

Corporate Parenting Strategy



As if they were my child



Introduction

Every employee, elected member and partner agency should have concern for a child who is looked after in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child. We use the term 'Corporate Parenting' when we talk about this responsibility.

As corporate parents we must make sure that children and young people who are looked after or care experienced are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

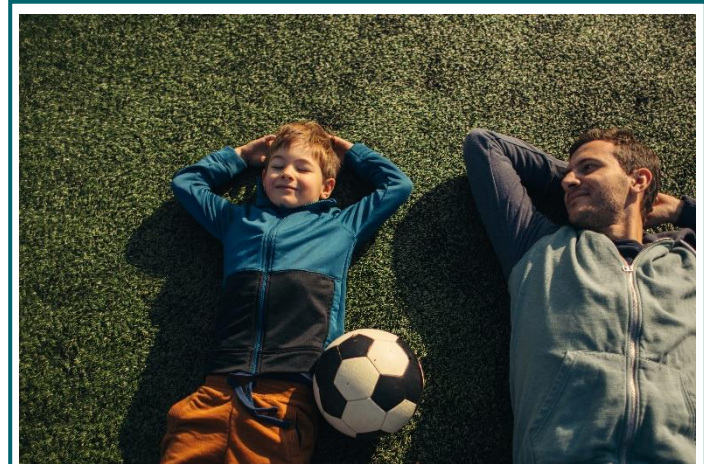
The idea of a corporate parent does not refer to a single person or point of contact, instead it is a culture and a commitment. Corporate parenting is all about providing care to children and young people so that they are supported to thrive, and they feel safe and loved.

Being a good corporate parent means we should:

- Accept responsibility for children who are looked after and make their needs a priority.
- Seek the same outcomes for these young people that any good parent would want for their own children.
- Promote the life chances of all children who are looked after, and care experienced young people.
- Consider the impact of decision making on our children who are looked after, and care experienced young people.
- Make sure that children and young people have a strong sense of belonging, ensuring that they are cared about as well as cared for.
- Be ambitious for our young people and help them develop a sense of aspiration and self-belief.

Having a Corporate Parenting Strategy is important as it will help people to be clear what they are expected to do as a corporate parent. It will also help children and young people to know what they can expect from their corporate parents.

The strategy sets out exactly what a corporate parent is, outlines our vision for corporate parenting and says what our plans are to be the best corporate parents that we can.



“Corporate parenting is everyone’s role... if you think about what all parents want, they want their children to feel safe, they want them to be healthy, they want them to have a good school, they want them to enjoy themselves and have access to the right activities and leisure; as a parent you want all those things, and that is where we as corporate parents want to get assurance.”

