

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

16 April 2018

Sunderland's Guide to Corporate Parenting

1. Purpose of the Report:

This Report is to advise the Corporate Parenting Board of the Statutory Guidance that was issued to Local Authorities in February 2018 about applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

2. Background:

The role that Councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. A strong ethos of Corporate Parenting means that sense of vision and responsibility towards the children they look after and their Care Leavers is a priority for everyone. They recognise that Looked After Children have the same needs to be loved, cared for and feel safe as other children. Also that there are unique challenges that Looked After Children and Care Leavers face. 60% of children become Looked After due to abuse and neglect and they have poorer educational and health outcomes than their peers. Local Authorities that have a strong Corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and wellbeing.

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. The Corporate Parenting Principles are intended to secure a better approach to fulfilling existing functions in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers and for the Local Authority to facilitate as far as possible secure, nurturing and positive experiences for Looked After Children and Young People and enable positive outcomes for them.

The Corporate Parenting Principles are not new requirements but provide a framework to help Local Authorities understand and fully comply with existing duties across the whole of their services as they discharge those duties to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

3. The Principles:

In order to thrive, children and young people 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 this functions in relation to Looked After Children and Young People as follows:

- To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing 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.

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 young people are not placed at significant disadvantage when compared with the support of non-Looked After Children or a young person may receive from their family.

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 years and over. 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.