

TITLE OF REPORT: Corporate Parenting Board Update

REPORT OF: Andrea Houlahan, Deputy Strategic Director,
Children's Social Care and Early Help

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update following the Corporate Parenting Board meeting which was held on 1 March 2022.

Policy Context

What is Corporate Parenting

1. Corporate parenting operates at strategic, operational, and individual levels. It has three key elements:
 - A statutory duty, detailed in the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, on all parts of a local authority to co-operate in promoting the welfare of children and young people looked after, and a duty on other partners and agencies to co-operate in fulfilling that duty.
 - Co-ordinating the activities of the many different professionals and carers who are involved in a child or young person's life and taking a strategic, child centred approach to the delivery of services.
 - Shifting the emphasis from "corporate" to "parenting", making sure our moral and statutory responsibilities towards children looked after and care leavers are being fulfilled.

Legislative Framework

2. Local authorities must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their functions in relation to children looked-after and care leavers as set out in the guidance.

The Corporate Parenting Principles

3. The Corporate Parenting Principles set out seven fundamental requirements for looked after children and care leavers, as follows:
 - To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
 - To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
 - To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
 - To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
 - For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
 - To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living
4. Gateshead Council has a unique responsibility to children who are cared for by the authority and care leavers as their 'corporate parents'. As such, the Council has legal and moral responsibilities towards them and as a corporate parent should carry out many of the roles a parent would. We must aspire to provide everything a loving parent does and should still be able to provide our children and young people with the best possible support and care so they can achieve good outcomes in life.
 5. For the Council to be a good corporate parent, we need to have the highest ambitions for our children and young people looked after and have a 'whole council' approach to their care and upbringing, involving staff, carers, Elected Members, and partner organisations alike. We will encourage everyone to do as much as they can to make sure that children and young people feel in control of their lives and able to overcome the barriers they face.
 6. Gateshead Council has a strong commitment to corporate parenting, making it a priority for everyone as if they were our own children and young people.
 7. Whilst specific corporate parenting responsibilities do not apply to partner agencies, the Statutory Guidance to the Act (2018) notes that councils with the highest ambitions for looked after children and care leavers will seek to engage other agencies in meeting the needs of their young people. Gateshead Council alone cannot meet the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers and needs to work effectively with partners to implement the statutory Corporate Parenting Principles.

Corporate Parenting Board Update

8. See appendix 1 for the reports which were submitted to the board in March. These included
 - Workforce development training
 - MSET Annual Report
 - Safeguarding Children Unit - Annual Report
 - Learning from Inspections, Peer Reviews and Learning Reviews Annual Report
 - Youth Justice Service Update
 - Regional Adoption Agency Report

9. Attendance has remained strong with elected members and partner agencies. Membership includes police, health, the council's children's right officer, public health, a foster carer, the virtual school head, mental health services, Gateshead Housing, and the CCG. There continues to be a challenge in recruiting a member from the voluntary community sector.
10. The function which is to ensure that all the activity in the council continually contributes to improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in a thread throughout the agenda and meeting forward plans. The agenda will remain dynamic and be changed in response to local and national activity as required.
11. Since the last Corporate Parenting Board, the young ambassadors have delivered Corporate Parenting training to Councillor members, the session was held via teams and was very well attended. This training will be part of an annual schedule and it was agreed that the training will be expanded and delivered to CMT as well.

The Role of Partners

12. Accountability to the Corporate Parenting Board continues to be via the Corporate Partnership Group which has been established to promote a strong corporate parenting ethos and consider how services can be delivered differently to meet the needs of the care population as effectively as possible. Partnership group membership will also include a young person ambassador who will have lead responsibility for two of the sub-groups.

The Partnership Group

13. The Corporate Parenting Partnership Group is made up of colleagues from the Council, Health Services, Education, the Voluntary Sector, and other relevant organisations. This group is chaired by the Assistant Strategic Director – Social Work and the Service Manager – Looked After Children is the vice chair.
14. The group will take forward issues and decisions arising from the Corporate Parenting Board which require the engagement of operational services in and outside the council. The actions and recommendations agreed by this group will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board.
15. Further work is being undertaken to develop the partnership action plan which will be presented to the next Corporate Parenting Board in May 2022.

Conclusion

16. The Corporate Parenting Board will continue to meet every 4 months and consider pertinent activity which impacts on the children and young people of Gateshead. All information shared will be circulated to all elected members who are corporate parents.

