

ROTHERHAM CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

Corporate Parenting Panel

1. Our Commitment to Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to raising the quality of life of everyone living within the borough. For children in particular, the council aims to provide high quality opportunities for learning and ensure children are healthy and safe. It is important that the Corporate Parenting Panel members ensure that the Council provides such care, education and opportunities that the Panel would be afforded to their own children.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces corporate parenting principles, which comprise of seven needs that local authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked-after children or care leavers (collectively referred to as *looked-after children and care leavers*).

In order to thrive, children and care leavers have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers , as follows:

- i. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and care leavers
- ii. to encourage those children and care leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings
- iii. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and care leavers
- iv. to help those children and care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- v. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and care leavers
- vi. for those children and care leavers to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- vii. to prepare those children and care leavers for adulthood and independent living.

The corporate parenting principles do not exist in a vacuum. They should shape the mind-set and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carries out all of its functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers.

The corporate parenting principles are not about applying a formulaic approach to how services are delivered in relation to looked-after children and care leavers.

Rather they describe the behaviours and attitudes expected of councils when they are acting as any good parent would do by supporting, encouraging and guiding their children to lead healthy, rounded and fulfilled lives. The principles intend to ensure that all councils have high ambitions for the children in their care. In doing so, the application of the principles must respond to the individual needs, vulnerabilities or disadvantages of looked after children and care leavers. This will assist in securing that such children and care leavers are not placed at significant disadvantage when compared with the support a non-looked after child may receive from their family.

The detail of what local authorities must do to effectively care for looked-after children and care leavers is addressed through existing legislation, regulations and accompanying statutory guidance. The corporate parenting principles are intended to inform how a local authority carries out those existing responsibilities, whether that is about assessing a looked after child's needs or listening to and taking account of the wishes and feelings of care leavers. The principles are intended to encourage local authorities to be ambitious and aspirational for their looked-after children and care leavers.

The corporate parenting principles do not replace or change existing legal duties, for example in relation to the provision of accommodation for care leavers aged 18 and above.

This document should be read together with the statutory guidance which can be found below

Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers
February 2018

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683698/Applying_corporate_parenting_principles_to_looked-after_children_and_care_leavers.pdf

2. Purpose

2.1 The role of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPP) is to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its duties towards Looked After Children (LAC) corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.

2.2 In order to achieve the above it will be necessary that:-

- Elected members champion the needs of children and Care leavers people and respond proactively and effectively to their needs
- There is clear evidence that partnership working is improving outcomes
Partners have very high aspirations for Looked After children and care leavers
- The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and Corporate Parenting Board (CPP) provide effective leadership and contribute significantly to the development of services, which are regularly audited for effectiveness

The Panel will:-

- i) Lead on behalf of the Council and partners of the Local Authority to ensure that all services directly provided for children and Care leavers in care and care leavers are scrutinised to deliver to a high standard and to all statutory requirements.
- ii) Raise the aspiration, ambitions and life chances of children and care leavers in care and care leavers, narrowing the gap of achievement between children in care, care leavers and their peers.
- iii) Ensure that children in care are protected and supported to develop as healthy citizens, able to participate in their community.
- iv) Ensure that all elected members are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities and that all Council services are mindful of the needs of children in care and respond accordingly within their particular remit.

3. Responsibilities

The Panel has the following responsibilities:

To ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parent to children and care leavers in care and care leavers, including:

- 3.1 Care leavers in residential care
- 3.2 Children and care leavers in foster care
- 3.3 Children placed for adoption
- 3.4 Children placed at home under Placement with Parents Regulations
- 3.5 Care leavers who are living in supported lodgings
- 3.6 Care leavers in secure services
- 3.7 Care leavers in custody
- 3.8 To engage and listen to the views of children, care leavers and their carers for whom the Council is the parent.
- 3.9 To work in partnership with other statutory agencies to drive forward improvements in care.
- 3.10 To act as the governing body for the Virtual School for looked after children and Care leavers.

3. Functions of the Panel

- i) To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children (LAC) services, children's homes, and the virtual school with a view to recommending any changes.
- ii) Ensure that the profile of the corporate parenting agenda is incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies through out the Council overseeing interagency working arrangements. Review reports relating to complaints from looked after children to ensure officers have dealt with these appropriately and made any recommendations for change.

