

Subject:	Corporate Parenting
DIRECTORATE:	Social Care & Health
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	17th July 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To bring forward a recommendation from the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel that cabinet approve adoption of the Corporate Parenting Charter.
- 1.2 To set out the principles of the Corporate Parenting Charter launched by Welsh Government in September 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

For Cabinet to approve the adoption of the Corporate Parenting Charter.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Corporate parenting promotes the collective responsibility of local authorities to safeguard and promote the rights and life chances of care experienced children and young people. Supporting care experienced children and young people through their childhoods, and as they leave care, should be the responsibility of all public sector bodies (Corporate Parenting Charter: A Promise for Wales, Welsh Government 2023).
- 3.2 The Corporate Parenting Charter was developed in collaboration with care-experienced young people and was officially launched by the Welsh Government in September 2023. The Government is asking public sector bodies to sign-up to the charter to show their commitment

to promoting the rights and life chances of children and young people with care experience. Public bodies are not restricted to Local Authorities but include health authorities, the Police, regulators and third sector organisations amongst others. To date there are 13 Local Authorities in Wales that have signed-up to the charter.

3.3 The charter is a set of principles and promises aligned to United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The principles should be followed when providing services to care-experienced children and young people.

As set out in the charter the principles are:

Equality – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC)

Eradicate Stigma – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)

Togetherness – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).

Support – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information an training. •

Ambition – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31). •

Nurture – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25). •

Good Health – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39). •

A Stable Home – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).

A Good Education – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29). •

Thrive – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able to make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29). •

Lifelong – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children's best interests (Article 3)

3.4 The Corporate Parenting Charter sets out 9 promises which are described as something all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people.

The promises within the charter are:

We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.

We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.

We will involve all experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.

We will keep all care experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.

We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.

We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.

We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.

We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.

We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.

3.5 The council has a Corporate Parenting Strategy in place which was endorsed by Council on 18th May 2023. The strategy sets out 9 priority areas for how the council will support and

promote the life chances of children with care experience. The implementation of the strategy is overseen by the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel.

3.6 The priorities within the Council's Corporate Parenting strategy align closely with the principles and promises laid out in the charter. The charter would not supersede the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy, but would reinforce and compliment it. At the same time, signing-up to the charter would publicly demonstrate the Council's commitment to supporting children with care experience and young people leaving care.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION

4.1 Children who are looked after by the local authority will already have been placed at a disadvantage when they come into care, and are likely to have been exposed to significant adversity. By signing-up to the Charter the council is demonstrating its commitment to overcoming the disadvantages faced by children and young people with care experience. Adhering to the promises and principles within the charter will help to make Monmouthshire a fairer and more equitable county and provide a framework for Monmouthshire County Council to promote the rights and wellbeing of children and young people with care experienced.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Cabinet could choose not to adopt the charter. This would not materially affect the Council's commitment to promoting the life chances of children and young people with care experience, as this is already established through the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

5.2 The option of adopting the charter, as proposed within this report, presents an opportunity to add to the collective voice at a national level, of the need to recognise and uphold the rights of children and young people with care experience as a uniquely disadvantaged group within society.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

There are no evaluation measures identified within the charter.

7. REASONS

- 7.1 The charter has been developed collaboratively and is seen as an important set of commitments and promises made by Welsh Government to care experienced children and young people.
- 7.2 Welsh Government is actively championing the charter and encouraging adoption of the charter by all Local Authorities and other public bodies in Wales
- 7.3 The promises and principles within the Welsh Government charter compliment the intentions and priorities of the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Signing the charter would be cost neutral to the Local Authority.

9. Consultees

- 9.1 The corporate parenting charter was discussed at the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel on 23rd October 2023. There was unanimous support that a recommendation should be made for Cabinet to adopt the charter.
- 9.2 A number of care experienced young people are actively engaged in the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel and have followed the work of the development of the charter. This group of young people are keen to see Monmouthshire adopt the charter.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Monmouthshire Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 – 2025 presented at Full Council 18th May 2023
- Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales “A SHARED PARENTING PLEDGE” (Welsh Government) and The Principles of Corporate Parenting <https://www.gov.wales/corporate-parenting-charter>

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