– David Thrussell, Head of Service,
Corporate Parenting

Our Vision, Principles and Values

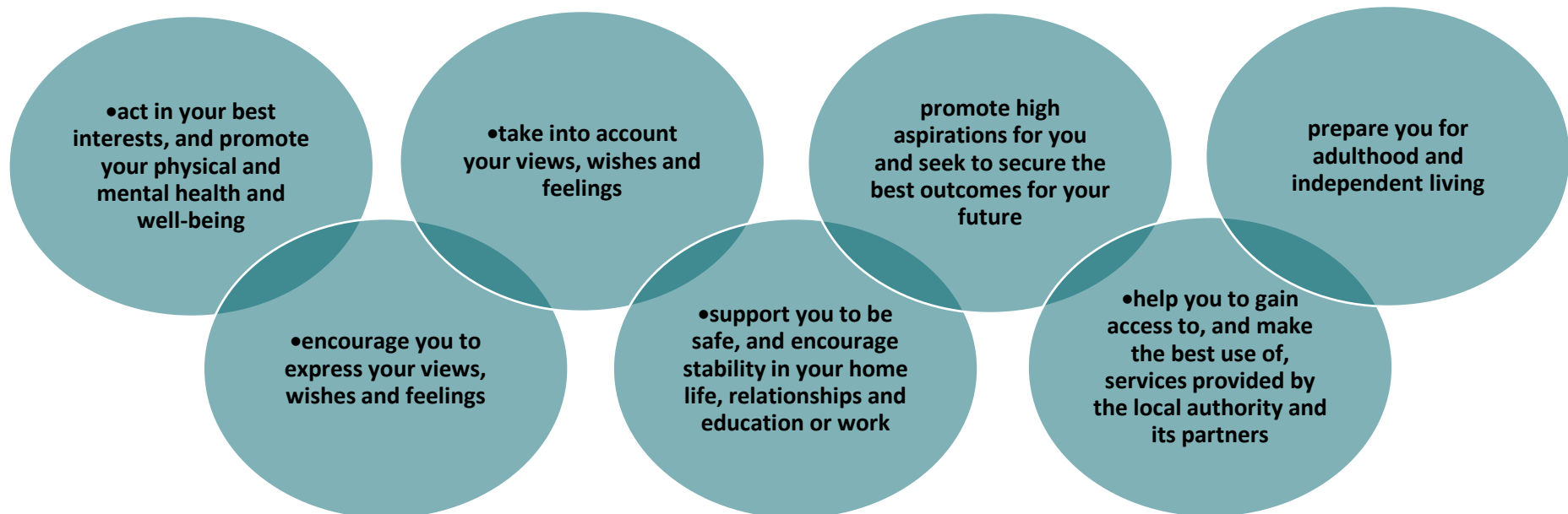
“It’s important that everything you can expect from a parent you can expect and get from the council, and people in the council know that everything you can expect from a parent you can get.”

–Martin Samuels, Strategic Director for Social Care and Education

Leicester City Council’s Social Care and Education department is committed to supporting children, young people, vulnerable adults, and families to be safe, be independent, be ambitious for themselves, and live the best life they can. We believe that it is not just the staff in our department who have a responsibility for ensuring that children in care and care leavers achieve good outcomes. The responsibility lies across the whole of Leicester City Council and our partners. We expect all people to act as if a child who is looked after is their own child.

Corporate Parenting Principles

For our children who are looked after and our care experienced young people, we will:



Embracing participation and co-production

As part of their enquiry in 2021, our Children in Care Generation Select panel suggested that we should use the Let's T.A.L.K (Think About Leicester's Kids) principle to remember children and young people when decision makers plan services.

The use of the Let's T.A.L.K principle reflects our wider approach to participation and co-production based on the Lundy model of participation. Reflecting children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Child, we will put children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

Using the Lundy model, we will listen to and act upon the views of young people and their families to inform service development, intervention and decision making.

We are proud that young people's voices have been at the heart of corporate parenting subgroups and that they have played a role in shaping the important priorities for us to work on.

Our pledges

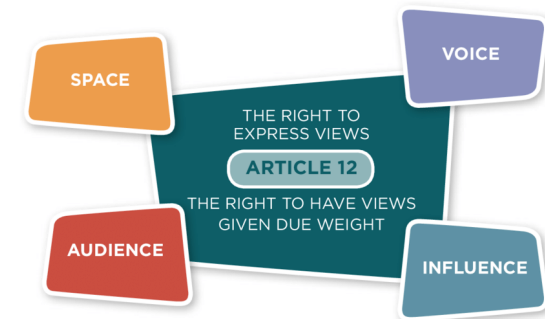
To help our children and young people understand how will meet the corporate parenting principles, we have made a pledge to children in care and a pledge to care leavers. These pledges set out our promises to all children and young people in care.

The pledges tell our children who are looked after and our care experienced young people what they can expect from their corporate parents, how we will support them to stay safe, achieve their goals and have their wishes and feelings heard and acted upon.

The pledges help us to ensure that children who are looked after and care experienced young people are supported in every aspect of their lives.

Language

We recognise the significance of language and that the way we speak to and about our young people plays a part in creating the right space, as referenced in the Lundy model of participation, to feel respected and valued. That is why we plan to no longer use "looked after child" or "LAC" and instead chose person-first language "child looked after"/ "child who is looked after" or "CLA".

