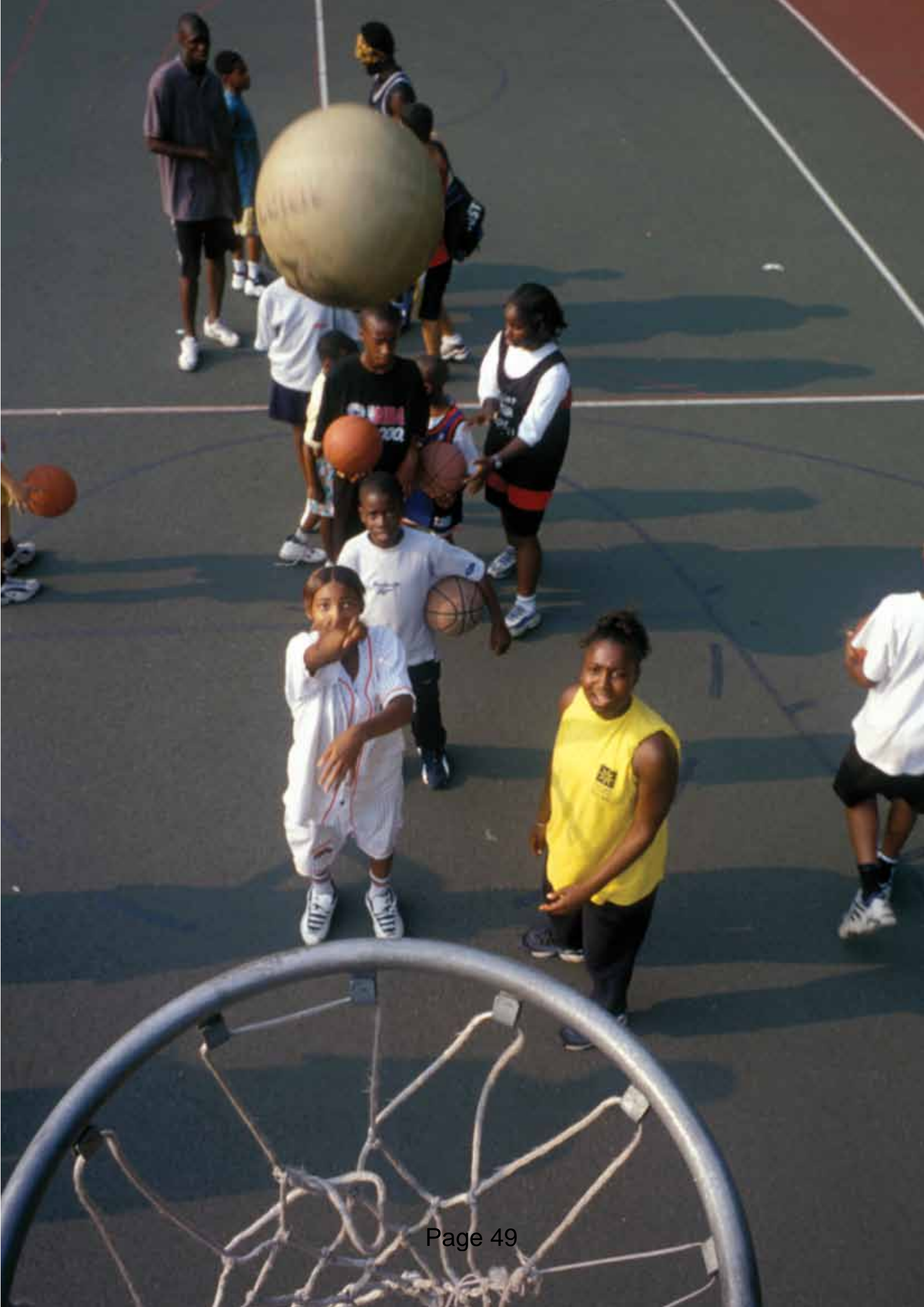
Safeguarding children peer review

<http://www.local.gov.uk/safeguarding-children-peer-reviews>

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please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
We consider requests on an individual basis.

Corporate Parenting Resource Pack

Foreword

Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do and when a child, for whatever reason, can't safely stay at home, it is up to us as the local authority to step in and give them the care, support and stability that they deserve. This isn't just up to the lead member or director of children's services – we need everyone looking out for our most vulnerable children and young people, so every councillor has a role to play. This pack aims to help them fulfil that role as effectively as possible.

Being a corporate parent means doing everything we can for every child in the council's care – and every care leaver - to give them the opportunities that other children get. This covers everything from keeping an eye on their progress at school, to looking after their health and wellbeing, to preparing them for life as independent adults – and supporting them when they get there. We need to be ambitious for the children in our care, encouraging them to dream big and take chances even if they don't feel like that's been an option in the past.

It's also about the smaller things that make life more fulfilling. It's about making sure children receive birthday cards, are rewarded when they do well (and supported when they don't), and get to take part in the activities they

enjoy. It's about making sure someone's on the end of a phone when a care leaver is having a hard day at work or university, or is there to help them navigate an application form. It's about doing the things you'd do for your own children.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law what corporate parents should be looking at to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for looked after children and young people, and care leavers. Authorities across the country already do a fantastic job of this, and we've highlighted some examples in this pack. We'd be delighted to hear of any others to add to our online database of good practice for others to learn from, to make sure every councillor has the tools they need to be a good corporate parent.

No child asks to come into care, and many of them will face more challenges before they reach adulthood than any child deserves. It is our duty and our privilege to fight their corner and give them every opportunity to reach their potential.

Councillor Richard Watts
Chair, LGA Children and Young
People Board

Contents

Foreword	1
Corporate parenting: an introduction	3
Updates to legislation and practice	7
Key lines of enquiry for all councillors	10
Local case studies:	15
<i>Gloucestershire County Council</i>	15
<i>London Borough of Lambeth</i>	16
<i>Hampshire County Council</i>	16
<i>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council</i>	17
<i>Trafford Council</i>	18
Key resources and further reading	19
Glossary	20

Corporate Parenting: an introduction

What is a Corporate Parent?

