

# Public Document Pack



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Tuesday, 16 January 2018

## Notice of Reports Received following Publication of Agenda.

### Children and Young People Select Committee

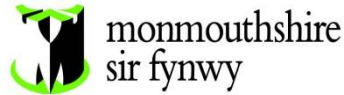
Wednesday, 24th January, 2018 at 2.00 pm,  
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

Attached are reports that the committee will consider as part of the original agenda but were submitted to democratic services following publication of the agenda.

Item No	Item	Pages
4.	Corporate Parenting Strategy - Pre-decision scrutiny of the Corporate Parenting Strategy	1 - 22

**Paul Matthews**  
Chief Executive

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**SUBJECT: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018 - 2021**

**MEETING: CYP Select Committee**

**DATE: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

## **1. PURPOSE:**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with the opportunity to scrutinise and contribute to the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018 – 2021 (appendix 1).

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 It is recommended that members:

- Scrutinise the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy and make recommendations, if required, as to its further development;
- Endorse the development of the strategy including the plan to seek further consultation with other key stake-holders.

## **3. KEY ISSUES:**

3.1 Under the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014, it is a statutory requirement for every council to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child it looks after, and every care leaver. The Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan sets out how the Council understands this responsibility and proposes to meet the statutory requirement over the next three year period.

3.2 In Monmouthshire County Council, “Our aspirations for the children and young people that we look after are the same as any good parent would want for their children. Where they need it children and young people will receive the very best possible standards of care and support” (Where I am Safe Strategy 2016).

3.3 This is the second iteration of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and builds on a review and appraisal of the first. The strategy is based on an overview of the current context including the profile of our Look After Children, young people and Care Leavers.

3.4 This is the initial stages of consultation for the revised strategy, with the intention to seek final approval at Cabinet in April 2018. Following CYP select further consultation is proposed including:

- Corporate Panel Members
- Young people's participation group
- Foster carers
- Operational social work teams and placement & support team
- Senior Leadership Team.

3.5 The Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan will be delivered and monitored through the Corporate Parenting Panel.

#### **4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

N/A

#### **5. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

N/A

#### **6. REASONS:**

6.1 The previous Corporate Parenting Strategy 2014 – 2017 is now out of date and a new strategy for the next three year period is required.

#### **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no additional resource implications identified as a consequence of this report.

#### **8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

N/A

#### **9. CONSULTEES:**

- Claire Marchant, Chief Officer, Social Care and Health
- Chair and Members of Corporate Parenting Panel

#### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- Appendix 1



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monmouthshire  
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# **Corporate Parenting Strategy**

## **2018 - 2021**

## Foreword

The Monmouthshire County Council Corporate Parenting Strategy is an important document which identifies, as defined by the Welsh Government, ‘the collective responsibility across services and across local authorities.... to safeguard and promote the life chances of looked after children.’

All Councillors have a special responsibility as Corporate Parents to ensure that children within our County have the opportunity to live a safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling life. A good education and opportunities for social development are paramount to this and in this respect, Looked After Children are absolutely no different and must be afforded the same choices.

The strategy sets out clearly a reference guide for Corporate Parents to follow and emphasises the key aspects of the role which include how to listen, learn and question and act as advocates on behalf of this special group.

This is the Council’s second Corporate Parenting Strategy.

County Councillor Penny Jones

Cabinet Member and Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel

## Corporate Parenting Priorities

**Priority 1 – All elected members and officers understand and act on their responsibilities as corporate parents**

**Priority 2: All looked after children have a safe and stable home**

**Priority 3: Looked after children enjoy a range of educational and learning opportunities**

**Priority 4: Looked after children enjoy the best possible health**

**Priority 5: Looked after children enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities**

**Priority 6: Looked after children are listened to and treated with respect**

**Priority 7: Looked after children are supported and enabled to achieve independence**

**Priority 8: Looked after children are cared for by Monmouthshire carers and remain close to their homes and communities**

**Priority 9: All care leavers are supported in education, training and employment**

## Where I am Safe

Within Monmouthshire, our first pledge to children and young people is that whenever possible we will support them to remain within their families. We recognise that this is the best environment for the majority of children and young people to develop and achieve their outcomes.

