

## 1.1.1 Children's Services Policies, Values and Principles



### SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter provides the context for all procedures.

It contains the overarching policy for the provision of services to children and families. It also sets out underlying values and principles for recording, confidentiality and consultation.

### AMENDMENT

In December 2018, a new [Section 2, Corporate Parenting](#) was added in response to the [DfE Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked-after Children and Care Leavers – Statutory Guidance \(Feb 2018\)](#). It includes the seven corporate parenting principles set out in the guidance.

### Contents

---

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Corporate Parenting](#)
3. [Key Outcomes](#)
4. [Key Principles](#)
5. [Our Strategy](#)

## 1. Introduction

---

This policy sets out the framework within which Children's Services work with children, young people and their families.

This policy framework has regard to and is consistent with a range of government guidance, particularly the principles set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

It is largely directed towards the work that Children's Services undertakes with Children in Need and Looked After Children; which is carried out in partnership with all sectors of the Local Authority and with other statutory, independent and voluntary sector services.

## 2. Corporate Parenting

---

### 2.1 Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

The role that councils play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. Local authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers.

The term 'corporate parent' is broadly understood by Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children, as well as those working directly in Children's Services, in relation to how local authorities should approach their responsibilities for looked after children and care leavers. 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. Corporate Parenting is an important part of the Ofsted inspection framework and the Corporate Parenting Principles are referenced in Ofsted's Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services.

The Corporate Parenting Principles are intended 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 experiences of looked-after children and care leavers, particularly in regards to whether they feel cared for and listened to, will therefore be an important measure of how successfully local authorities embed these principles.

## 2.2 Corporate Parenting Principles

The Corporate Parenting Principles set out seven principles that local authorities will have regard to when exercising their 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 Corporate Parenting Principles do not replace or change existing legal duties. The principles are intended to encourage local authorities to be ambitious and aspirational for their looked-after children and care leavers.

In addition, Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the responsibility to make arrangements to promote co-operation between 'relevant partners' with a view to improving the well-being of children in their area. This should include arrangements in relation to looked-after children and care leavers. Section 10(5) of the 2004 Act places a duty on relevant partners to co-operate with the local authority in the making of these arrangements, therefore promoting and ensuring a joined-up approach to improving the well-being of children in their area.

See [DfE Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked-after Children and Care Leavers – Statutory Guidance \(Feb 2018\)](#)

## 3. Key Outcomes

---

This can be summarised under 5 key outcomes for children and young people:

### Being healthy

All children and young people have the right to have their physical and mental health safeguarded and promoted. They also have the right to live a healthy lifestyle.

### Being safe

All children and young people have the right to be safe and secure, protected from harm and neglect, and to live in an environment that enables them to develop to their full physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social potential.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

All children and young people have the right to the best possible education and training which meets their identified needs and equips them to live full adult lives. They also have the right to time and support to pursue appropriate leisure interests, especially children acting as young carers.

### **Making a positive contribution**

All children and young people have the right to family life wherever possible and to be supported to take part in community life. They have the right to a continuity of care wherever possible and to develop and preserve their own identities. They also have a right to information and to make choices about their lives, having regard to their age and understanding. Through this they will be enabled to make a positive contribution to the community and to society.

### **Economic well-being**

All children have the right to live above the poverty threshold and to be equipped with the skills and knowledge that will help them overcome socio-economic disadvantage where necessary.

## **4. Key Principles**

---

Consideration of children's welfare and best interests will always be at the centre of the work that is undertaken

Children's Services will work to ensure the above outcomes by working to maintain children within their own families, and facilitating services to support this arrangement, wherever this is possible and consistent with the child's safety and well-being.

Where a child cannot be cared for within his or her immediate family, strenuous efforts will be made to identify potential carers within the wider kinship network of the child who are able and willing to care for the child.

If continuing care within his/her family is not possible every effort will be made to identify suitable alternative carers, reflecting the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background wherever possible and appropriate. Suitable local placements will be identified to achieve educational and social continuity

Children's Services will ensure that children who are looked after are placed in approved placements, suitable to meet their needs and that, wherever possible, siblings are placed together. For younger children, they will be placed in a family placement unless there are sound assessed reasons why residential care is the preferred option.

Children's Services will ensure that permanence plans are made for all looked after children within 4 months of their becoming looked after and enacted as quickly as possible. If a young person remains in care we will ensure that they are supported when they leave care at least until they are 21 or 24 if in full time education, to give them a positive start to independent living.

Children, their parents and other significant adults will be consulted about plans for their care and these plans will be subject to independent review. Children's Services will also consult about the services it provides and ensure that children have access to advocacy services that will assist them in being heard.

## 5. Our Strategy

---

The strategy for Children's Services is to harness government policy and funding streams to improve performance, so that we can work with other agencies to ensure better outcomes for every child and his or her family through cost effective systems, structures and partnerships - through targeting services to prevent most children from becoming children in need, whilst concentrating specialist services on children most in need to give them the best possible life chances.

End