

SUBJECT: CORPORATE PARENTING

MEETING: COUNCIL

DATE: 24th October 2019

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

NON-PUBLICATION - NA

1. PURPOSE:

To provide elected members with a summary of the work and activity of the Corporate Parenting Panel at the 'half-way point' with regards to the objectives within the Corporate Parenting Strategy (2018 – 2021).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Council Members:

- Note the work and activity of the Corporate Parenting Panel over the last period within the context of the Corporate Parenting Strategy;
- Endorse the on-going work of the Corporate Parenting Panel towards the objectives identified within the Strategy;
- Consider the implications for all elected members and the wider council.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Background and Context

All Councillors have a special responsibility as Corporate Parents to ensure that all Looked After Children within our County have the opportunity to live a safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling life.

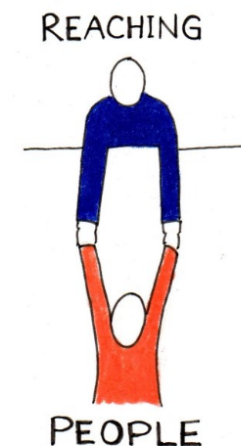
As at end of September 2019 there were 190 children who were 'looked after' in a range of placements including foster care, kinship care, placed with parents, supported living arrangements and in residential settings.

Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is the core legislation which underpins the corporate parenting duty. Section 78 states that it is the Council's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child it looks after, and every care leaver. Once a child is in care all elected members and officers of the local authority, as corporate parents, need to be concerned about that child.

The current Corporate Parenting Strategy (2018 – 2021) was endorsed by the Council in June 2018 (see appendix 1).

The strategy is set around 9 priority areas:

- 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



The delivery of the strategy is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Terms of Reference and membership for the Panel are set out at appendix 2 and 3.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy set out an action plan to support implementation of its strategic aims and objectives. The action plan has shaped the panel's activities and agenda over the last 18 months, a summary of which is provided below.

3.2 Activity and evaluation of progress of the current action plan

Of the 16 areas of activity set out in 2018, I have evaluated 9 of these as 'amber' and 7 'green' with no 'red' areas of activity.

Amber indicates that there are still some clear actions that can be achieved in the next period. Green indicates that the initial actions are complete; however, in most cases the nature of the activity means that it is on-going.

Overall the evaluation indicates that at this half-way point of the current strategy satisfactory progress is being made.

No.	What will we do?	Activity / Achievements	Measures / Evaluation	RAG
1.	Increase elected members understanding of their responsibilities as Corporate Parents	Corporate Parenting Training was offered to elected members in July 2017 (7 attended), January 2019 (7 attended) and July 2019 (3 attended).	17 members have received corporate parenting training	
2.	Ensure that consideration of Corporate Parenting responsibilities remains high profile within the Council's Senior Management Team	Impact of any council decisions are evaluated for impact on Looked After Children		
3.	Celebrate the achievements of looked after children, care leavers and our foster carers.	A celebration and consultation event was held at Hilston Park in October 2018	Planning for the next event is underway	
4.	Ensure that children and young people in care and care leavers have a voice, are heard and can influence service development	A care leavers consultation evening was held in March 2019. Outcomes and actions arising were presented to the panel in July 2019	Timing of meetings need to be reviewed to ensure care leaver representation at panel.	
5.	Ensure that all Looked After Children and young people are offered advocacy through an 'active offer'	There are systems in place to ensure that the active offer for advocacy is made. NYAS are represented at the Corporate Parenting Panel and provide reports into the activity regarding referrals, take up and outcomes of children and young people using advocacy.	Q1 showed an increase in referrals from the previous quarter - from 54 to 61	
6.	Make every effort to avoid unnecessary changes of placement.	Placement moves remain well within WG targets	There was a slight increase in children with 3 or more placement moves from 2018 to 2019 (5.76% to 6.94%)	
7.	Improve support available to Special Guardians	Children's Services have used ICF money to provide additional support to kinships carers	Report to be provided to Corporate Parenting Panel	
8.	Ensure that adoption processes and adoption support is in place and working well	The panel receives the annual report from the South East Wales Adoption Service.	3 adoption orders were granted in 2018- 2019	