- iii) Raise awareness in Rotherham Council and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities.
- iv) Raise the profile of the needs of looked after children and care leavers through a range of actions including through the organising of celebratory events for the recognition of achievement.
- v) Ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our looked after children and care leavers.
- vi) Promote the development of participation and ensure that the view of children and care leavers are regularly heard through the Corporate Parenting Panel to improve educational, health and social outcomes to raise aspiration and attainments.
- vii) Undertake meetings with children and care leavers , frontline staff and foster carers to inform the panel of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for looked after children.
- viii) Monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations to foster carers to achieve excellent and high quality care.
- ix) To appoint elected members to undertake visits to residential children's homes alongside the appointed regulation 44 visitor where appropriate.
- x) To participate in the QA Visits to Out of Authority Visits alongside the Placements and Commissioning Team.
- xi) To undertake QA visits to their teams and services in and related to the LAC Service to improve understanding of the functioning of the service and contribute to service development.
- xii) To appoint elected members as Champions for Children in Care in respect of the following strands:
 - *Housing – Cllr Watson*
 - *Employment and training opportunities within council departments and with partner agencies – Cllr M Elliott*
 - *Health (including mental health)- Cllr J Elliott*
 - *Educational Attainment and access to Higher Education – Cllr Watson*
 - *Foster carer recruitment and retention – Cllr Cusworth*
 - *Response to those who go missing – Cllr Clark*

4. Children in Care Council

Representatives from the Children in Care Council and Care leavers' Forum will contribute to the Corporate Parenting Panel through methods agreed with them

5. Work Programme

The Corporate Parenting Panel will meet every two months, formally agreeing a skeleton work programme annually and reviewing at each meeting. In reviewing the work programme, the panel may agree to request reports on particular matters of their own preference or as advised by the lead officer.

6. Performance Monitoring

The Corporate Parenting Panel will scrutinise and monitor outcomes for children in care and care leavers. To this end, the panel will develop and agree a core data set which it wishes to receive at each panel meeting. Additional detailed monitoring reports will be presented in accordance with the agreed work programme on the following key aspects of care:

- Placement stability
- Independent child care reviews
- The performance of all care standards regulated services:
 - Adoption and adoption support;
 - Fostering; and
 - Children's homes
- Service to care leavers, including accommodation, education, employment and training
- The health needs of children in care
- Educational attainment of children in care

7. Membership of the Panel

There will be standing membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel to provide continuity and consistency. Councillors outside the standing membership will be invited to discuss issues and raise questions within a standing agenda item.

Membership to include key partners and will include senior local police officer, Virtual Head Teacher, a representative from Housing and designated Health lead.

The Councillor standing membership will consist of up to 10 members, which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Advisory Lead Member will be chair the panel.

The CPP has nominated Cllr Cusworth to be the vice chair of the Panel.

Membership will also include a foster carer and representatives from the Children in Care Council.

8. Officer support

- The Strategic Director of Children's Services is responsible for ensuring that the panel has sufficient officer support to lead the council's corporate parenting strategy.
- The Assistant Deputy Director, Children and care leavers People's Services, will be the lead officer for the panel together with the Heads of Service/ Service Managers for Looked after Children, Leaving Care, Adoption and Fostering, the Head of the Virtual School and the Children's Rights lead.
- Democratic Services will provide the administrative arrangements and constitutional guidance to the panel.

9. Training

Appropriate training will be commissioned for corporate panel members as required.

Total Respect training is to be recommended and commissioned for Corporate Parenting Panel Members.

10. Chairing arrangements, Frequency of meetings and Governance

10.1 The Panel will be chaired by the statutory Lead Member for Children's Services to assist in him/ her carrying out their statutory duties. This person will be chairman on a permanent basis.

10.2 Meetings will be bi-monthly preceded by an agenda setting meeting.

10.3 The governance support for this Panel will be provided by a representative from the Council's Democratic Governance Service and the agenda will be dispatched a week in advance of the meeting.

10.4 It is an essential requirement that for each CPP there are sufficient elected members to contribute to fulfilling the role of the CPP. Therefore quoracy will only be met if there is a minimum of three elected members in attendance. If the meeting is not quorate then there is nothing to stop those in attendance discussing Corporate Parenting matters but it cannot be classed as a Board meeting and minutes will not be taken. As a consequence, non-quorate decisions cannot be ratified.

11. Reporting Mechanisms

The Corporate Parenting Panel will report to the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the appropriate Scrutiny Panel, Health and Well Being Board and the Children and Care leavers' Partnership on an annual basis .