There are however a small group of children and young people who will need to be accommodated, primarily as a result of abuse or neglect that they have experienced at home. We will ensure that children and young people who are unable to live safely within their own families are looked after and provided with the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs.

Children in care will already have been placed at a disadvantage when they come into care. Monmouthshire County Council wants to ensure that the experience of children and young people does not add to this disadvantage but provides them with the stability and security they need to flourish. Children and young people will be healthy and happy, and feel valued and loved. Children and young people will enjoy learning and grow into successful adults who can have positive relationships, positive futures, become responsible citizens and achieve their goals and ambitions. “Our aspirations for the children and young people that we look after are the same as any good parent would want for their children. Where they need it children and young people will receive the very best possible standards of care and support” (Where I am Safe Strategy 2016).

## Entitlements of Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Children who are looked after have the same entitlements as all children and young people. Under the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 this is now articulated through the concept of well-being. For children and young people this incorporates:

- Being safe
- Having somewhere suitable to live
- Being involved in decisions that impact your life
- Having friends
- Being part of good, strong communities
- Having every chance to do well in education, employment and training
- Feeling good about your life
- Being able to grow up happily and successfully,
- Being well-looked after

## What is corporate parenting?

Parents always want the best for their children. For children in care it is elected members and officers who are together responsible for providing the quality of care that would be good enough for their own children.

Welsh Government defined the concept of corporate parenting as:

*“The collective responsibility across services and across local authorities, to safeguard and promote the life chances of looked after children”*

### **Councillors as Corporate Parents**

Elected members have a ‘special responsibility’.

*“When you became an elected member you took on one of your most important roles, as corporate parent to children your local authority looks after. The importance of your corporate parenting responsibilities cannot be overemphasised. Elected Members have a responsibility to ensure that children looked after by the Council are able to thrive, that they are nurtured, supported, educated, listened to and prepared for adult life in the way any good parent would want for their own children. These children will often have faced significant challenges and will need the help of adults who hold powerful and influential positions.”*

Gwenda Thomas AM, Deputy Minister for Social Services

Key aspects of the role of a Corporate Parent include:

- To know what the key issues and concerns are of our looked after children and to ensure that the Council is responding to these.
- Ensuring that parental responsibilities for LAC are being fulfilled;
- To identify where things need to improve and to make a difference for good
- To consider and question the impact of Council decisions on looked after children and care leavers.

### Officers of the Council

Corporate parenting responsibilities are not confined to elected members. All officers share the responsibility to promote the needs of looked after children.

Key responsibilities of all Officers are:

- To promote the life chances of looked after children and care leavers in their area of responsibility.
- To consider the impact of decision making on looked after children and care leavers.

## Care Leavers

The Corporate Parenting Strategy applies equally to care leavers as it does to children and young people who are looked after.

A Care Leaver is defined as a child who was previously a Looked After Child and was in Care on their 16th birthday. Our duties to care leavers remain until they are 21 or 25 if they are in fulltime education. A young person can 're-connect' to care and support at any time during this period.

The local authority as a 'good corporate parent' will assist the young person with financial support to achieve economic well-being and make a positive and successful transition to adulthood.

The report undertaken by the Children's Commissioner 'Hidden Ambitions' published in 2017 has re-emphasised to Local Authorities that Care Leavers still face many barriers, and that more needs to be done to ensure that care leavers have the support and resources they need to make successful transitions into adult life.

At a regional level, the Institute of Public Care (IPC) recently undertook a review into the care leavers with complex needs to explore how support and accommodation services for this group of young people could be improved and developed.

## Looked after children

### **The National Picture**

There are over 67,000 children currently being looked after by Local Authorities in England and over 5,700 by Local Authorities in Wales, the majority of whom live in foster placements. The number of children in care in Wales increased by 24% in the five years up until March 2012 and over the last 20 years has doubled.

Children who become Looked After are likely to have experienced trauma and exposure to multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Children who become Looked After who are disabled and / or come from ethnic minority backgrounds can experience further disadvantage.

