



Rutland County Council

Corporate Parenting Board

Strategy and Terms of Reference

‘Would this be good enough for my child?’

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Corporate Parenting Strategy and Board Terms of Reference

1.1 Introduction

The term “corporate parent” is generally used to describe the relationship between a local authority and a child who is “looked after” or was looked after by them (care leavers) and in respect whom the local authority has ongoing duties and powers under 23A and 24D of the Children Act 1989.

As corporate parents in Rutland County Council it is our responsibility to ensure that children looked after and care leavers get the best experiences in life, from excellent parenting which promotes good health and educational attainment to a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and skills in order to have an enjoyable childhood and successful adult life. Stable placements, good health and support during transition are all essential elements, but children will only achieve their potential through the ambition and high expectation of all those involved in their lives.

1.2 The Objectives of the Corporate Parenting Board

The overall aim of the Board is to ensure the corporate responsibility of the whole council and partner agencies to children looked after, through the corporate parenting arrangements and governance. Rutland County Council has a strong track record as a corporate parent and this strategy builds on this so that the Council can become an outstanding corporate parent.

This strategy applies to those with a vested interest or professional responsibility in supporting and improving the lives of children looked after (CLA) and care leavers.

The Board needs to hold others to account where the needs and wellbeing of children looked after and care leavers are not met.

The principle of ***‘would this be good enough for my child’*** underpins this strategy for the Board and therefore the objectives of this strategy are to ensure that the whole Council and partner agencies work together towards ensuring better outcomes for children looked after and care leavers. This can only be realised if all stakeholders work together in collaboration with a common purpose and ambition.

There is a responsibility on the Council and its partners to assess the contribution made to children looked after and care leavers and to enable the development of initiatives or services in meeting their needs within that service.

This strategy is governed by the Corporate Parenting Board and applies to all employees, services and departments and has the oversight of all elected members

1.3 Overarching Principles

- At the heart the Rutland Corporate Parenting Board Strategy is the full participation, involvement and contribution of children looked after and young people leaving care, up to the age of 25
- Excellent Corporate Parenting requires ownership and leadership at a senior level, including elected members; therefore councillors and officers must have a clear understanding and awareness of the issues for children looked after and care leavers so that they can ensure that their responsibilities as corporate parents are reflected in all aspects of the Council's work. All services have mechanisms in place to continually monitor and review the contribution they make to children looked after and care leavers;
- The Corporate Parenting Board Strategy is promoted across the Council at a Member, Council, Directorate, Service and Individual level
- The Corporate Parenting commitment is measurable through the improvement in life chances of children looked after and care leavers and these outcomes are reported to, and quality assured by, the Corporate Parenting Board and by children and young people themselves through the Children in Care Council (CICC).

1.4 Corporate Parenting Principles as outlined in Children and Social Worker Act 2017

- (1) A local authority in England must, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people defined as 'children looked after', and have regard to the need -
 - (a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
 - (b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - (c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
 - (d) 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 partner;
 - (e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
 - (f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
 - (g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

1.5 Children Looked After and Care Leavers

The term 'looked after' refers to any child or young person for whom the authority has, or shares, parental responsibility, or for whom the authority provides care and accommodation to the child or young person on behalf of their parent/s.

Rutland has between 35 and 45 CLA in their care at any one time. The majority of the children and young people need alternative care and accommodation because they are not able to live at home with a parent or parents. The term "child" can refer to any child or young person between 0-18 years and up to 25 years with a disability.

The authority also has a duty and responsibility to those young people who leave their long term care after the age of 16 years until they reach the age of 21 years or up to the age of 25 if they are in higher education.

The term "care leavers" is used to describe those children and young people who fall within the scope of the local authority duties set out in the Children Act 1989. Section 23B and 23C of the 1989 Act impose duties on the local authority to provide assistance and support to relevant children and former relevant children (namely children who were formally looked after by the LA) included in this assistance to be provided is the duty to appoint a personal advisor if certain criteria is met.

1.6 The Corporate Parenting Board and the Children and Young People's Pledge

The Corporate Parenting Board has the responsibility of ensuring that we, as a whole council are delivering the oversight of the corporate parenting agenda and is made up of senior officers from the council and partners, elected members and looked after young people and care leavers.

The Children's Pledge is a commitment from the Corporate Parenting Board, partners and elected members and our officers, to all our children and young people in and leaving our care.

The Pledges have been developed in partnership with young people, those attending the Children in Care Council, (CiCC), (SUSO, Speak Up, Speak Out), elected members and partners.

The underlying principles are aimed at ensuring children looked after and care leavers are safe, have good health and wellbeing, able to contribute to their local community and participate in society. Ensure they are able to grow up in a stable environment and have access to good accommodation, achieve, attain and access good education and training. Ensure they have a voice and be best placed to reach their full potential as adults. The pledges underpin the quality assurance reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board and subsequent priorities.

1.7 Role and Responsibilities:

It is the role of the Corporate Parenting Board to set the priorities for children in care and to monitor and scrutinise service delivery.

It will also:

- Ensure that the commitments outlined in the Pledge for Children in Care and Care Leavers are delivered and are having a positive impact for children and young people.
- Oversee the implementation of this Strategy with delegated responsibilities to Heads of Service or Senior Managers within all services and partner agencies.
- Monitor the delivery of good, safe, high quality services through quality assurance and performance management frameworks in relation to outcomes.