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority, or is under 25 and was looked after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent. This means that they should:

- Act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people;
- Encourages them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them;
- Make sure they have access to services;
- Make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

Children can be in care in a range of placements, with the authority acting as corporate parent to all of them. This includes foster care, children's homes, secure children's homes, special guardianship and kinship care.

Every councillor and officer within a council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child. Lead members, those on Corporate Parenting Panels and Overview and Scrutiny Committees will have particular responsibilities, but for all

councillors, this is where your role as the eyes and ears of the community is vitally important. Are there youth services in your ward that provide a vital service for looked-after children, and if so, how are you supporting them? Is there a children's home or care leaver accommodation in your ward? If foster carers in your ward provide care for disabled children, do they need any help to improve accessibility of local services? What feedback are you getting from residents?

For both officers and councillors, being a corporate parent means that when any service is being looked at that could impact upon looked after children and care leavers, or when you're hearing feedback from or reports about children in your care, consider the question:

“What if this were my child?”

It is important to remember that, just as not all children are the same, looked-after children and care leavers are not one homogenous group. While it is true that some will have experienced trauma and disruption in their lives and need support to cope with those experiences, others will have adjusted well to being in care and may be flourishing. As corporate parents, councillors need to recognise the differences in the children in their care, and make sure each child is getting what they need to do their best.

Corporate Parenting Panel

As corporate parents, all councillors should seek to stay informed about

children in the council's care, and care leavers. However, the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Panel can provide a useful forum for regular, detailed discussion of issues, and a positive link with children in care forums. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel can also use their position to raise awareness of the role amongst colleagues, and provide support to the lead member for children's services.

The Corporate Parenting Panel does not replace the duty of all councillors; members of all committees have a responsibility to consider how reports before them impact upon children in care and care leavers.

Working with partners

Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote co-operation between 'relevant partners', including the police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate. Councils should consider how their partners can help them to deliver their corporate parenting role, especially in relation to the provision of services. The NHS can help to make sure looked after children receive the mental health support that they need, for example, while close working between schools and the Virtual School Head will help to improve outcomes for children and young people in care.

Information and data

The lead member for children's services and those on the Corporate Parenting Panel should receive regular reports updating on progress with regard to looked after children and care leavers, while data will be available to all members through

reports presented to Full Council and scrutiny committees.

Data will be able to provide an overview of medium-to-long-term trends, but statistics on their own are not enough. Make sure that you are getting the necessary context and explanations – for example, if fewer children are going missing, is this the result of a positive intervention that you will want to continue using? Or are there issues with reporting? Also look for direction of travel, and comparisons with your statistical neighbours and national data to see where you're performing well and what could be better.

However, as any parent will know, situations with children and young people change quickly, and statistics will not provide all the real-time data that you need. Keep in close contact with the Children in Care Council, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and your Director of Children's Services to make sure that you're receiving up-to-date information and can respond quickly if you need to.

Safeguarding

Local authorities have a responsibility for safeguarding all children, but there are certain risks that particularly affect children in care and care leavers that corporate parents need to be aware of.

Children in care are three times more likely to go missing than children not in care¹. Processes must be in place to report missing children, and then to follow up with them when they are found to find out the underlying reasons for going missing. Corporate

¹

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children>

parents should be monitoring instances of children going missing, and how regularly follow up interviews are taking place, as well as any emerging themes, to properly safeguard these children.

Child victims of modern slavery are particularly vulnerable, with nearly two thirds of trafficked children in local authority care going missing at some point; nearly a third of these go missing within one week². Councils need to make sure a strong multi-agency approach is in place to protect victims from further risk from their traffickers and preventing trafficking from taking place. In particular, there should be a clear understanding between the local authority and the police of roles in planning for this protection and responding if a trafficked child goes missing. Council representatives on local area multi-agency safeguarding arrangements should make sure there is oversight of those arrangements, and monitor how well they are being implemented.

Children in care are also more likely to be at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) than those in the general population. While issues that lead young people into local authority care may put them at risk, the experience of care itself can also be significant, especially if the child's placement lacks stability. Those at risk of CSE will need to have clear plans in place to protect them, and all social workers should know how to spot signs of risk and deal with them appropriately.

The LGA's resource pack for councillors on tackling CSE is available on our website.

²

http://www.ecpat.org.uk/sites/default/files/trafficked_children_and_missing_ecpat_uk_and_missing_people_joint_briefing_october_2014.pdf

Sources of information

Children in Care Council and other feedback mechanisms

There should be mechanisms in place for you to hear from children in your care (see page 10), with this information being reported regularly to the Corporate Parenting Panel. There may also be an annual report submitted to Full Council. The format for reporting should be discussed with children and young people; some may wish to meet with councillors to discuss issues face to face, some may prefer to use mediators, and others may prefer online methods.

This feedback can provide you with rich information to act upon to make sure children in your care and care leavers are getting what they need – from concerns about how they're kept informed about their placements, to how often they can see any siblings they aren't placed with, right down to whether they're happy with their pocket money!

Independent Reviewing Officer annual report

Amongst other duties, IROs are responsible for making sure that the local authority, as a corporate parent, give proper consideration and weight to the child's wishes and feelings in their care plans, and that they genuinely responds to a child's needs.

The IRO manager should produce an annual report for the consideration of the Corporate Parenting Panel, which should include areas of good practice, and areas for development. It should include commentary on issues including the participation of children and their parents, and whether any

resource issues are putting the delivery of a good service to all looked after children at risk.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Joint health and wellbeing strategies (JHWSs) are developed by local leaders to enable the planning and commissioning of integrated services that meet the needs of their whole local community. They particularly work to reduce health inequalities and support the needs of vulnerable groups and individuals; the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment underpinning the JHWS should include specific consideration of children in care and care leavers. The strategy (or associated delivery plan) will include targets, actions and who is responsible for implementing those actions.

