

Introduction to Corporate Parenting in Rotherham

Suzanne Joyner – Strategic Director of Children & Young People's Services

Ailsa Barr – Assistant Director, Children's Social Care

The Legal Context & National Policy

- Over the last 30 years there has been significant legislation that has strengthened the corporate parenting role and corporate parenting duties.
- **The Children Act 1989** – introduced notion of ‘parental responsibility’ and ‘corporate parenting’:
 - The Children and Families Act 2014
 - Duty to appoint a Virtual School Head – closing the education gap
 - Staying Put support to 21 years;
 - Care Leaver Strategy 2016
 - New ways to support care leavers;
- **The Children and Social Work Act 2017**
 - Defines in law the role of corporate parents for the first time and extends support for care leavers to 25.
 - Requires a clear ‘local offer’.

What do we mean by Corporate Parenting?

- Corporate parenting is different from ‘ordinary’ parenting of children in that the focus is not on forming personal relationships with individual children.
- Corporate parent principle “...**would this be good enough for my child?..**” and be the champion children looked after and care leavers – what can I do to support them in my role?
- Good corporate parents recognise the complexity of caring for children in care and that problems do not always have easy solutions – they are not one homogenous group – celebrate their ambitions and successes.

Who are Corporate Parents?

- All Councillors and Officers within the council and partners, particularly health and education colleagues who have special duties.
- Some Councillors and officers will be more involved than others and have greater responsibilities e.g. Lead Member, being a member of the Corporate Parenting Board, being on a Scrutiny Committee.
- All Members can take a role in their communities and in their organisations to ensure that decision-making takes account of their corporate parenting duties and their responsibilities e.g. council tax exemption, priority housing, work experience and apprenticeships.

Hearing from our children and young people

- As corporate parents it's really important to hear about our children and young people's lived experiences.
- We have a LAC council who are all care experienced and they can help us understand things from their perspective.
- LAC council are regular attenders at corporate parenting panel so that they can give feedback to and raise challenge to their corporate parents.



Knowing how well we support our children in care & care leavers

There are specific measures that support Corporate Parents to understand the quality of how an LA cares for and supports children in care and care leavers which include performance for:

- LAC plans, reviews and visits
- Placements
- Fostering and adoption
- Health and dental
- Education / Employment and Training



Profile of our children in care

- As of 14/05/21
 - 579 looked after children.
 - 119 are aged between 0-4 yrs; 143 aged 5-10 yrs; 265 aged 11-17 yrs and 52 aged 17 yrs.
 - Most looked after children come from a White British backgrounds, with the biggest BAME groups being Gypsy/Roma (47) and White/Asian (32).
 - 80.8% (468) are living in a family based setting; with foster carers, wider family/ friends or parents.
 - All have a care plan, health assessment and Personal Education Plan to ensure there is a shared parenting approach to meeting their needs.

Profile of our care leavers

- As at 14/05/21
 - 310 care leavers.
 - 98.5% of our care leavers are in suitable accommodation.
 - 66% are in Education Training or Employment.
 - All Care leavers aged 16 have a Pathway plan to support their journey into independence.

Corporate parenting panel

- Multi-agency forum made up of the council's elected councillors representing all parties, as well as the multi-agency partners in Rotherham who are responsible for delivering good and effective corporate parenting for children and young people.
- Work closely with the LAC council to ensure that corporate parents hear directly from children and young people
- Champion the needs of looked after children and care leavers throughout the council and partner agencies

**WHAT DO WE WANT OUR CP
PARENTING PANEL TO BE?**