9.	Increase the number of LAC placements with Monmouthshire Foster Carers	<p>The Fostering Project work remains high profile across the county. Including 2 Foster Carer 'Thank-you' events.</p> <p>There continues to be a steady increase in Monmouthshire carers both generic and kinship carers.</p>	<p>Generic carers increased from 25 (2018) to 29 (2019)</p> <p>Kinships carers increased from 30 (2018) to 36 (2019)</p>	
10.	Increase the options for support and accommodation for care leavers including 'When I am Ready' placements	<p>There is a worker in place to promote When I am Ready placements and supported lodging placements.</p> <p>The needs of care leavers are considered within the Children's Services Commissioning Strategy (due at Panel Nov 2019)</p>	2 out of 55 care leavers (aged 16 – 24) experienced homelessness in 2019	
11.	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.	Life-story work for all children who are looked after has a high profile within Children's Service.	A presentation on Life-Story work within Children's Services is due at panel in November 2019	
12.	Narrow the gap of educational achievement between looked after children and their peers	<p>Challenges remain for the Local Authority to ensure that clusters use the Pupil Development Grant effectively to 'close' the gap for children who have ALN or who are in the PRU provision.</p> <p>Further work is also required to ensure that PEPs are completed to a good quality.</p>	2019 data not yet received – due at panel Nov 2019	
13.	Ensure that all looked after children and care leavers are fully supported to engage in education, training or employment post-16	<p>Some recent achievements of care leavers are listed at point.</p> <p>Care leavers consultation indicated that further work was needed to grow 'real jobs' following training and apprenticeships.</p> <p>This is being addressed via Enterprise. The Council may wish</p>	The numbers of care leavers who are in education, training or employment have remained stable, with the needs of individuals being addressed on a 1:1 basis.	

		to consider how this could be supported in the future.		
14.	Ensure the health needs of LAC and young people are met		100% children who are looked after were registered with a GP within 10 days of placement 73.3 % of children who are looked after were seen by dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after (on target)	
15.	Promote good emotional health and safe behaviours amongst all our looked after children.	BASE provides therapeutic support to our looked after children and their carers. Children's Services have recently used ICF money to support the expansion of BASE. The panel receives an annual report of the work undertaken by BASE.	14 children currently open for direct work at BASE 10 carers receiving on-going support	
16.	Ensure that all LAC and Care Leavers have access to a full range of 'extra-curriculum' activities	This was discussed at panel together with the Independent Reviewing Officer. Any individual barriers to accessing extra-curriculum activity is addressed on an individual basis.		

3.3 Care Leavers Consultation Event

In March 2019 care leavers were invited to meet with members of the corporate parenting panel.

Care leavers were consulted on the 9 Priority Areas and asked for feedback:

- What are we doing OK at?
- Where do we need to improve?
- Ideas about what would help

The outcomes from the event were collated and presented to panel at the July meeting with representation from 2 care leavers. There were some strong themes arising from the event notably the loneliness and isolation that some care leavers can experience; the need to better prepare children who are looked after for independent living; the need to do all that we can to support care leavers into full and permanent employment.



Actions were identified as set out in appendix 4. These actions will go on to inform the work of the panel over the next period and potentially the subsequent Corporate Parenting Strategy.

3.4 Key Achievements

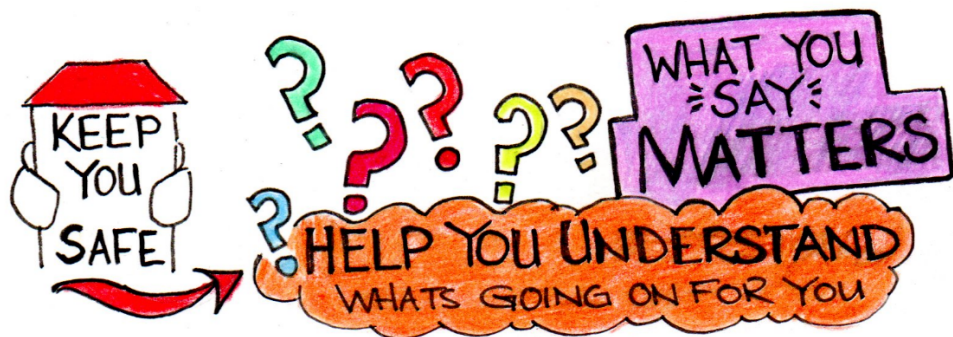
Foster carers 'thank-you' events were held in June 2018 at Caldicot Castle and at Usk show in September 2019. This gave panel members the opportunity to extend thanks to all Monmouthshire's foster carers in recognition of the wonderful work that they do. The intention is for this to be an annual occurrence.