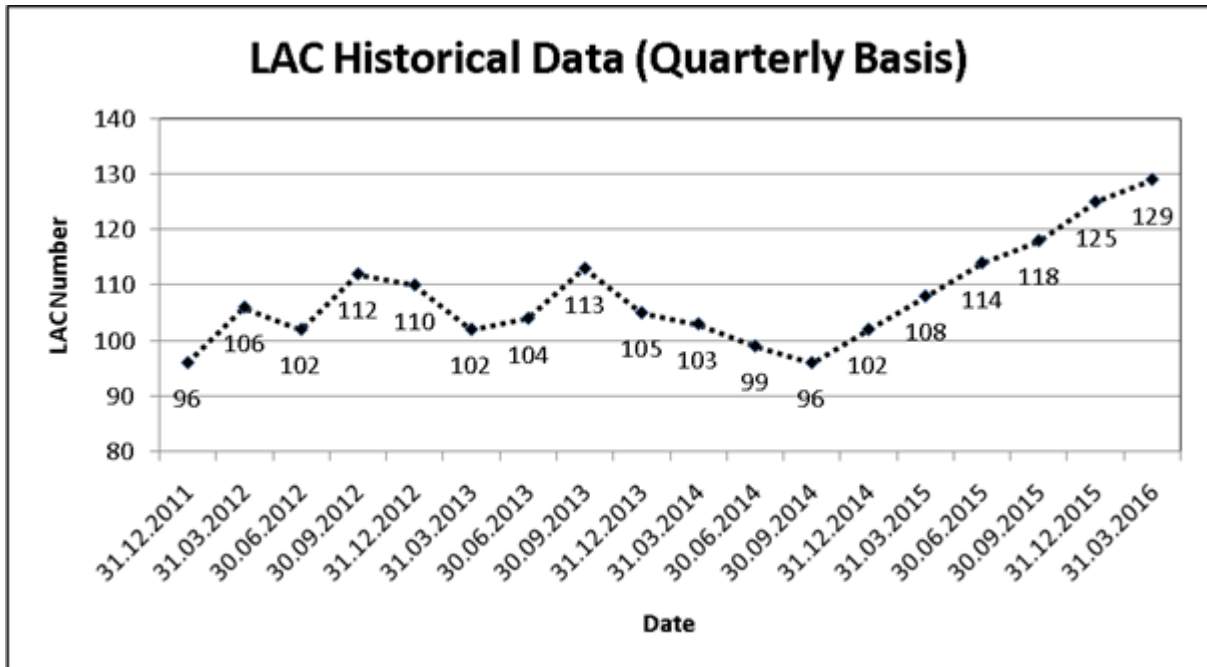
The outcomes for children and young people in care remain poor, with research indicating that this group is over represented amongst

- homeless and prison populations,
- are more likely to be offending,
- experience drug and alcohol misuse, and
- have poor mental health.

However, despite the complex needs these children and young people have, many can and do make a great success of their lives, with the right support and care. For example, in Monmouthshire, of our current cohort of care leavers # in university # in full time education # numbers employed or in apprenticeships.

## The Local Picture

As at end of September 2017 there were 147 children or young people Looked After by Monmouthshire Council and 35 care leavers. This represents a significant increase over the last five years.



Graph to update

The majority are being looked after because they have experienced significant abuse or neglect, and most are subject to Care Orders made by the courts under the Children Act 1989. These orders confer Parental Responsibility on the council (shared with their parents).