The JHWS will be agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board, which should also monitor its implementation. Board meetings should be public, with the JHWS, reports and minutes all available on the council website.

Performance reports

Reports should be published once a quarter updating on key indicators in relation to children in care, including direction of travel. These indicators are part of a nationally collected dataset reported to DfE, and include information on placement stability, outcomes for children in care and adoption. Your authority may also report on other indicators according to local priorities.

These reports should be publicly available, and should also be

presented to a locally agreed committee – for example the Corporate Parenting Panel, the relevant scrutiny committee or Cabinet.

Feedback from foster parents

Most children who are in care live with foster parents, and the quality and experience of those foster parents is key to ensuring good outcomes for children. Each authority will have different ways of gathering feedback from foster parents, including surveys and focus groups, along with different ways of reporting that feedback. The Corporate Parenting Panel should receive updates on foster parent feedback, and this should be used to help inform support for foster parents, and to improve recruitment and retention.

[Stability Index](#)

Stability for children in care is an important element in helping them to secure positive outcomes. To help support improved placement stability, the Children's Commissioner is developing a Stability Index to measure three aspects of children's experiences of care - placement moves, school moves, and changes in social worker. This was first published in April 2017 on the Children's Commissioner website, with the intention of annual publication going forward to provide analysis and support for local authorities to improve provision and outcomes for children in care.

Updates to legislation and practice

National Quality Standards for Children's Homes

The [Children's Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) set out nine Quality Standards which outline the aspirational and positive outcomes that all children's homes are expected to deliver.

These quality standards are:

- Quality and purpose of care
- Children's views, wishes and feelings
- Education
- Enjoyment and achievement standard
- Health and well-being
- Positive relationships
- Protection of children
- Leadership and management
- Care planning

Further information on each standard is outlined in the Department for Education's [Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations](#).

New rules for Out of Area Placements

Statutory guidance³ has strengthened the responsibilities of local authorities to notify other local authorities if they placed a looked after child within their area. Children's homes are also now required to notify their host local authority when a child is placed with them by another authority.

An 'out of area' placement is classified as one outside of the council's

³ [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review](#)

geographical boundary, but within an authority that it shares a boundary with. If a child is placed in an authority that doesn't share a geographical boundary with the placing authority, that is classed as an 'at a distance' placement.

A responsible officer should be formally appointed by the DCS to approve out of area placements; this will often be an Assistant Director. All at a distance placements must be signed off by the DCS. This does not apply where the placement is with the parent, a connected person or a foster carer approved by the responsible authority.

The child's IRO should always be consulted prior to an out of area placement being made, and the wishes of the child should be taken into account. The host authority should also be consulted in advance in the case of distant placements.

Staying Put and Staying Close

'Staying Put' is an arrangement that allows a looked after child to continue to live with their foster carer after their 18th birthday, when they cease to be 'looked after' by the local authority. This can take place where the council considers it appropriate, and both the young person and the carer want to enter a staying put arrangement.

A 'Staying Put' duty was introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014, which requires local authorities to monitor arrangements and provide advice and support (including financial) to the foster parent and young person to facilitate the arrangement until the young person reaches 21.

The Government has committed to introducing 'Staying Close' – a variant of Staying Put for young people leaving residential care. Approaches are currently being trialled using Department for Education Innovation Funding.

[Sir Martin Narey's Independent Review of Residential Care](#)

Sir Martin Narey was commissioned by the Prime Minister in 2015 to carry out an independent review of children's residential care, to make sure that they were doing the best job they possibly could.

The final report was published in July 2016 and contained 34 recommendations. These included ways to improve commissioning of children's home beds, and to encourage development of the right sort of provision in the right places.

Sir Narey also recommended a review of fostering provision, and the need for sharing of best practice across a range of areas.

Several areas of national policy were also singled out as needing review, including guidance around planning, the use of restraint, and the recording of criminal offences to avoid the criminalisation of children in care. Changes to Ofsted inspections and guidance were also recommended.

Finally, Sir Narey highlighted ways to improve staffing, including making sure social work students spent part of their placement within a children's home to make sure new staff are getting experience across the sector.

Fostering Stocktake

Following Sir Martin Narey's recommendation in July 2016, the DfE has announced a Fostering Stocktake, which is to be conducted by Sir Narey and Mark Owers. The aim of the stocktake is to understand what is working well and why, where improvements are needed to achieve better outcomes for children and to identify areas where further research is needed.

Evidence has been sought from a wide range of stakeholders, and the final report is due at the end of 2017.

[Care Leaver Strategy 2016](#)

The Government published a new Care Leaver Strategy in July 2016, entitled *Keep On Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence*.

The strategy strengthens the role of the corporate parent, paving the way for the provisions in the Children and Social Work Act 2017; pledges to use Innovating Funding to trial new ways to support young people leaving care; and looks at improving the measurement of outcomes for care leavers.

[Statutory Guidance - Children who go Missing from Care](#)

New statutory guidance was issued in January 2014 on children who run away or go missing from home or care.

The guidance highlights the need for a children's services authority to name a senior children's service manager as responsible for monitoring policies and performance relating to children who go missing from home or care. The responsible manager should understand the risks and issues facing

missing children and review best practice in dealing with the issue.

Local authorities should agree with the police and other partners a protocol for dealing with children who run away or go missing in their area. Protocols should be agreed and reviewed regularly with all agencies and be scrutinised by local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Where appropriate, agreed protocols should also be in place with neighbouring authorities.

Statutory Guidance - Promoting the Education of Looked-After Children

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on every children's services authority in England to appoint a Virtual School Head - an officer employed to make sure that the council's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children is properly discharged.