A form titled "Where do you fit into our Roadmap?". It has a green background with a road and trees. At the top, it says "Your voice matters! As a care-experienced young person, you are an expert by experience and that's why we'd like to know your thoughts on the following questions:". Below this are three input fields: "Your name:", "Date of meeting:", and "Your subgroup:". There are two large white text boxes for writing answers. At the bottom left, there is a brown signpost that says "Young People's Voice and Opinions". At the bottom right, there is an illustration of a group of diverse young people standing together.

Children in Care Pledge



We will tell all children and young people in care of their rights.

We will listen to your views and opinions and involve you in decisions about your care.

We will provide a safe place for you to live.

We will celebrate your 18th birthday with you.

We will make sure that all social workers receive participation training on the Lundy Model.

We will support our Care Experienced Consultants.

We will offer opportunities for young people aged 11 - 16 years to take part in service evaluation.

We will provide opportunities for you to relax, have fun and enjoy yourself.

We will support you with your education, both formal and informal.

We will not do anything that will make you stand out as a child in care.

We will show you how to contact your social worker.

We will plan your transition from care that makes sure you are prepared and ready.

We will give you access to an advocate if you need support to have your voice heard.

We will support you to have hopes and dreams.

We will respect your personal property.

We will help you to access all the services that you need to keep you healthy and safe.

We will support you to understand why you are in care, and explain how you will maintain relationships with family members and other people important to you.

We will respect you for who you are. We will help you to develop a strong sense of personal identity and maintain your cultural and religious beliefs.

CARE LEAVERS' PLEDGE

Leicester City

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

We will:

- Support you with your goals and aspirations for the future
- Provide training and work experience opportunities within our organisation ensuring that you are not financially disadvantaged
- Help you prepare for interviews, writing your CV, giving you the tools to help you succeed
- Support you to have access to appropriate transport to attend your training & employment interviews
- Support you to access funding for a laptop for your education or training
- Celebrate your successes and achievements with you
- Encourage your hobbies and access to leisure and recreational activities

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We will:

- Help you to maintain good health and wellbeing to prevent you from feeling isolated
- Agree contact from your Leaving Care Advisor and help to maintain a social network
- Provide you with advice and support to access appropriate health services
- Support you to arrange your medical appointments when needed

A PLACE TO LIVE

We will:

- Support you with finding a suitable place to live
- Help you to make a house your home
- Make sure you know your entitlements with regards to benefits & grants
- Offer support to help you manage your money
- Provide you with support to enable you to live successfully in the community

PREPARING FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

We will:

- Respect you as an individual and recognise you as an adult capable of making your own decisions about your life
- Treat you fairly and support you to maximise your opportunities regardless of your situation, ethnicity, or disability and will always be transparent about how we support you
- Provide you with access to the Leaving Care Team if you no longer have an allocated worker or are returning for assistance, advice, or support
- Provide you with assistance with the cost of learning to drive

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

We will:

- Ensure that you know your rights including your right to vote
- Recognise that you are the experts by experience on decisions that impact on your life
- Encourage you to shape our policies and procedures that effect you
- Promote your active involvement and participation in decision making
- Create the right space, voice, and audience for you to be able to influence the decisions that impact on you as underpinned by the Lundy model
- Advocate on your behalf for additional support when needed
- Provide specialist support if you are an asylum seeker or were an unaccompanied child

TRANSITIONS

We will:

