

Effective Corporate Parenting

Self-Assessment tool

- It is recommended that the self-assessment is completed by the Chair and/or members of the Corporate Parenting Board (either individually or as a collective). It may be helpful to nominate someone from outside of the CPB to facilitate completion as required.
- The tool can be used to self-assess against all the principles or can be adapted to support focus on specific areas.

Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers

Principle 1: to act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people.

Rationale: All good parents take account of their children's best interests and health and well-being. This is integral to a culture and attitude where investing in the quality of relationships with looked-after children and care leavers is recognised as of crucial importance. Young people will feel listened to, understood and supported to reach their full potential.

As a Corporate Parenting Board:

Do we know ...

- That the physical and mental health needs of our children in care and care leavers are looked after?
- Whether / how care leavers can access information about their health?
- What looked-after children and young people themselves say about their health needs and priorities and how well they are met?

Do we...

- Take account of the physical, emotional and mental health needs of children in care when developing our Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Joint Health and Well-being Strategies (JHWS)?
- Ensure that we and our partners consider the needs of looked after children and care leavers when commissioning services for all children?
- Ensure that health assessments and dental checks are carried out on time?
- Receive regular reports on the health needs and outcomes of children in care?

Evidence:

Where are we now?

Analysis:

What are our strengths?

What are our areas for development?

The Voice of Children in Care and Care Leavers

Principle 2: to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

Principle 3: to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people

Rationale: Encouraging the views, wishes and feelings of looked-after children and care leavers and listening to them is fundamental to being a good corporate parent. This underpins how local authorities can deliver high quality care and pathway planning for looked-after children and care leavers. Their involvement in care planning is essential.

As a Corporate Parenting Board:**Do we know...**

- Whether our children have positive and stable relationships with professionals and carers who are committed to protecting them and promoting their welfare?
- The mechanisms professionals use to encourage children in care and care leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings?

Do we...

- Ensure that children in care and care leavers understand their rights, entitlements and responsibilities?

- Ensure that we hear the views and wishes of a diverse range of Children in care and care leavers, including through the Children in Care council?
- Use this to plan our work strategically?
- Ensure voices and feedback on services, feed into service reviews?

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Aspiration and Achievement

Principle 4: to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority/ partners

Principle 5: to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people

Rationale: It is important that high ambitions and aspirations for children in care and care leavers are set. Local Authorities and their partners should ask, would it be good enough for my one child? As corporate parents, local authorities should have regard to the need to help the children they look after and care leavers to secure the services they need.

As a Corporate Parenting Board:

Do we know...

- Whether children and young people attend school and make good educational progress at school or other provision whilst in our care?
- The quality of Personal Education Planning (whether all children in care have a Personal Education Plan? Whether these plans been reviewed and audited for their quality, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness?)
- How effective the Virtual School service is and what impact has it had?
- The quality of support children and young people receive - whether they receive the same support from their carers as they would from a good parent?

Do we...

- Ensure that the children in our care have accesses to the services that they need?
- Ensure that children and young people have access to a range of social, educational, and recreational opportunities?
- Demonstrate that as corporate parents, we have high aspirations for all children in our care?

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Quality, Planning, Stability and Permanence

Principle 6: for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work

Rationale: Children in care and care leavers need to feel and be safe, to have stability in their lives including in their education and work and to build resilience by forging strong and trusted relationships. As Corporate Parents, you need to strive to ensure there is continuity of support and relationships.

As a Corporate Parenting Board:

Do we know...

- About the quality of activity around children in care and the impact for children and young people:
 - How stable, safe and secure the lives of our children are while they are in our care?
 - Whether children and young people become looked after in a timely manner and with their best interests in mind?
 - Whether the process and planning that is involved when a child comes into care is robust?
 - Whether plans for their future are appropriate and ambitious?

Do we...

- Act to improve the experience of children in our care and ensure that they are provided with:
 - Good quality permanence plans where it is not possible for them to return home?
 - Quality support for their family where the plan is for them to return home, to ensure their safety?
 - The ability to have their wishes and feelings taken into account, and those of their parents?
 - Safe, stable and secure placements where they are placed outside of the local authority?
 - A sufficiently wide range and choice of available placements to ensure their needs can be met?
 - Well trained and supported carers who can give them high-quality, safe and stable care that meets their diverse needs?
 - A match to the right family through a strong system of effective fostering and adoption panels, supported by the respective decision-makers.

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Care Leavers and Transition

Principle 7: to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

Care leavers are also considered in all other Principles

Rationale: Children in care need support to transition to adulthood and care leavers need support to live independent lives

As a Corporate Parenting Board:

Do we know...

- The quality of support young people leaving care receive to access housing, tenancies, employment, benefits, further and higher education and training and the impact it has?

Do we...

- Act to improve the experience of young people who are leaving or have left our care and ensure that they are provided with:
 - Timely, effective pathway plans which address their needs and are ambitious for them?
 - Support to develop the skills and confidence they need to maximise their chances of successful maturity to adulthood and to achieve well in their adult lives?
 - The right level of practical, emotional and financial support until they are at least 21 and, when necessary, until they are 25?
 - All key documents they need to begin their lives as young adults, such as national insurance numbers, birth certificates and passports?

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Governance and Board Effectiveness

Rationale: Strong corporate parenting means strong leadership, challenge and accountability at every level. How the governance framework facilitates effective corporate parenting is key. How the council fulfils its responsibilities and champions the needs and aspirations of Children in Care and Care Leavers

As a Corporate Parenting Board:**Do we...**

- Have high standards of parenting and high ambition for the children in our care and those who are leaving or who have left our care, which informs how we deliver our corporate parenting role?
- Have a shared vision for improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers?
- Ensure a strategic approach to corporate parenting is reflected in joint working and planning arrangements?
- Do we champion and promote good corporate parenting across our strategic networks to strengthen and increase engagement?
- Ensure all corporate parents understand their role?
- Know how the Corporate Parenting Board work with others in the system, such as Scrutiny, Health and wellbeing board, Local Safeguarding Children Partnership and others?
- Understand the Governance Framework for Children's Services?
- Ensure the Corporate Parenting Board functions effectively and has a positive impact on the wellbeing of children in care and care leavers?
- Ensure that board discussions reflect the voices of children in care and care leavers?

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