This statutory guidance, issued in July 2014, details that duty, and highlights that as corporate parents, local authorities should have high aspirations for the children they look after. The guidance outlines the ways in which authorities should work to close the progress gap between looked-after children and their peers, and to make sure that looked-after children have access to high quality education.

Statutory Guidance - Special Guardianship

New guidance was issued in January 2017 on Special Guardianship, outlining the issues local authorities should take into account when preparing reports for the court to apply for special guardianship orders. This includes information about the child's needs, and more detailed assessments of the child's relationship with, and the parenting capacity of, the prospective special guardian.

Key lines of enquiry for all councillors

1. What is our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

Understanding the characteristics of children and young people is the first step to making sure that you are able to act in their interests. Your Children in Care team will have information on the children in the council's care, including:

- Age and length of time in care
- Where children are placed
- Number of children in foster care, secure units, children's homes or other placements
- Number of children awaiting adoption
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Placement stability
- Accommodation and employment information about care leavers

You should also have information about social worker caseloads, to make sure that these are manageable and social workers are able to dedicate sufficient time to children, regardless of their needs.

Find out how this information compares to that of other authorities in your statistical group, and to the national picture, and look at direction of travel to help spot trends and areas of concern.

2. Do all of our councillors and officers know about their corporate parenting responsibilities?

Every councillor should ideally have training when first elected on their corporate parenting role. It is every councillor's responsibility to consider how new plans and policies might affect children in care, and to ask questions to ensure that those children are getting the best outcomes.

There are certain departments within a council that this will be particularly important for, such as education, housing and skills, however every section of the council needs to consider how its work impacts on children in care and care leavers. Look at how business plans and reports are structured – are officers proactively considering the needs of children in the council's care, or could this be improved?

Consider ways of raising awareness about the corporate parenting role, for example inviting all councillors to any celebration events, or inviting the Children in Care Council to give feedback at Full Council or relevant committee meetings.

3. How are we giving children and young people the chance to express their views, wishes and feelings? How do we know those are being acted on?

Children should be involved in developing their care plans, and provided with advocates to help them do this wherever necessary. Likewise, care leavers need to be integral to the

development of their Pathway Plans. Social workers make the necessary arrangements for this to happen, and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) should ensure children and young people are listened to, and their views taken seriously. What feedback are you getting from your IROs on how well this is happening?

Most local authorities have established Children in Care Councils, comprising any looked after children and care leavers who want to take part (though you may wish to hold a separate Care Leavers' Forum, depending on what young people ask for); if your authority hasn't done so, consider establishing this or an alternative method of feedback that's appropriate for your looked after children. They should be able to set the agenda so that they can talk about what matters to them, and they should also decide how they would like to engage with the Corporate Parenting Panel – whether that's through joint meetings, feeding back via a mediator, or something else.

Don't forget, however, that not all children will want to take part in group forums – there should be mechanisms set up to allow all children and young people to express their views in a way that they're comfortable with.

Also consider how you engage with children with special educational needs and disabilities, or those who may face cultural or language barriers to engaging in feedback processes. In some cases, there may be some safeguarding concerns about children with particularly complex needs being asked to take part in certain ways of giving feedback – there should be sensitive discussions between the children's carers, the complex needs team, social workers and any other

relevant professionals to find the best ways of engaging these children, who should still have the opportunity to say how they feel about their care.

Very young children may also find it harder to explain their wishes and feelings, and there will inevitably be children and young people who actively disengage from review meetings or feedback forums. Consider also those children placed out of area. All looked after children and care leavers have a right to be heard, and support must be put in place to give them every opportunity.

Consider also how feedback from children in care and care leavers is fed back to the whole council so that it can be factored into all relevant decisions – from housing and employment to education and public health.

Regardless of how feedback is collected, make sure that you report back to children and young people on what has been done as a result of that feedback – show the young people that their voices are being heard, and changes are being made as a result.

4. How do we show children in our care that we have high aspirations for them?

Children in care are less likely than their peers to do well at school for a variety of reasons, from instability and a lack of support at home, to early traumas, but providing the appropriate support can help them start to overcome some of these difficulties. Your Virtual School Head will be able to keep you updated with how looked after children are progressing in school, and what action is being taken to help them reach their potential.

Children and young people thrive on recognition and reward, and it's important to make sure that children in care receive this in the same way children in the rest of the population do. Award ceremonies, money for carers to take children for a celebration of a sports game win, or a congratulations card from the lead member for a good school report will all reassure children that their efforts are recognised, supported and cared about.

As young people approach leaving care, they should be getting support from their social worker and a personal adviser to consider their future options. You can make sure that young people are encouraged to think broadly and ambitiously about their options, and how to get there, by speaking to your Virtual School Head.

5. What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment should include consideration of the needs of children in care and care leavers⁴, with an accompanying Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in place to meet those needs and minimise inequalities. The Health and Wellbeing Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the JHWS. Particular issues to look out for include:

- Mental health services - Children in care are four times more likely to have a mental health difficulty than children in the general population⁵.

⁴ [Statutory Guidance on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies](#)

⁵ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in-care/emotional-wellbeing-of-children-in-care/>

- Sexual health and family planning services – A quarter of young women leaving care are pregnant, and nearly half become pregnant within two years⁶.
- Drug and alcohol prevention services – a third of young people leaving care report problems with drugs or alcohol within a year⁷.

In 2016, 57.3% of children in care had a special educational need, compared to 14.4% of all children⁸. Your Virtual School Head will be able to let you know what support children with learning difficulties are receiving in school.

If a child has experienced one or more placement moves, check whether health records are being passed between carers so that things like regular dental check-ups and standard vaccinations aren't being missed. Looked after children should receive an annual health assessment (every six months for under-fives)⁹, but make sure these are being carried out in a child-friendly way – some children find these intrusive and feel they are unnecessary, so make sure they understand why they are taking place and that they know their right to opt out. Pass on feedback about assessments to the CCG, which carries them out, and check whether this is being acted on.