Recommendation

17. It is requested that Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- note the contents of this report

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Appendices 1

Link to Corporate Parenting Board reports;

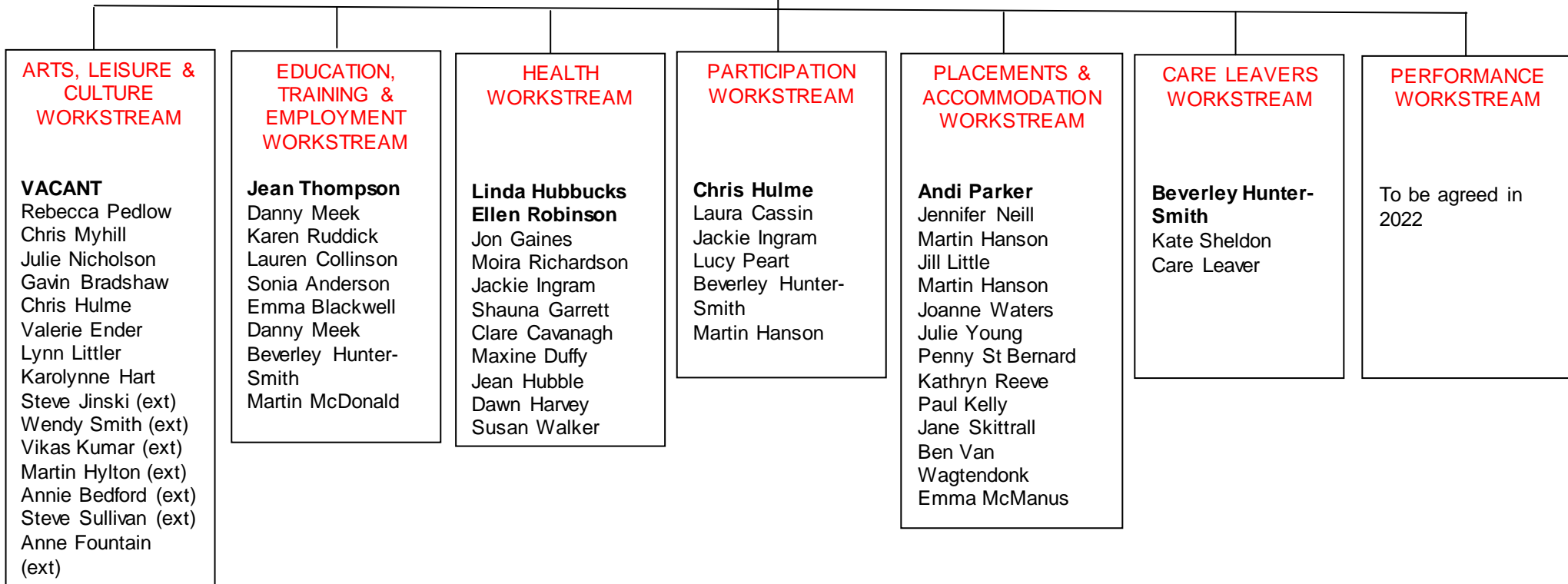
[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Corporate Parenting Board, 01/03/2022 14:00](#)

Corporate Parenting Governance Chart

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

CORPORATE PARENTING PARTNERSHIP

Chair: Deputy Strategic Director,
Children’s Social Care and Early Help
Vice Chair– Children and Families and
Service Manager – Looked After Children



Corporate Parenting Workstreams

All workstreams will be underpinned by the principles of:

- Co-production with children, young people, carers, and other stakeholders
- Focusing on the impact of any actions on the lives of children and young people in care, and Care Leavers
- Proactive solution focused approaches

Workstream	Three Key Priorities for 2021	
Education, Training & Employment	5.1a	Ensure that all Gateshead children have an effective, high quality PEP
	5.2a	Develop a process to ensure that all post-16 young people have a written career plan
	5.2b	Ensure the consistency of engagement of post-16 young people with EET and to achieve 90% attendance
Health	4.1a 4.1b	Recovery – return to face to face health assessments and access to health services including dental and identifying health needs of care leavers. Monitoring compliance with statutory timeframes via score card.
	4.1b	Strengthen provision of emotional & mental health support to meet local need and ensure that children placed at distance receive the service they require. Strengthen assessment of mental health needs on entering care.
	4.1c	Improve support and advice to reduce unplanned pregnancies and the number of babies of care leavers coming into the care system.
Participation	1.1a	Planning session for CSCMT to be delivered by young people so that they understand the current challenges faced by children and young people.
	1.1b	Voice of the Child Audit to highlight areas for development to strengthen the voice of the child in LAC reviews and explore styles of recording, consultation documents and how the IROs code participation in the process.
	1.1c	Organisation of a virtual celebration event to recognise and reward the achievements of our children and young people during the difficult pandemic period.
Placements & Accommodation	2.1e	Look at specific provision to enable CYP to reside in or return to Gateshead. This may increase Gateshead provision or work alongside it

	5.1g	Ensure work to bring CYP back into Gateshead dovetails with active work on alternative education provision
	2.1e	Develop the Shared Lives offer to work with CYP from 16yrs as an alternative to fostering and residential placements.
Care Leavers	6.1a	Develop a multi-agency Care Leavers group to consult with young people and inform and improve service delivery
	6.1a	Consult with young people regarding their transition to the Leaving care team, accommodation, and the SAILS panel process.
	6.1c	Consult with young people in relation to their awareness of their entitlements as care leavers.