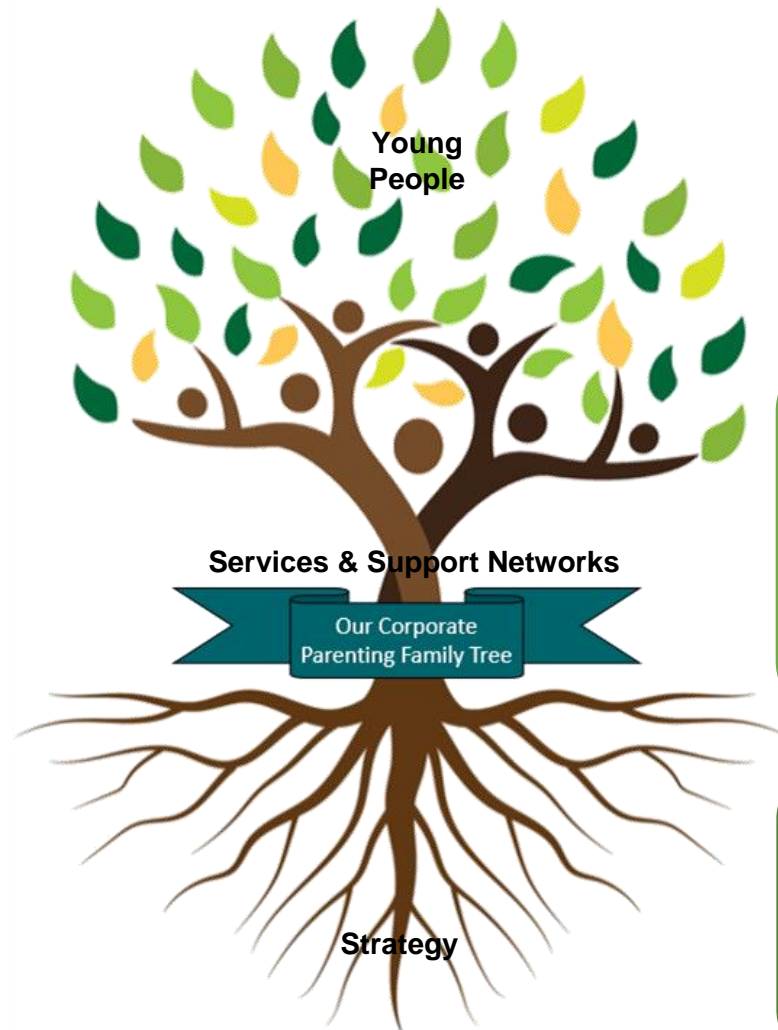
- Guide you through your transition before you leave care
- Provide you with information and advice and a timeline for your transitions
- Support you in remaining in contact with your friends & family members
- Aim to keep and not change your Leaving Care Advisor

January 2022



Our family of corporate parents

Our Children in Care Generation Select panel recommended that all staff should have time to see themselves as part of a bigger family of corporate parents, particularly those adults who have the most contact with children who are looked after, and care experienced young people. Our corporate parenting family tree outlines the responsibilities that people have in relation to corporate parenting.



Every employee in the council together with people in partner agencies

- Understand the impact of all decisions on our children
- Consider the quality of care for our children and whether this is good enough.
- Recognise the needs of children who are looked after, and care experienced young people.
- Strive to continually improve outcomes for our children and young people.

Strategic Director for Social Care and Education and Directorate, Lead Member for Children's Services and Elected Members

- Provide leadership to ensure strategic plans reflect the needs of children who are looked after, and care experienced young people.
- Ensure governance arrangements are in place to support a strong corporate parenting approach.
- Drive joint work with partner agencies to support our children

Members of corporate parenting subgroups, the Corporate Parenting Board

- Work with officers and partner agencies to improve services and respond to changing needs
- Ensure government expectations regarding services to children who are looked after, and care experienced young people are met.

Our approach

Corporate Parenting has been identified as one of five priority areas In the Children’s Social Care division at Leicester City Council. Supported by our partners our ambition is to ensure that the principles of ‘if this were my child’ are encouraged and promoted across the council and its strategic partnerships. As corporate parents we will support our children who are looked after and care experienced young people to be safe, have a good home, achieve their goals, and become successful adults in society.

We know we will have been successful in achieving our ambition:

when young people say:



“I understand the role of corporate parent and how it impacts on my life. I have my own copy of the Children in Care Pledge, and I understand what my entitlements are. I feel my rights are respected by all professionals working with me.”

we can say:



“We support you with your education, both formal and informal. We do not do anything that makes you stand out as a child in care. We support you to have hopes and dreams. We show you how to contact your social worker. We respect your personal property. We celebrate your 18th birthday with you. We plan your transition from care that makes sure you are prepared and ready.”