Consider also issues like access to sports facilities and music lessons or other activities outside of school, which will contribute to a child's wellbeing

⁶ HM Government (2016) [Keep On Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ DfE (2017) [Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England](#)

⁹ DfE (2015) [Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked-After Children](#)

and sense of belonging. What happens to these if a child changes placement? Are you helping care leavers to continue accessing activities to support their wellbeing?

A significant issue for looked after children and care leavers is having a support network. Many won't be able to rely on family, and if they've experienced multiple placement or school moves, they might not have had a chance to build up a network of their own. Look at what's being done to help them develop relationships that will support them both now and when they leave care, and see what help is available locally – are there volunteer mentors or support groups, for example? All looked-after children should be offered the chance to have an independent visitor – a volunteer to befriend and support them consistently, providing a relationship with an adult who isn't their foster carer or social worker. Having stable placements and social workers will also help children to feel more secure and help them learn to develop positive relationships.

6. Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?

Stability for children and young people is linked to improved mental health and educational attainment¹⁰. It also helps children to develop relationships, feel more secure, and develop a sense of belonging.

Despite this, 10% of looked after children had three or more foster care placements in 2015-16¹¹. Analysis by the Office of the Children's

¹⁰ Children's Commissioner (2017) [Stability Index for Children in Care: Technical Report](#)

¹¹ DfE (2016) [Children looked after in England \(including adoption\) year ending 31 March 2016](#)

Commissioner also found that 24% of children experienced at least one school move that year, and 35% saw their social worker change at least once¹². One child in twenty experienced a change of placement, school and social worker over the course of a year¹³.

Clearly, statistics alone cannot be taken on face value. A child or young person should not stay in an unsuitable placement, while a change of social worker in order to improve caseloads may ultimately be positive for the child – provided this is well managed. However, you need to understand the reasons for any instability experienced by children, and take action to limit this where it is not in their best interests.

7. What are outcomes like for our care leavers?

As a corporate parent, it's up to you to make sure that care leavers get the support they need to lead successful lives.

Care leavers can face a wide variety of challenges, and depending on their individual needs, they might need the support of their personal adviser and social worker to overcome their own hurdles to progress – and they need to know that support is there as they make the transition from a looked after child to independent living.

Each young person's pathway plan should consider their options for when they've left school, whether they want to go on to further study, or want to go straight into the world of work.

¹² Children's Commissioner (2017) [Stability Index for Children in Care: Technical Report](#)

¹³ Ibid

For those aiming for university, find out what support children in your care are receiving at school to help them get achieve the best results they're capable of, and speak with your Virtual School Head to learn about what interventions are working best or could be expanded. It's also important to look at pathway plans to see how children are reassured about university – it's a scary prospect for children still living with their own families, so care leavers need to know how they'll manage their finances, and where they can go during the long university holidays.

For those that don't go on to university, how many are not in education, employment or training – and what is your authority doing to change that? Are the statistics getting better or worse? Find out how care leavers factor into your authority's recruitment, skills and economic development strategies.

For more information on outcomes for care leavers, please see our "support for care leavers" resource pack.

8. How many children are we placing in out of area placements?

What proportion of your looked-after children are being placed out of area, and why?

Every children's services council has a 'sufficiency duty', which states that it must take steps that secure, as far as possible, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of children that it is looking after. If you are placing a higher proportion of your children out of area than your statistical neighbours, or than you were two years ago, is this because the children need very specialist

Local Case Studies

placements that can only be found elsewhere, or because there are not enough placements locally? If the latter, what is being done to improve this? If children are moved out of area, this means moving them away from their school, their friends and family, and the area they're familiar with – it's important that if that happens, it's for the right reasons.

9. How are we planning for the future/commissioning services?

If you have what you consider to be too many children and young people being placed out of area, you will need to revisit your authority's sufficiency plan and revise plans and commissioning to address this. You will need a strong understanding of what your needs are now and into the future, which you can identify by looking at the data and feedback available to you, and analysing local and national trends. You can then use this information to better manage the market in your area, whether through recruiting and training more foster carers; evaluating the use of in-house and external provision; and considering the balance of children's home places or foster care with high levels of support for children with complex needs.

Consider also the way in which services for looked-after children are commissioned; are services better commissioned at a local (how local?) or regional level? Would children and young people's outcomes be improved if you pooled resources with partners for specific outcomes, such as early intervention or wellbeing? Are young people involved at any point in commissioning processes, to make sure that services meet their needs?

Gloucestershire

The voice of children and young people is at the heart of Gloucestershire's approach to corporate parenting. A significant drive over the last two years has seen a culture change across the council, with children in care, young people with experience of children's social services and corporate parents working together on everything from strategic planning and service delivery to training and consultation.

One of the key ways that Gloucestershire incorporates the voice of children and young people is through their Ambassadors for Vulnerable Children & Young People. These young people, aged 16-25, all have experience of children's social services – whether through being in care, experiencing early help, or receiving support for a disability, for example – and play a central role in developing the council's services. They also act as a link between children and young people and the rest of the council, making sure those voices are heard.

As Participation Manager Della Price highlights, "Ambassadors help us to keep our focus on, and communicate effectively with, children and young people; they challenge us, work with us, and often identify areas of our work that can be neglected. Most importantly, they've changed our attitudes, understanding and awareness of the issues that are important to children and young people."

