

Report of: Sue Rumbold – Chief Officer

Report to: Inner West Community Committee

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Title: Raising awareness of what it means in practice to be a Corporate Parent and the role of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Purpose of report:

1. This report briefly outlines the role of the Corporate Parenting Board and aims to increase understanding of the role of the Children's Champion and what being a Corporate Parent means.
2. Cllr Gruen is a children's champion for the Inner West area and member of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB). In September and November members of the Corporate Parenting Board were invited to attend an induction session planned by Rob Murray (Head of Service for Looked After Children), Jancis Andrew (Head of Virtual School) and Hannah Lamplugh (Voice and Influence Lead). In December young people on the Have a Voice Council (Children in Care Council) and Care Leavers Council took over the Corporate Parenting Board. Prior to this meeting they asked members of the Corporate Parenting Board to let them know three things they planned to do as a result of the induction session. Cllr Gruen identified one of her actions would be to

“Explain the role of the CPB to the inner west community committee and ensure all reports comment on the impact on children looked after and decisions where this is relevant.”

3. We agreed the first step towards achieving this action would be to run an awareness raising session for all members of the Inner West Community Committee, using activities that were developed for the induction session and takeover meeting.

Background information:

What is corporate parenting?

4. When a child or young person cannot live with their birth family for whatever reason and becomes looked after, parental responsibility transfers to the local authority; this is referred to as corporate parenting. Although it does not have a formal legal definition, it is commonly understood to mean that officers and elected members of the local authority have a responsibility to take the same interest in the progress, attainments and wellbeing of looked after children and young people as a responsible parent could be expected to have for their own children. Corporate parenting also extends to care leavers, as the local authority retains a level of responsibility for former looked after children up to the age of 21, or 24 for those in full time education. Good corporate parenting involves championing the rights of looked after children and care leavers, and ensuring that they have access to good services and support from the local authority, partner agencies and individual lead practitioners.
5. Every elected member, when elected to represent their ward, becomes a corporate parent as part of their role. Whilst much of the responsibility for actually delivering care for looked after children and care leavers is delegated to staff within the children's workforce (crucially, this is not limited to professionals within the Children's Social Work Service, but applies to all members of staff who may come into contact with looked after children, including schools and healthcare practitioners), officers and staff within the local authority deliver services and support on behalf of their elected members.

The function and focus of the Corporate Parenting Board

6. In Leeds, our Corporate Parenting Board was originally established in 2006 and brings together elected members from all political parties and each Area Committee across the city, as well as relevant officers within the Council, and colleagues from partner agencies. The Board has recently been strengthened to focus on specific outcomes for children, young people and care leavers. Themed meetings on, for example, health or education will consider support and services for children and young people. Directors from relevant Council directorates and other agencies such as schools and NHS bodies will be invited to attend meetings so that the Board can offer scrutiny and challenge. The Corporate Parenting Board works closely with the Have a Voice Council and the Care Leavers Council. These groups are made up of children and young people who are currently looked after or who have left the care of the local authority, and they help to advise officers and members in Leeds about their experiences of the care system, and what is important to them in terms of improving the services they receive. The Have a Voice Council helped officers to develop a list of promises from the local authority to all looked after children in our care, and the Care Leaver Council helped us to implement the national Care Leavers Charter, and they have contributed to a number of senior officer recruitment processes. The Have a Voice Council meets with a Corporate Parenting Board regularly throughout the year, and the young people attending those meetings are supported to set their own agenda and co-chair the meetings with Cllr Hayden. They

also meet regularly with Cllr Hayden in the role as chair of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Key Functions of the Corporate Parenting Board

7. The board plays a vital role in holding to account the Council and wider partnership in relation to outcomes for looked after children and care leavers and also in helping to agree the strategic direction and priorities for services. It sets and oversees the work of the strategic Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) which includes third sector representatives. The board ensures that we are meeting our responsibilities to looked after children and care leavers by regularly reviewing performance data and by themed work within the meetings. The board also has direct contact with looked after children and care leavers through the annual take over day and through meetings with the Have a Voice Council and the Care Leaver Council.

8. Contextual information about the Inner West community committee area

9. The Inner West community committee area contains just under nine per cent of the Leeds under-19 population, an estimated 15,243 children and young people. There are 20 primary schools, three secondary schools, seven children’s centres, and three children’s homes within the boundaries of the Inner West community committee. 90 per cent of the primary schools are currently rated good or better by Ofsted; 67 per cent of the secondaries are rated good or better. Eighty-eight per cent of the children’s centres are rated good or better, and all three children’s homes are currently rated as ‘outstanding’.

10. 86 of the 1,240 children looked after in Leeds (end of January 2017) are ‘placed’ within the Inner West boundaries. More than half of the 86 are in a Leeds City Council foster placement, with 12 residing in one of the three children’s homes in the area. Table one provides greater detail.

11. Table one: children looked after by type of placement, at 31 January 2017

Type of placement	Inner West	Leeds Total
Foster placement with relative or friend	8	208
Leeds City Council foster placement	47	777
Childrens Home	12	64
Placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibility	9	64
Other	10	127
<i>Total</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>1240</i>

12. Data source: Frameworki (Children’s Social Work Service case management system), February 2017

12. Outcomes of the session:

- Greater awareness of the characteristics and outcomes of looked after children
- Increased understanding of what corporate parenting means in practice.
- Informed about the different levels of corporate parenting responsibility
- **Universal responsibility** – applicable to all councillors and LCC employees,
- **Targeted responsibility** e.g. Corporate Parenting Board Members, Governors
- **Specialist responsibility** e.g. the Lead Member for Children’s Services.

- More informed about number of looked after children, children's homes, Foster Carer support groups in your area.
- Received a pack of information which will include a guide on being a corporate parent, glossary of terms, information about Have a Voice Council and Care Leavers Council and the Local Authorities' promise to Looked After Children and Young People

13. Agenda for the 45 minute session:

1. Introductions and 'check in' question;
2. Outcomes of the session;
3. Quiz;
4. Roles and Responsibilities;
5. Local data, information and opportunities.

a. Consultation and engagement

The session is being planned as a result of young people asking Corporate Parents what actions they will take following their induction session.

Young people helped developed the quiz .

b. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

Leeds City Council considers equality and diversity in all aspects of care for Children Looked After.

c. Council policies and city priorities

This section is not relevant to this report.

d. Resources and value for money

This section is not relevant to this report.

e. Legal implications, access to information and call in

This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

f. Risk management

This section is not relevant to this report.

14. Conclusion

Recommendations

Members of the Inner West Community Committee use their increased knowledge and understanding of looked after children and young people and corporate parenting to consider and act on their own corporate parenting responsibilities.

At a future meeting, Cllr Gruen to explore with members of the Community Committee how future Community Committee reports could consider and record the impact of decisions on looked after children and care leavers –where this is relevant.