### Breakdown by legal status

Legal status	April-September 2016
Section 20/Section 76	18 12%
Interim Care Order	19
Care Order	100
Placement Order	7
Ward of Court	3
Total	147

### Breakdown by age

<b>AGE</b>	<b>April-September 2017</b>	
Under 12 months	14	39
1-4 years	29	
5-10 years	45	
11-15 years	41	
16-17 years	18	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>147</b>	

### Breakdown by type of placement

<b>Type of placement</b>	<b>April-Sept 2017</b>
Generic foster carers	28
Specific foster carers	30
Agency foster carers	44
Placed with parents	24
Residential unit	12
Adoption	4
Independence	5
total	147

### Breakdown by time looked after

<b>Time LAC</b>	<b>April-Sept 2017</b>
Less than 1 year	43
1-2 years	24
2-5 years	48
5-10 years	29
10 years +	3
Total	147

Significantly, there are more children placed with foster carers working for independent fostering agencies than placed with Monmouthshire foster carers. This is something that the current strategy is seeking to address: In Monmouthshire we want children to be looked after by Monmouthshire carers and, whenever possible, to remain within the geographical boundaries of Monmouthshire, closer to their home and communities. We believe that this is the best way of achieving best outcomes for our looked after children, and is the reason why we have added this to our Corporate Parenting priorities.



## Review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan 2014 – 2017

The current strategy and action plan is built on a review and appraisal of the previous 3 years and through consultation with key stakeholders. This includes Corporate Panel Members, the young people's participation group, foster carers, operational social worker teams and SLT. The review recognises that whilst some real progress has been made in some areas, in others changes have been harder to sustain. The context is ever changing both in terms of the legislative framework and in terms of the operational services that are tasked with delivering against many of the identified objectives.

The key outcomes from the review are set out below:

### **Key Achievements**

- Members 'Introduction to Corporate Parents' was updated and carried out as part of the induction programme for the new administration
- Consideration of Corporate Parenting responsibilities is now required in all reports for Cabinet or Full Council.
- There is a good understanding and awareness of Corporate Parenting through SLT and across the Local Authority directorates. Actions around Looked After children feature in Service Improvement Plans other than Social Care.
- The council has evaluated initial apprenticeship programmes and has strengthened the operational leadership of this. There is a post created in Enterprise to support 16 – 18 year old care leavers with education, training and employment.
- We have a team of dedicated and committed foster carers in Monmouthshire, who have a good network of support through FC4FC.
- There is a training programme in place for foster carers.
- Members of the Placement and Support team are trained in attachment based practice to help them support foster carers.
- There is support in place for generic and kinship carers through the BASE.
- BASE is well established and helps ensure that the emotional and psychological needs of Looked After children, young people and care leavers are understood and met.
- Educational achievement #####
- A SGO support worker is in place to support carers and the impact of this is being evaluated.
- TLCY and enterprise continue to provide extra curriculum activities to our Looked After Children, young people.
- The Fostering Project is in place to support the recruitment and retention of Monmouthshire foster carers.

### **Barriers and Challenges**

- The achievements of our Looked After children, young people and care leavers are not as well recognised or celebrated at a corporate level as we would want.
- The young people's participation group is not as well-developed as we would

wish at this point. There is a desire to increase the support of and the link between Corporate Panel Members and members of the participation group.

- We do not have sufficient Monmouthshire carers and remain overly reliant on independent foster agencies.
- There is still a shortage of positive support and accommodation choices for care leavers.
- Foster carers do not always find training easy to access and training can be inconsistent.
- There is still work to do to ensure that all members understand their roles as Corporate Parents.
- Life-story work is still not routinely in place with all looked after children.

### The Changing Context

- Numbers of Looked After Children continues to increase
- The number of kinship carers continue to increase
- There is a strong drive at national level to increase the regional alignment of fostering services through the National Fostering Framework
- The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 has been implemented.
- Advocacy services are now commissioned regionally.

### How the strategy will be delivered, monitored and evaluated

The Corporate Parenting strategy includes an action plan to support implementation of its aims and objectives. Where actions have been brought forward or amended from the previous action plan this is indicated. Measures have been put in place where possible, so that Corporate Panel members have an evidence base through which progress can be monitored. Implementation will be monitored and evaluated by the Corporate Parenting Panel on a 6-monthly basis. The Corporate Parenting Panel will present an annual report to Full Council on progress.

