

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual review of Corporate Parenting Activity 2022/2023

REPORT OF: Deputy Strategic Director, Children Social Care, Early Help and Specialist Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This is a covering report to provide an overview of the Corporate Parenting Board activity over the last 12 months and covers the period up to the end of March 2023, proposals for the forward plan (appendix 1) and work to be undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Board over the next 12 months.

POLICY CONTEXT

What is Corporate Parenting?

- 2 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority, or is under 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent.
- 3 This means that they should:
 - act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
 - encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them
 - make sure they have access to services
 - make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work
 - prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

Legislative Framework

- 4 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 statutory guidance.

Corporate Parenting Boards

- 5 As corporate parents, all councillors should seek to stay informed about children in the council's care, and care leavers. In Gateshead the Corporate Parenting Board is the mechanism for these detailed discussions. Members of the Board should use their position to raise awareness of the role amongst colleagues and provide support to the lead member for children's services.
- 6 The Board should receive regular updates and progress reports from partners about the work and services they deliver to looked after children and care leavers.

Current Situation

- 7 Gateshead's Corporate Parenting Board is currently held quarterly, and the membership is broad reaching. The board is chaired by the Children's Portfolio holder Cllr Gary Haley and membership spans across children social care, education, health, commissioning, elected council members and the voluntary sector and young ambassadors. Further work is needed to engage police and probation stakeholder in the board membership.
- 8 Over the past 12-18months the board has been revised and the corporate parenting partnership plan has been re-established and strengthened.
- 9 Six young ambassadors were recruited following proposals from the Corporate Parenting Board and have been in post for 12months. Their work plan is routinely reported into the board for consideration
- 10 The Board has been routinely appraised of the activity across services and updated on service developments and innovations, performance of services, inspections activity, partnership activity and regional and national policy changes.

Next Steps

- 11 Going forward the Corporate Parenting Board agenda has been aligned with the Corporate Parenting partnership plan and it is proposed that the forward plan for each meeting follows the one of the four themes identified in the plan.
- 12 This will enable members to have greater clarity about the work being undertaken across the partnership and in the service to address the four priorities. It will also enable robust discussions about partnership interventions and delivery of services and allow opportunities for the board to shape plans in the best interest of children and young people
- 13 It is proposed that a Corporate Parenting Board Training programme is developed with the support of our young ambassadors. Members are encouraged to engage in sessions which will enhance their understanding of the Corporate Parent Board member role.

- 14 Measuring the impact of the board is pivotal and going forward an annual report will be produced detailing the work undertaken by board members and detailing the difference this has made to children and young people.

Recommendations

- 15 Overview and Scrutiny are recommended to:
- (a) note and comment on the information provided in the report and powerpoint presentation.
 - (b) agree next step actions.

Contact:

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Appendix 1: Corporate Parenting Work Programme 2023/2024

Quarter 1

Theme 1: Supporting children and young people to remain safely at home with families / extended families; what is the evidence; what progress are we making and what are the outcomes?

MEETING DATE

6 June 2023

(deadline for reports – 26 May 2023)

To include

- Trauma Informed Care Report – **Dr Aisling Martin**
- Edge of Care Strategy – Impact of delivery plan – **Lisa Wood**
- Reunification Strategy – impact of delivery plan – **Laurie Thompson**
- Kinship Care – Impact, Supported and feedback from Kindship carers – **Claire Morris**
- Corporate Parenting Partnership Plan Update – Theme 1 – Supporting Children and Young People to remain at home with families / extended families – **Claire Morris / Laurie Thompson**
- Performance Update (theme and overall) – **Gary Lewis**
- Corporate Parenting Annual Report – **Andrea Houlahan**
- One Voice – Update on experiences; work plan and priorities – **Chris Hulme/Paige Thomason**

Quarter 2

Theme 2 – Meeting children’s needs and improving outcomes; what is the evidence; what is the progress we are making and what are the outcomes?

MEETING DATE

19 Sept 23

(deadline for reports – 11 September 2023)

To include:

- IRO Annual Report – **Paige Thomason / Heather Jenkins**
- Annual Report from Children in Care Health Team – **Ellen Robinson**
- Work to reduce children who are missing from care and support for those who are at risk of exploitation – **Lisa Wood**
- Annual Report on Achieving Early Permanence – **Victoria McKay**
- Engagement and participation of young people and how they are influencing service delivery and improvement – **Paige Thomason / Chris Hulme**
- Performance Update (theme and overall) – **Gary Lewis**
- Corporate Parenting Partnership Plan Update – Theme 2 - Meeting children’s needs and improving outcomes; what is the evidence; what progress are we making and what are the outcomes? – **Claire Morris / Laurie Thompson**
- One Voice – Update on experiences; work plan and priorities – **Chris Hulme**
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Quarter 3

Theme 3: Ensuring there are sufficient homes for out children in care and care experienced young people; what is the evidence; what progress are we making and what are the outcomes?

MEETING DATE

19 Dec 2023

(deadline for reports – 11 December 2023)

To include:

- Sufficiency Strategy Update – 6 monthly progress report – **Claire Morris**
- RAA Annual Report – **Victoria McKay / Nik Flavell**
- Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy – update to include hearing directly from foster carers about their experience – **Claire Morris**
- Corporate Parenting Partnership Plan Update – Theme 3 - Ensuring there are sufficient homes for our children in care and care experienced young people; what is the evidence; what progress are we making and what are the outcomes? **who is writing this one**
- Performance update (theme and overall) – **Gary Lewis**
- One Voice – Update on experiences; work plan and priorities – **Chris Hulme**

Quarter 4

Theme: Improving outcomes for care experienced young people; what is the evidence; what progress are we making and what are the outcomes?

MEETING DATE

5 March 2024

(deadline for reports – 26 February 2023)

To include:

- Review of Care Leaver Offer – Annual update on work of Regional Care Leaver Board – **Laurie Thompson**
- Annual Corporate Parenting Board Report – completed with young people (to go into OSC) – **Claire Morris / Laurie Thompson**
- Care Leavers Strategy – **Laurie Thompson**
- Care Leavers & Young People Presentation – **Chris Hulme**
- Performance Update (theme and overall) – **Gary Lewis**
- Virtual School Annual Report – **Linda Mason**
- One Voice – Update on experiences; work plan and priorities – **Chris Hulme**