Our Pledges:

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are happy and have good Health and Well Being

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are safe and have stable accommodation (including staying out options)

Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their potential and have access to good education, training and/or employment

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and participate in society

Children Looked After and Care build positive relationships

Young People are prepared to become independent and successful adults

1.8 Requirements

- The leadership and governance of the Corporate Parenting Board must be clear in relation to the Board's power to deploy resources and hold officers to account.
- Individual board members must be trained and prepared for their task, and be clear about the authority they carry.
- We need board members to be advocates for children and young people to ensure their voice is heard and ensure their needs are met.

- The relationship of the Corporate Parenting Board to other Boards, partnership arrangements, and scrutiny committees must be clear.
- The Corporate Parenting Board must have access to robust qualitative and quantitative management information in order to effectively monitor performance against outcomes and track delivery of Pledge commitments.
- The Board will, therefore, receive bi-annual reports on a range of local and national performance indicators in relation to children in care e.g. health, education and participation and inspection outcomes.

1.9 Board Membership

The Corporate Parenting Board will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, who is also the children's looked after "champion" and the Board will meet quarterly.

Membership will also consist of the other elected members as appropriate as well as key partners.

Children looked after will attend with assistance from the CiCC (Children in Care Council)(SUSO). Where they cannot or choose not to attend, their voice will be brought by the SUSO (Speak Up, Speak Out) lead to ensure they are heard and remain central to the board and decisions.

The meeting will also require attendance of the relevant SMT members to reflect the three Directorates and the relevant officers.

Also in attendance will be foster carer representative, designated looked after health professional representation and colleagues from education.

The involvement of young people on the Board will be essential to inform current and future priorities and decisions relating to children in care.

Designated health professionals will hold a bi-monthly Strategic Child Looked After Health Meeting which will feed into the Corporate Parenting Board.

We, the Council, require a whole authority and partner agency commitment to our children and young people in care and our care leavers, which is reflected in a holistic, integrated and cross-cutting service delivery approach. This is essential if our children in care and our care leavers are to achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives.

2.0 Purpose of the Board:

To oversee the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy with delegated responsibilities to Heads of Service or Senior Managers within all departments and partner agencies.

To oversee the 'Pledges', our promise to children looked after and care leavers, and ensure we are delivering on our promises.

To ensure the '[Foster Carers' Charter](#)' is adhered to by both the council and our carers

2.1 Elected Members Membership:

Chair: Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

Elected Member with responsibility as "champion" for children looked after.

2.2 Service User Membership:

Children Looked After, Young People and Care Leavers (SUSO), supported by the Early Help Co-ordinator – Youth and Community Development Officer

2.3 Board Membership:

Membership of this group will include

- Team Manager Permanency and Protection Team
- Team Manager Fostering, Adoption and Care Leavers
- Team Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding
- Service Manager for Children Social Care
- Head of Service Children Social Care
- Virtual Head Teacher
- Foster Carer representative
- Designated (CLA) Nurse and/or Designated Doctor
- School Governor Representative
- Representatives from Places and Resources Directorates
- Independent Providers: to be determined
- Voluntary Sector: to be determined
- Leicestershire CC Adoption Service Manager
- CAFCASS representative
- SUSO Members and/or their Advocate
- Early Help Service Manager with the oversight of the Pledges

2.4 Terms of Reference:

The Corporate Parenting Board will work to a yearly work programme within its terms of reference, which are as follows:

- Provide a forum for Children in Care and Care Leavers to influence policy, service developments, practice, etc so that there is continuous improvement.
- Take a strategic overview of Rutland County Council's and partner agencies' responsibilities towards Children in Care and care leavers.
- Ensure there are good joint working arrangements between Council Directorates and services and partner agencies and hold them to account for high quality service delivery.
- Ensure that relevant new initiatives, plans, policies, and service developments are presented to the Board for consultation.
- Monitor the performance of all the key stakeholders by receiving annual progress reports in relation to the six Outcomes, including for Care Leavers.
- Receive annual reports from the Adoption and Fostering Services in relation to recruitment and retention of carers, placement stability and the annual IRO report and annual Private Fostering Report.
- Receive an annual report from Designated Nurse and Designated Doctor the "whole family safeguarding report"

2.5 Frequency of meetings: Quarterly

2.6 Children Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet:

The Panel and Cabinet will receive annual reports and other reports as required.

2.7 Relationship with Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children's Board:

Reporting relationship only. They will receive the yearly work programme of the Corporate Parenting Board and an Annual Report for information purposes.

2.8 Relationship with Children's Trust Board:

Reporting relationship only. The Corporate Parenting Board will provide annual reports to the Children's Trust Board. The reports will be for information only to update progress and improvements made in the key outcome areas for looked after children and young people

2.9 Training Needs:

All Board members should attend a training session to include context and purpose of the Board, roles and responsibilities.

3.0 Agenda:

This will be set by the Head of Service and the Portfolio Holder., There will be a young-person friendly agenda drawn up and shared with all our children looked after (age appropriate) and care leavers to gather feedback where they are unable to attend.

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