Ambassadors are recruited annually, with 12 currently in post, and are paid for both their time and expenses whenever they attend meetings or events. They attend the Children in Care Council so that they can feed back to the Corporate Parenting Group, which they are co-opted onto, and have led consultation with looked after children to help improve everything from the activities children do with their social worker, to issues around contact with family; their own experiences make them ideally placed to help communicate the needs and wants of children back to corporate parents. They have also been part of task groups to improve the quality of care plans, improve questions on fostering panels, and to secure a pilot of personal budgets for children in care who need mental health support. The early involvement of young people in the latter was instrumental in gaining the support of NHS England for the pilot, highlighting the way in which the council places the voice of young people at the heart of their work.

The council has involved the Ambassadors in the design of information for young people, which has been highly successful, for example leading to more young people attending fostering panels as they now understand better what goes on, and improving the use of the MOMO app so that children in care can get help with things they are worried about more easily.

Working with the Ambassadors means that the whole council understands their corporate parenting role more clearly. This year, all councillors will receive training from the Ambassadors about the role of members as Corporate Parents, while each year, Ambassadors run workshops as part of the Virtual School Designated Teacher training. The Ambassadors have also helped the Children in Care Council to host meetings with councillors, which have had excellent feedback from both the children, who feel listened to, and the councillors whose understanding of being a child in care has improved significantly.

Improving interaction between young people and councillors has been crucial to the success of Gloucestershire's corporate parenting approach. It has not only placed corporate parenting at the forefront of people's minds and helped to improve understanding of the key issues, but has shown children and young people that the council genuinely listens to their needs, and acts on them to make things better.

For more information, please contact Della.Price@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Lambeth

Any good parent will know that the needs of their children always come first – and Lambeth Council is committed to putting that philosophy into practice with all the children for whom it is a corporate parent.

Where children are placed in residential care, the council works hard to develop and maintain strong partnerships with those providers to make sure that the children's individual needs and wants are properly taken care of.

In the case of 14-year-old Amy, this has meant support to feel stable in her children's home, and honouring her wish to stay in that home with those she describes as 'family', rather than transferring into foster care. The authority and the children's home have worked together to find ways to help her develop her confidence and self-esteem, including providing piano lessons to nurture her passion for music.

Amy is now considering whether she wants to move on to foster care as she gets older, so both the children's home and the authority are starting to plan with her. Most importantly, they are working at a pace that suits her, rather than trying to rush her, making sure that her voice is at the forefront of any decision – as any parent knows, children and young people need support and encouragement to work through big decisions, to make sure that they can come to the right decision long-term.

The relationship between the council and the provider is a vital one – much like the relationship between two parents. Trust, mutual respect and good communication mean that both parties can concentrate on working towards the same outcome – a successful and positive care experience for all children being looked after.

Hampshire

Being a good corporate parent means getting involved, asking questions and making sure the voices of children and young people are being heard.

When the children's residential service was under review in Hampshire, the Lead Member for Children's Services took the opportunity to find out exactly what children wanted and needed, and to make sure their voices were at the centre of any new proposals. This included visiting existing homes – owned both by the local authority and other sectors – to find out about the experiences of the children living there, and to see what they thought made a "homely environment".

At the same time, work was underway to implement the evidence-based Pillars of Parenting model, an approach to move from “looking after” children to “caring for” them, and providing strong support for staff including access to an educational psychologist. Children were involved in board meetings as the new care model was put in place, ensuring that they could flag up any issues with the model and let officers and councillors know how they felt about the changes.

In one small children’s home using the Pillars of Parenting model, stability for the children living there was found to be better, involvement in crime was reduced, and engagement in education was good. The improved outcomes for children as a result of the new care model and the small, well-located home provided a good evidence-base to support what young people were saying.

The Lead Member took those views and the evidence directly back to his fellow elected members, emphasising the benefits the council could realise – both in terms of outcomes for children in care, and financially thanks to those long-term outcomes – by selling old, larger children’s homes with poor community links to support new homes more suited to caring for children. As a result, he was able to successfully bid for considerable investment from the council to provide six new homes.

The Lead Member has continued to champion children’s views as the process has continued, attending workshops where children contributed to the design of the new homes, and regularly visiting the homes during the build process to make sure they met the varied needs of the children he’d been speaking to. He has also worked with officers on keeping his fellow corporate parents engaged, with many visiting children’s homes, and some even taking their dogs along to meet the children – a great ice breaker!

Stockton-on-Tees

In Stockton-on-Tees, councillors and officers have worked hard to make sure that the voices of looked-after children and care leavers are not only listened to – they are seen to make a real difference to services.

Virtually all care leavers – 93%, well above the national average - move on to suitable accommodation of their choice, thanks in no small part to careful listening to the needs of care leavers, and the work of ‘Young Inspectors’. These young people review all semi-independent accommodation to check that it’s somewhere they would like to live, and make sure the corporate management team takes action to tackle any areas found to be in need of improvement.

The ‘Let’s Take Action’ group, part of the Children in Care Council, is a group of young people who meet fortnightly to develop projects and initiatives to support the voice of the young people they represent. Their work has included developing a pledge for children in care for senior leaders to work to, delivering workshops on finance and budgeting challenges and speaking at Corporate Parenting events. One of the members of this group recently won a Civic Award in Stockton as ‘young person of the year’.

The council also took part in The Fostering Network's 'Inspiring Voices' project to raise awareness of, and engagement with, children in care councils. In Stockton-on-Tees, the group consists of young people, who chair the meeting, foster carers, senior council officers and key partners. The group has worked together on a range of projects to respond to the needs of children in care and care leavers, from developing welcome packs for children coming into care, producing information packs on corporate parenting for councillors, and reviewing both how young people are engaged, and what is then done with that information.

During Ofsted's latest visit, inspectors commented on how children's voices were clearly heard, praising the "very healthy culture" promoted by senior managers and political leaders to make sure that learning from the views of looked after children and young people was taken on board, and to involve them in shaping services.

