

8 September 2022

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Corporate Parenting Strategy

1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update members of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee on the further development of Corporate Parenting for Together for Children and Sunderland City Council, with a renewed Corporate Parenting Strategy.

2 Background

- 2.1 It is a collective responsibility for Together for Children, Sunderland City Council for all of their employee's, elected members and partner agencies to provide the best possible care and safeguarding for all children and young people who are cared for by Together for Children. As a parent we would want the best for our own child or children, to ensure that they have opportunities to be safe, to be happy, to be healthy, to achieve in their education and have appropriate leisure opportunities, enabling them to develop into adulthood equipped to lead independent lives and to make their way as happy, healthy, successful and financially secure adults.
- 2.2 Within Together for Children and Sunderland City Council, the Corporate Parenting Board is already established. It was agreed that a review of the strategy was needed to bring the policy and work up to date with the current policy and practice requirements.
- 2.3 Although delayed by Covid on a number of occasions, work took place with the Change Council, to assist them in understanding what a Corporate Parent was and why this was relevant to them. A number of sessions took place, resulting in an agreed view of what they wanted their Corporate Parents to do. This included a list of priorities around health and care, stigma, employment, education, leisure, housing and transport.
- 2.4 The attendees at Change Council are involved with a range of projects and agreed to delegate Corporate Parenting to two young people, who had an interest in this work and have been involved since the initial sessions took place. They provide information at each Board meeting on the work of the Change Council and in relation to the work on the strategy.

3 Progress

- 3.1 Young people did not feel that the title of Corporate Parenting Board was appropriate and requested that this was changed to Supportive Parenting Partnership, which was agreed at the meeting on 23 July 2022.
- 3.2 The strategy has been reduced significantly to ensure that the focus remains on the key areas identified by young people, provides information on how we progress the strategy, how we know we are making a difference for cared for and care experienced children and young people and what work is agreed for the Partnership to complete.
- 3.3 Members and key agencies will be required to ensure that they complete the tasks within the Supportive Parenting Partnership Work Plan, which is currently being finalised.
- 3.4 Change Council felt that staff within Together for Children, Sunderland City Council and partner agencies did not always understand the experience of children and young people and therefore their needs. They have an established game called 'The Change Game', this has been reviewed and amended to reflect the current process and use of language. This game is used to enable others to understand what life is like for cared for and care experienced children and young people and will be used for training corporate parents.
- 3.5 A work plan is in development and includes information on the key areas to be considered by the group. A training session is planned in the autumn for members of the Supportive Parenting Partnership initially. The Change Game will be used in a variety of settings with staff, members and other agencies over the coming months, across organisations and at various meetings. Members of this Children, Education and Skills Committee will be invited to participate in this in due course.
- 3.6 The Terms of Reference have also been reviewed of as part of this process.
- 3.7 A presentation will be provided at the meeting. Louise Farthing, Portfolio Holder for Children Learning and Skills will also be in attendance.

4 Recommendation

This work continues and is for update purposes at this time. The final strategy and Change Game will be provided to the Children, Education and Skills Committee.