



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

13 October 2022

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds – Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Families	
Lead Director:	Simon Wellman – Director: Education & Skills	
Service Area:	Education and Skills	
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Wards Affected:	All Wards	
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision	
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable	
Report considered by:	SMT 20 September 2022 Business Briefing 29 September 2022	

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:-

1.1 Approves the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 attached at **Appendix A**, in-line with statutory expectations.

1.2 Notes:-

- The role of Telford & Wrekin Council and partners to advocate on behalf of Children in Care
- The voice of Children in Care at the heart of our work as Corporate Parents

- The high aspirations for Children in Care set out in the strategy, with a focus on positive outcomes

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Strategy for approval by Cabinet.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Department for Education publication, *“Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers; Statutory guidance for local authorities; February 2018”*, describes the role of the council as Corporate Parents and how this role should be a “priority for everyone”. It sets out that a strong ethos and vision should lead to a strategic approach which ensures positive outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

3.2 The statutory guidance identifies seven Corporate Parenting Principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their Corporate Parenting functions for Children in Care and Care Leavers. These are:-

- 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; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

3.3 In line with the Corporate Parenting Principles above, the Strategy aims to place the voice of the child at its heart, to ensure their views shape the priorities for us all as Corporate Parents and to make sure that an ongoing dialogue with young people is front and centre when making decisions.

- 3.4 The statutory guidance defines everyone from “the Chief Executive down to front line staff, as well as elected council members” as Corporate Parents. There is also an expectation that relevant partners, such as colleagues in health and schools, support the Local Authority in discharging the corporate parenting functions.
- 3.5 In Telford and Wrekin there are 457 Children in Care (as at 13th September 2022). We are proud of key successes such as our Children in Care achieved better outcomes at all key stages in education than the national averages for Children in Care in the summer 2022 exams and tests. We provide opportunities for positive activities and engagement with our young people including residential visits to Arthog, summer arts projects, hotshot award ceremony, young people conference to name but a few.
- 3.6 The new corporate parenting strategy sits at the heart of our vision to continually improve the lives and outcomes of our children in care and care leavers.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 Through an engagement event with children in care and care leavers, we developed a new ‘Promise’. The young people identified seven priorities:
- Being an individual
 - Respect and value
 - Hearing your voice
 - Developing your independence
 - Building Strong relationships
 - Fulfilling your ambitions
 - Being Safe and Healthy
- 4.2 The Promise is at the heart of the new strategy, the seven priorities identified by the young people have become our priorities as Corporate Parents. Each priority is linked back to the voice of the young people, not just from engagement events but also from the Bright Spots survey where all Children in Care and Care Leavers had the opportunity to feed back on their experience in care.
- 4.3 For each priority we have identified the key actions, ‘We Will’, to respond to and address the issues identified by the young people. There is also a ‘How we know we have made a difference’ section which provides success criteria for the priority.
- 4.4 The ongoing dialogue is key, we have therefore created a ‘Young Persons’ Panel’ which will meet every 3 months, in-between meetings of the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group and will be used to focus the two way conversation about each of the priorities, the actions and the impact of these.
- 4.5 For each priority we are developing a performance dashboard, using the ‘How we will know we have made a difference’ section to inform the performance indicators. We are also developing action plans to sit under the priorities. The conversations

with the Young Persons' Panel will also shape the actions in these plans and we will be able to feedback on progress against these.

- 4.6 Every young person going through the care system is different and individual and will have their own experiences of care. Our challenge is to do all we can to make this experience as positive as possible and to support each child to become an independent, successful adult. This strategy aims to focus our work to help us all to achieve this.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy supports our implementation of statutory requirements. It will replace the existing strategy which was completed in 2018.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy will be at the heart of any future inspection of Local Authority Childrens' Services and is therefore a crucial document. By failing to have a revised Strategy, the Council would not be complying with its statutory requirements.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy links to the council priorities, in particular:
- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
 - A community focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Telford & Wrekin Council spends over £31 million annually on services directly supporting the aims of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. This includes social work teams directly supporting children in care, foster care and educational support through the Virtual School Team.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 The Council must produce, and work to, a Corporate Parenting Strategy in order to meet the requirements of, and its obligations pursuant, to the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Strategy as attached at **Appendix A** satisfies this requirement.

9.2 There are no known human resource implications associated with this report.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 A borough wide and beyond strategy, will therefore have a positive impact for young people across all wards.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The strategy aims to close the gap in outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers, especially in relation to health outcomes, educational outcomes and becoming economically independent.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 This strategy relates to Children in Care with a diverse range of backgrounds and needs.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 None.

14.0 Background Papers

1 Our Promise to You – Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	22/09/2022	26/09/2022	AL
Finance	20/09/2022	23/09/2022	TD
Director	23/09/2022	26.09.2022	SW