Contact: Martin Gray, Director of Children's Services martin.gray@stockton.gov.uk

Trafford

When a young person presents as homeless to a local authority, and they have not been in care before their 16th birthday, the authority's responsibilities in law are very limited, requiring only advice, assistance and befriending. In Trafford, the Corporate Parenting Board and officers felt that, despite not being corporate parents in such cases in legislative terms, they still had a responsibility to these vulnerable young people, who were homeless and in need of trusted professional support; doing the bare minimum was not good enough.

They agreed to provide these young people with a full leaving care service, with support from a personal adviser, a pathway plan, safe and appropriate accommodation, support to live independently and help to engage in education, employment and training. The leaving care grant could also be awarded in certain circumstances. Ofsted was very supportive of the approach, which is an example of how councillors and officers can and do still step in to help young people – even where they don't have to, and where it isn't easy, just as other good parents would.

Key resources and further reading

This will include the statutory guidance when it's out!

LGA Modern Slavery Guide

[Tackling child sexual exploitation: LGA resource pack for councils](#)

[Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

[National Children's Bureau Corporate Parenting Took Kit](#)

[Draft DfE guidance on trafficked children](#)

[Safeguarding Children: A Practical Guide for Overview and Scrutiny Councillors - Centre for Public Scrutiny](#)

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Glossary

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - all services that work with children and young people experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
Care order	A court order approving the case for a child to be taken into care.
Care plan	A care plan should be developed for every child and young person when they come into care. This should identify how the child will be accommodated, how long it is anticipated that the care order will last, and formulate planned outcomes for the child with associated actions. The plan should be reviewed at least every six months.
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group – these commission most hospital and community NHS services in their area, including mental health and learning disability services.
Child sexual exploitation (CSE)	CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (aged under 18) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, affection, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. This can occur in physical situations or through the use of technology, for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones.
Children’s home	A residential facility where groups of children are cared for by qualified workers.
Former relevant child	A care leaver aged 18-21 who was a relevant child or was in care until the age of 18. Young people who are still getting help with education or training remain ‘former relevant’ until their training has finished.
Foster care	Foster care is a way for children to be cared for within a family setting when their own family is unable to care for them. It is considered temporary in that there is no legal split from the family (as with adoption), but can be long term where this is in the best interests of the child.
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)	An IRO chair’s a looked-after child’s review(s) and monitors the child’s case on an ongoing basis. They ensure that the care plan for the child fully reflects their current needs, wishes and feelings, and that the actions set out in the plan are consistent with the local authority’s legal responsibilities towards the child.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	JSNAs identifies the current and future health needs of the local population to inform and guide commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within local authority areas.
Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)	The JHWS outlines how local partners will work to improve health in the local population and reduce health inequalities.
Kinship care	Kinship care is where a child is looked after by a relative

	or a friend, but the local authority still has legal responsibility for them
Modern slavery	Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. A person is trafficked if they are brought to (or moved around) a country by others who threaten, frighten, hurt and force them to do work or other things they don't want to do.
Pathway Plan	A Pathway Plan is developed by the local authority with a young person in care as they approach their 16 th birthday to help them effectively make the transition from care to living independently. It includes areas such as accommodation, education, life skills and health.
Personal Education Plan (PEP)	The PEP is a statutory part of a child's care plan, making sure that all relevant partners are engaged in a child's education, tracking their progress and giving them the support they need to achieve and be aspirational in their education.
Private arrangement	An informal arrangement where a child or young person is looked after by a close relative such as grand-parents, aunts or uncles.
Private fostering	An informal arrangement where a child or young person is looked after by someone who is not their parent or close relative. The local authority should ideally be informed of the arrangement, but is not responsible for the child and is therefore not the corporate parent.
Relevant child	Young people aged between 16 and 17 who are still in care; or who were in care for at least 13 weeks between their 14 th and 16 th birthdays (unless this was planned respite care)
Secure children's home	Secure children's homes offer specialist care and intensive support in a secure setting to young people sentenced by the courts and to young people detained for their own welfare (for example, where children are at risk of child sexual exploitation, and likely to place themselves in risky situations). These are referred to as youth justice beds, and welfare beds respectively.
Special guardianship	Special Guardianship means that a child lives with carers who have parental responsibility for them until they turn 18, but legal ties with the parents are not cut as with adoption. The child is no longer the responsibility of the local authority.
Staying Put	An arrangement whereby a looked after child can stay with their foster carer after the age of 18, as long as both the young person and the foster parent is happy with this arrangement, and it is in the young person's best interests. The council has a duty to support the arrangement up to young person's 21 st birthday.
Sufficiency Duty	The duty for a council to take steps that secure, as far as possible, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet

	the needs of children that it is looking after.
UASC	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
Virtual School Head	All local authorities must have a virtual school head (VSH) in charge of promoting the educational achievement of the children looked after by that authority. Their role is to know how the looked-after children are doing, and help school staff and social workers to find out about the extra needs of these children and any additional support available to them. VSHs also work with the children's services department and all schools in the area on initiatives to promote the education of children in care.

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Corporate Parenting Board
Date:	27 November 2017
Title:	Protocol with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Board
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Lin Ferguson, Area Director, Children's Services

Tel: 01962 891623

Email: Lin.ferguson@hants.gov.uk

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 For the Corporate Parenting Board to note the role and function of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB), and approve the proposed Protocol outlining how the two Boards will exchange information and work together on areas of mutual interest.

2. Summary

2.1. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the draft Protocol between the Hampshire Corporate Parenting Board and Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) attached as Annex 1.

2.2. Both the Hampshire Corporate Parenting Board and the HSCB have important, but distinct roles in ensuring that Looked After Children receive good quality services, have their welfare promoted, reach their potential and are safeguarded from harm.

2.3. This protocol aims to support the two Boards to operate effectively in relation to one another in terms of safeguarding children who are Looked After in Hampshire, and the means to ensure effective co-ordination and coherence. It outlines the joint areas of interest and suggests ways in which the two Boards can share information in relation to these areas.