Terms of Reference and Membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel is at annexe 1

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No.	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who is responsible?	How will we measure progress?
1. B/Fwd	Increase elected members understanding of their responsibilities as Corporate Parents	Induct all elected members  Hold annual corporate parenting members' seminar  Present annual report on Corporate Parenting to Full Council.	Lead Member for Children and Young People  HoS	# elected members inducted  # elected members attending corporate parenting seminar  Dates of annual reports to council
2. B/Fwd (amended)	Ensure that consideration of Corporate Parenting responsibilities remains high profile within the Council's Senior Management Team	Represent the rights of LAC and Care Leavers at SLT  Annual reports	Chief Officer SCH	Dates of annual reports
3. B/Fwd	Celebrate the achievements of looked after children, care leavers and our foster carers.	Introduce programme of individual achievement awards  Host an achievement event	Youth / Enterprise leads together with Children's Services with the support of Corporate Parenting Panel and Foster Carer reps	Awards made  Date of event

4. B/fwd	Ensure that children and young people in care and care leavers have a voice, are heard and can influence service development	Support the development of young people's participation group  Implement LAC survey and respond to outcomes	Youth lead working with Team Manager, Long-Term Support	Annual report from participation group
5. New	Ensure that all Looked After Children and young people are offered advocacy through an 'active offer'	Promote the 'active offer' within social work teams and foster carers	HoS  NYAS	# active offers  # LAC / Care leavers involved in advocacy
6. B/Fwd	Make every effort to avoid unnecessary changes of placement.	Training, supervision and support for foster carers both 'practical' and 'psychological'.  Ensure good practice around matching processes.	Service Manager, Managed Care	# of unplanned placement moves / placement breakdowns
7. B/Fwd	Improve support available to Special Guardians	Review of SGO policy and practice and implement new arrangements	Service Manager, Managed Care	# SGO support plans  # SGO breakdowns and reasons
8. New	Ensure that adoption processes and adoption support is in place and working well	Ensure that operational link with SEWAS is working well	Service Manager, Managed Care working with SEWAS	SEWAS annual report including # of POs made and # of adoptions achieved

9. New	Increase the number of LAC placements with Monmouthshire Foster Carers	Implement the objectives of the fostering project	Service Manager, Managed Care working with the fostering project board	# increase in placements with Monmouthshire carers
10. New	Increase the options for support and accommodation for care leavers including 'When I am Ready' placements	Implementation of the LAC / commissioning strategy Where I am Safe  Implement outcomes from the IPC review	Service Manager, Managed Care working with Lead Commissioner for CS	# Care Leavers experiencing period of homelessness or living in unsuitable accommodation
11. B/Fwd	Ensure that all children have a good understanding of their own "life-story" – why they live where they do and what the plans for their future are.	Ensure Support Workers, Social Workers and Foster Carers have skills and confidence in completing life-story work.	Service Manager, Managed Care	TBC
12. B/Fwd	Narrow the gap of educational achievement between looked after children and their peers	Ensure PEPs are completed within timescales; are of high quality and based on a multi-disciplinary approach	Inclusion Manager CYP	# (%) children reaching expected levels at key-stage
13. B/Fwd (amended)	Ensure that all looked after children and care leavers are fully supported to engage in education,	Ensure that Pathway Plans are implemented through a partnership approach	Enterprise Leads together with Team Manager Long-Term Support	# (%) of care leavers who are in education, training or employment

	training or employment post-16			
14. B/Fwd (amended)	Ensure the health needs of LAC and young people are met	Undertake LAC health assessments  Ensure that Health records and information travels with children moving placements or entering care	Lead Nurse for LAC ABUHB	# LAC health assessments completed on time  Annual report
15. B/Fwd (amended)	Promote good emotional health and safe behaviours amongst all our looked after children.	Support carers in meeting the emotional needs of LAC and young people  Ensure LAC and young people have access to psychological and therapeutic support	Service Manager, Managed Care working with Family Support services and BASE	
16. B/fwd (amended)	Ensure that all LAC and Care Leavers have access to a full range of 'extra-curriculum' activities	Support carers and young people to access activities and events as identified based on understanding of children / young people's interests and potential	Service Manager, Managed Care working with youth, enterprise and leisure leads and schools	# LAC / Care leavers participating in clubs and events

Annexe 1



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