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Corporate Parenting Introduction June 2021

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 Hampshire (short version)
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Corporate parent: *to promote the best outcomes for our Children in Care and Care Leavers*

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, and every councillor has a role to play.

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. (LGA)

Role of the Corporate Parenting Board;

The role of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) is to ensure that all services to Children in Care (CIC) and Care Leavers are of a high standard and 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 look after their mental health and wellbeing
- Having opportunities for positive social integration
- Enabling the most vulnerable children and young people in society to flourish into the successful adults they can become

What needs to improve?

The Corporate Parenting Board's rigour in holding partners, including health providers and district councils, to account to ensure that they prioritise services for children and young people more effectively

So...

In order to achieve this;

A little background about how children come into the care of the local authority and how they are supported and looked after and where you can support as Corporate Parents;

A Child in Care can be aged 0 – 18 years

Care Leavers are aged 18 years to 25 years of age who have been in care (there is a set criteria and eligibility as to what level of support they are offered)

How?

There will be a programme of business which will be reviewed and amended by the CPB as required – led by priorities identified by Children in Care and Care Leavers, these will:

Reviewing the outcomes for children in care and care leavers

Ensure that the voice of Children in Care and Care Leavers is listened to, acted upon and incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies for children in care and care leavers

Ensuring sufficient resources are available for the Care Ambassadors to directly engage with children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council

Raise the profile of children in care and care leavers by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents with key responsibilities

Hold partner agencies to account in respect of their responsibility as corporate parents

Ensure that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents

The CPB will meet with Children in Care and Care Leavers, frontline staff and foster carers / residential homes to enable them to inform the Board of the standards of care offered to our children and young people.

The focus of work will remain in line with the priorities of the Children in Care and Care Leaver Pledge and the Local Offer for Care Leavers which will be reviewed on an annual basis

There will be a joint working protocol between the Corporate Parenting Board and Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership(HSCP) where an annual report on the CPB will be shared with HSCP.

The CPB will make recommendations to the Executive Lead Member on matters relating to Children in Care and Care Leavers

Reasons why a child may become looked after by the Local Authority;

Some will have had **harmful experiences**, including **neglect, physical and sexual abuse**, while others may be in care because of the illness or death of a parent

The significant majority of **children are in care because of parental difficulties** – not the child's. They are separated from their family because it is unable to provide the quality of care needed.

How can a child become looked after by the Local Authority;

Consent of the parent - this is generally when the parent identifies that at that time, they can not care for their child, and no support will enable them to do this. (more commonly referred to as **voluntary S20**)

Court Order - the Local Authority have applied to the Court seeking legal powers to remove a child from parental care due to significant risk of harm. (more commonly referred to as **Interim or Care Order**)

Children in Care (data provided is correct as of 30 March 2021)

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) will become looked after children by the Local Authority on arrival in UK, there are 56 UASC in the care of Hampshire

There are 1649 children in the care of Hampshire Children's Services

Children in Care are **usually cared for by foster carers**, with 482 children in in house foster carers, and 463 in independent foster placements

Extended **family members sometimes** look after a child, which is often a preferable arrangement so they are not then placed with strangers, there are 256 children placed with **Connected Carers**

193 children are placed in children's homes, either in-house or through independent providers

There are 126 children placed with their parents, but remained looked after due to a Court Order

The average cost for each child in care is £60k per year

There are currently **758** Care Leavers (18+)

Once a child in care reaches **16 years of age**, they are introduced to their Care Leaver Personal Adviser (CLPA)

At **18 years of age** their support comes directly from the **care leavers service**

4 Care Leaver teams offer **practical, emotional and some financial support** to ensure young people have suitable accommodation, contact with their families and previous foster carers, access to education, training and employment and access to health services

Local authorities support care leavers **up to the age of 25**

Some care leavers go on to **university**, some find **employment**, but for some adulthood is exceptionally difficult and they require **intensive support** from the teams