2. Contextual information

2.1. The draft Protocol contains information about the Corporate Parenting Board that will be discussed and agreed during its inaugural meeting, such as Terms of Reference. If these are subject to change the Protocol can be updated to reflect the discussions.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	No

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

•
Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-assessments.htm>

*Inset in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state*

- (a) why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions.*

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

There is no impact.

3. Climate Change:

These proposals do not have any impact on the environment.

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**PROTOCOL ON THE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE
HAMPSHIRE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
AND
THE HAMPSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDRENS BOARD**

AGREED BY	HSCB Executive	June 2017	
AGREED BY	Corporate Parenting Board	27 November 2017	
REVIEW DATE			

1. PURPOSE OF PROTOCOL

- 1.1 Both Hampshire Corporate Parenting Board and Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) have important, but distinct roles in ensuring that Looked After Children receive good quality services, have their welfare promoted, reach their potential and are safeguarded from harm.
- 1.2 HSCB is a statutory partnership board and the Corporate Parenting Board is the key forum for monitoring services and outcomes for Looked After Children, to champion their achievements and pursue innovation and developments to improve outcomes. There is no hierarchical relationship between the HSCB and Corporate Parenting Board but a joint responsibility to ensure that the needs of Looked After Children are prioritised at a strategic level and delivered effectively at an operational level.
- 1.3 This protocol aims to support the two Boards to operate effectively in relation to one another in terms of safeguarding and the means which we will secure effective co-ordination and coherence.
- 1.4 Joint areas of interest for Looked After Children between the HSCB and the Corporate Parenting Board include but are not restricted to:
- Child's Voice - Taking account of Looked after Children's wishes and feelings (section 22 (4) Children Act 1989), including those who are provided with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and children taken into police protection (section 46(3) (d) of that Act);
 - Assessing Need and Providing Help - Where a child becomes looked after the assessment will be the baseline for work with the family. Any needs which have been identified should be addressed before decisions are made about the child's return home. An assessment by a social worker is required before the child returns home under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. This will provide evidence of whether the necessary improvements have been made to ensure the child's safety when they return home (Working Together 2013, Chapter 2).
 - Children's Homes – Monitoring the quality of service provision and outcomes for children who are placed in the local authorities children's homes.
 - Out of Area Placements – Monitoring the quality of service provision and outcomes for children who are placed out of the local area, including the commissioning arrangements.
 - Stability of Placements – monitor the stability of placement for Looked After Children (former National Indicators 62 & 63).
 - Children who go missing or run away from Care – Ensuring that Looked After Children receive appropriate support to prevent them from going missing and that they receive the appropriate service and support should they do so.
 - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) – Ensure that UASC receive appropriate assessments and service provision.
 - Care Planning – Ensure Looked After Children have good quality and timely Care Plans and Pathway Plans.
 - Health and Education Needs – Monitor local performance indicators in relation to Health Assessments and Plans and Personal Education Plans.

- Looked after Children Reviews – Monitor the timeliness (former National Indicator) and quality of children’s Looked After Reviews, including that their participation and wishes and feelings are taken into account.

2. THE ROLE OF HAMPSHIRE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

2.1 Hampshire Corporate Parenting Board was established in 2017 to support the work of the Children and Family Advisory Panel (CFAP) in the specific area of corporate parenting. CFAP is constituted to “advise the relevant Executive Member on a number of policy areas”. The Corporate Parenting Board is delegated to make recommendations on matters falling within its remit to the relevant Executive Member. It may also advise and report to the CFAP.

2.2 The Corporate Parenting Board will consist of elected representatives and young people, who are Care Ambassadors.

2.3 The Corporate Parenting Board will make recommendations to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services regarding:

- the review and monitoring of outcomes for children in care and care leavers
- the steps required to ensure that the views of Hampshire’s children in care and care leavers are listened to and acted upon, including ensuring those views are incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies throughout the County Council;
- ensuring sufficient resources are available for the ‘Care Ambassadors’ to directly engage with all children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council;
- raising awareness by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents and the County Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities;
- raising the profile of the needs of children in care and care leavers through support for a range of actions & events, to recognise their achievement and contribution;
- ensuring that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents;
- ensuring that the views of children and young people on the development of services which affect them are regularly heard through the Care Ambassadors, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD).
- reviewing the children in care/care leavers Pledge annually;
- ensuring all staff working with children in care and care leavers have the appropriate support and training needs identified.

3. THE ROLE OF HAMPSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDRENS BOARD

Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB)

3.1 The key objectives of the HSCB as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' are:

- To co-ordinate local work to safeguard and promote the well-being of children;
- To ensure the effectiveness of that work

3.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

3.3 A key objective in undertaking these roles is to enable children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

3.4 The role of an LSCB is to scrutinise and challenge the work of agencies both individually and collectively. The LSCB is not operationally responsible for managers and staff in constituent agencies.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD AND HAMPSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

4.1 The Corporate Parenting Board produces an annual report for CFAP and this will be submitted to the HSCB on an annual basis. Where possible the timing of this this should enable the findings to be incorporated into the HSCB Annual Report.

4.2 The HSCB produces an Annual Report which is presented to the Council's Cabinet. The report will contain a section on Looked After Children.

4.3 Quality Assurance audits undertaken or commissioned by HSCB in relation to any aspect of Looked After Children issues will have the findings reported to the Corporate Parenting Board in timely manner.

4.4 Local and National Performance Indicators for Looked After Children are reported to both the Corporate Parenting Board and the HSCB.

5. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

5.1 If there are any areas of significant concern that cannot be resolved in accordance with this protocol then a strategy meeting will be held between the Independent chair of HSCB, the Director of Childrens Services and the chair of the Corporate Parenting Board and any other senior person that is regarded as being required.

5.2 The Corporate Parenting Board and HSCB should undertake to review the implementation of this protocol annually.

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