

SUBJECT: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025 - 2028

MEETING: Council

DATE: 5th March 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To present to the Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2025-2028 including performance against the previous Corporate Parenting strategy 2022 - 2025 and an updated Action Plan for 2025 – 2028.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorses the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan for 2025-2028.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Part 6 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014) sets out the duties of the Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of care experienced children and young people (including children looked after and care leavers).

3.2 As of end of January 2026, there were 204 children looked after by the Local Authority including 16 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Children in the care of the Local Authority reside in a range of placements including foster care, residential care (both independently commissioned or in-house placements); placed with family / friends (kinship care) or placed with parents. The majority of children are placed under statutory orders with a smaller number of children placed under voluntary arrangements. When a child is in care (under a statutory order) the Local Authority shares Parental Responsibility (PR) with the parents and has the majority PR.

3.3 The strategy seeks to articulate the vision of the Council in relation to Care Experienced children and young people and clarifies the responsibilities of the Officers of the Council and County Councillors when considering the rights of Children Looked After and Care Experienced young people.

3.4 The strategy sets out the local picture in relation to the trends and changes of Monmouthshire's Children Looked After population and provides an overview of the national context including changes in legislation and governmental policy where relevant. The commentary on key achievements and next steps is the basis for the revised Action Plan to cover the next 3 year period (appendix 1 a).

3.5 The Council's Corporate Parenting Panel is the cross-party body responsible for ensuring that the council, together with its partners, acts as a "good parent" to all care experienced children and young people. One of the panel's core functions is to oversee the delivery of the action plan and ensure that care experienced children and young people receive the best possible care and support, and that their personal wellbeing outcomes are achieved.

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

4.1 The strategy is concerned with the rights of care experienced children and young people, who fall into a protected characteristic by virtue of their age. The strategy recognizes that every child is individual and that children require placements that support their sense of identity and self-worth. The strategy emphasizes the progress that has been achieved over recent years regarding increasing the availability of local placements through the development of residential provision and enhancing the support provided to in-house foster carers. As well as retaining children in Wales this helps to support local employment opportunities. The strategy recognizes the central importance of helping young people to develop the independence, skills and personal resilience they will need to live fulfilled and happy lives.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Not applicable

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

6.1 The report provides a review of the Corporate Parenting previous action plan (2022 – 2025) including key milestones, and offers key data to support analysis of service level performance. Key actions for the next period are set out in the action plan for 2025 – 2028).

7. REASONS:

7.1 The strategy is not a statutory requirement but is developed so that elected members and officers of the Council have a clear understanding of the collective roles and responsibilities towards the children in Monmouthshire's care and those who leave the care system.

7.2 The report offers an opportunity to review and scrutinise the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the wider service areas and partners that are represented.

7.3 Presenting the strategy to council presents an opportunity for members to contribute to the development of services and activities that support the wellbeing of care experienced children.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no additional resources implications associated with the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

9. CONSULTEES:

9.1 Consultation of the draft strategy and action plan took place with:

- Corporate Parenting Panel Members
- Children Services Directorate Management Team
- Lead Member for Social Care, Safeguarding & Accessible Health Services.

9.2 The draft Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan was scrutinised by the People Scrutiny Committee on 24th February 2026. The following issues were discussed:

- The extent to which young people were involved in the development of the strategy. Members were informed that engagement with young people is ongoing and has informed the development of the strategy and action plan in a wider sense. Cabinet members attend the specific engagement events that are held to hear directly from young people about their experiences.
- The approach to the recruitment of foster carers in terms of challenges around meeting targets in previous years.
- The reasons behind increased complexity in children's needs.
- The role and importance of connected and kinship carers.
- The development of private residential homes within Monmouthshire.
- Performance regarding unplanned changes in placements.
- The importance of supporting children's cultural identify.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. AUTHOR:

Diane Corrister

Head of Children Services Monmouthshire

E-mail: dianecorrister@monmouthshire.gov.uk