FC4FC continues to run activities and events and provide opportunities for informal network and support between carers. There is representation on the panel from FC4FC and a regular report is received. This provides further opportunity for consultation and feedback to the panel directly from carers.

At Christmas time 2018 a huge effort was made from within Children's Services, across the Council and from some local sponsors to ensure that any child / young person who was in need would receive some Christmas presents. Work is underway to replicate this for Christmas 2019.

The LAC celebration event in October 2018 was attended by 18 children and young people and was lots of fun. As an initial 'tester' event this provided the panel with some good ideas about how to make this better next time particularly with some more age differentiated activities. Planning is now underway for a further event in Spring 2020. It is hoped that this sort of event will take place bi-annually.



Planning for Success training has been commenced to support foster carers and social workers in supporting children who are looked after to succeed at school. Training sessions have included Provision, Personal Education Plans and LAC funding; Attendance, behaviour and exclusions; Additional Learning Needs and Emotional Literacy.

Following the care leavers consultation event, care leavers residing in Monmouthshire now have access to a free leisure pass.

Children's Services aim to keep panel members informed about some of the achievements of our care leavers, many of whom achieve full independence despite the many adversities and challenges they have faced.

Whilst there are too many to list, some of the notable recent achievements include:

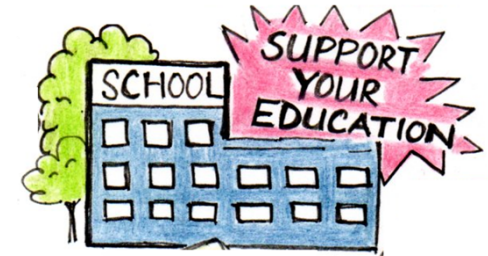
- One young person graduated with a First Class with Honours in Theological Studies in Philosophy and Ethics and received the Faculty of Humanities Dean's Award for Achievement
- One young person recently graduated in psychology studies and has already secured employment
- One young person returned to Higher Education to study social sciences
- One young person went to Africa on a volunteering programme where she help set up a school for orphan's and helped with a protected wildlife programme
- One young person is starting Bristol University to do a law degree.
- One young person is just starting an access course which again hopefully will lead to a university place.
- One young person is in the third year of a carpentry apprenticeship.

3.5 Next Steps

Over the next 18 months, the Corporate Parenting panel will continue to work towards the objectives within the current strategy, additionally incorporating actions arising from consultation events.

Some key actions for the panel over the next period include:

- Host a further Corporate Parenting training session for elected members
- Host a second celebration and consultation event for children who are looked after
- Induct care leavers as members of the panel
- Host a second consultation event for care leavers
- Receive and contribute to the Children's Services commissioning strategy in the light of care leavers consultation
- Gain a clearer understanding of the quality and impact of Personal Education Plans for Looked After children
- Generate and support ideas for how to promote employment opportunities for care leavers.



4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

No other options were considered.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation measures are set out in the action plan at appendix 1 and have been included where possible in the current report.

6. REASONS:

The Council has a statutory requirement to define how it will respond to the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child it looks after, and every care leaver, not only within Children's Services but through the involvement of the whole council.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no core financial implications required to implement the strategy. A range of potential avenues will be explored to financially support aspects of the strategy around specific events and activities for young people or carers. Officer and Member time is required to ensure the effective implementation of the strategy.

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

See attached at Appendix 5

9. CONSULTEES:

Who	Mechanism	Outcome
Corporate Parenting Panel Members	Discussed at panel Sept 2019	Report content and ideas discussed
Care Leavers Group	Consultation Event March 2019	See appendix

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan 2018 – 2021 (appendix 1)

Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference (Appendix 2)

Corporate Parenting Panel Membership (Appendix 3)

Summary of outcomes and actions from care leavers consultation (Appendix 4)

Annual Director's Report



Social Care & Health: Directors Report

This report is about people. The people we support, the people we work with and those that partner with us.

[Go to this
Sway](#)

11. AUTHOR:

Jane Rodgers, Head of Children's Services

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644054

E-mail: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk