

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

To: **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

Meeting Date: **30th January 2019**

From: **Name: Aidan O'Reilly
Title: Service Manager – Corporate Parenting**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: **The Corporate Parenting Strategy has been refreshed as part of on-going service delivery. The proposed strategy covers the period from 2019-2021.**

Recommendation: **The Sub-Committee is asked to:**

- a) review and endorse the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-2021 prior to its launch with children, their families, their carers and designated officers.**

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Summary:

- The corporate parenting strategy has been updated to cover the period from 2019 to 2021. The Executive Summary is attached at Appendix 1 and the full document at Appendix 2.
- The previous pledge to Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children has been replaced with 10 specific promises. These promises are in line with statutory expectations but have also been informed by an anonymised survey of Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children.
- These promises holistically represent a shared view of how to best support and safeguard Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children. Within the strategy are details of how these promises will be met and also how compliance will be monitored

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Children Act 1989 sets out Local Authority responsibilities to Looked After Children. Volume 3 of the Guidance Regulations: Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers gives details of how Care Leavers should be provided with support and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 extended the responsibility of the Local Authority to young people leaving care, up to the age of 25.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of Corporate Parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for Looked After Children and young people, and Care Leavers. Being a Corporate Parent means doing everything possible for every Looked After Child and Care Leaver to give them opportunities that other children receive. This means that Corporate Parents should:

- act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
 - encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them
 - make sure they have access to services
 - make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work
 - prepare them for adulthood and independent living
- 1.2 Local Authorities do not act alone in their Corporate Parenting role. The Children Act 1989 placed a duty on the NHS, housing and education

authorities to assist social care services to fulfil their responsibility by providing support and services.

For officers, councillors and partners, being a Corporate Parent means that when any service is being reviewed that could impact upon Looked After Children and Care Leavers, or when hearing feedback from, or reports about, looked after children, they should consider:

“What if this were my child?” and, “What can we do to put this right?”

- 1.3 As Corporate Parents, we all need to recognise the uniqueness of the children in our care and make sure each child is getting what they need to do their best. This is achieved by being informed, getting involved, asking questions, championing rights and making sure the voices of children and young people are being heard.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 How the Strategy was Developed

In 2017 and 2018, Cambridgeshire County Council, in conjunction with Coram Voice and Bristol University encouraged our Looked After Children and Care Leavers to participate in a survey of their well-being. The Survey ‘Your Life, Your Care’ (also known as Bright Spots), aimed to improve the care experience and well-being of children in care and care leavers by identifying and promoting ‘bright spots’ - the practices that had a positive influence on children and young people’s well-being. A number of the themes arising from the results of the Bright Spots Survey have been used to put a relevant and meaningful structure within Cambridgeshire’s Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The Strategy has been consulted on amongst Looked After Children, foster carers, the children’s workforce and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Safeguarding Children Board which includes representatives from Health, Education, Police, Youth Offending, Housing and voluntary services.

2.2 Our Promises to Cambridgeshire Looked After Children

Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to our Looked After children’s care, and will always have high expectations of what they can do and achieve.

The Council is committed to supporting Looked After children to reach their full potential. Our Children in Care Council, Voices Matter, has identified the following 10 Promises that Cambridgeshire County Council will strive to achieve.

We will:

1. Make sure you know why you’re in care and support you to understand about this honestly at the right times throughout your journey
2. Support you to achieve your goals and reach your potential, in school and in your hobbies and interests
3. Support you to live a healthy lifestyle, including helping look after your mental health

4. Keep you safe and help you to keep yourself safe
5. Always work to keep you in a placement where you are happy
6. Ask you about, and keep you updated of any changes to your care plan
7. Always work to ensure that if you need to move placement, this is done in a planned way, and give you a chance to meet your new carers first
8. Help you see important people in your life
9. Listen to you and show you respect
10. Support you as you move into adulthood and continue our relationship with you until you are 25

2.3 How the Strategy will be Monitored

Using the outcome areas of Relationships, Safety, Rights, Well-Being, Achieving, Recovery and Reunification, the strategy sets out the priorities to improve outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. There is a workstream for each of the six outcome areas. Each work stream is led by a manager best placed for that role. Our aim is to ensure that the ambitions set out in the Pledge are achieved. A multiagency action plan which details how the outcomes will be achieved will be monitored and evaluated through the Corporate Parenting Committee.

3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Resource Implications

N/A maintained within existing resources

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

N/A

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

N/A compliant with statutory frameworks

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

N/A

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

To be considered alongside development of the Local Offer to young people leaving care

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

N/A

3.7 Public Health Implications

N/A

Source Documents	Location
Corporate Parenting – Executive Summary	Aidan O'Reilly Scott House, Hunts
Corporate Parenting Strategy January 2019	Aidan O'Reilly Scott House, Hunts