To help us meet our ambition for corporate parenting we have identified five priority themes agreed with children and young people.



A place to live – placing focus on ensuring young people have a safe place to live and that they are supported with the practicalities of living in their own home.



Preparing for successful living – helping young people to achieve successful lives in adulthood, including accessing training and employment.



Health and wellbeing – seeking a clear understanding of what good mental health means to young people and ensuring that young people are informed about the health support available.



Active citizenship – considering the needs and voices of all young people, keeping them informed of our corporate parenting responsibility to them.



Education – raising aspirations and supporting children who are looked after with their education while seeking to work with carers on how to support children looked after with their education.

The themes help to map the ambitions we have for all our care experienced young people and are informed by needs analysis, current regional/national issues, and service delivery plans and priorities. They also help to identify which professionals are best placed to support young people to achieve these ambitions. Regardless of whether professionals work directly with children looked after or care leavers, it is the duty of every employee of the council to consider the direct and indirect effect their decisions might have on care experienced young people's lives. This outlines the breadth of influence services have on young people and how they overlap or interact with each other.

A Place to Live

Why this is important

As a corporate parent, it is our responsibility to ensure that care experienced young people have a safe place to live where they feel protected and valued. We must also support young people with the practicalities of living in their own home and keep them informed of the support available. It is important that applying for housing is as accessible as possible, that young people know who will support them in their transition to adulthood and we must ensure our support offer reflects the current needs of our young people.

What are we aiming for

There is a clear offer through commissioned services that supports the housing of young people.

There are clear pathways for care experienced young people to access services and support.

How we support the theme as a corporate parent

- Listen to young people to better understand their housing and support needs
- Support a young person to find a home
- Ensure housing is considered in decision-making
- Identify when someone is living in unsuitable accommodation and provide additional support
- Commission services that support young people's housing needs
- Help young people to understand pathways for accessing services

Preparing for Successful Living	
Why this is important	What we are aiming for
<p>It is important to understand what living successfully means for our young people. We know that being independent is not the only marker of success and we would rather young people know how and where to access support when/if they need it. We must ensure that young people are equipped with the skills they need in their adult lives and as any parent would, must continuously identify and work to remove barriers to their success.</p>	<p>All staff are ambitious for children as they move into adulthood and their practice is informed by visualising the adult the child will become.</p> <p>The transitions strategy and commissioning strategy align to provide clarity about the provision of support up to the age of 25. There is evidence of early planning to support good transitions to adulthood.</p>
How we support the theme as a corporate parent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about current opportunities for jobs, apprenticeships, and work experience • Teach young people independent skills such as cooking, cleaning, and budgeting • Support young people to achieve their ambitions and realise their potential • Signpost available support for care leavers • Encourage co-production of pathway plans with every young person • Identify Education, Employment and Training opportunities for all care leavers • Engage with business to create Education, Employment and Training opportunities • Seek to remove barriers to successful living where these are identified • Promote opportunities for staying put with carers beyond the age of 18 	

Health and Wellbeing	
Why this is important	What we are aiming for
<p>We recognise the unique challenges that care experienced children and young people face. We aim to better understand how we can support good mental health and physical health for our children looked after and carer leavers. We understand that ensuring good information about available health support is integral to this, which is why we strive to maintain strong professional health and social care networks.</p>	<p>There is a clear offer through commissioned services that supports the health needs of care experienced children, young people, and care leavers.</p> <p>There are clear pathways for care experienced young people and their carers to access services.</p>
How we support the theme as a corporate parent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly commission services with health partners • Support medical appointments for children who are looked after • Analyse data to understand health needs and trends • Provide access to exercise and leisure activities for children who are looked after • Tell young people how to access health services • Build a young person's emotional resilience • Support young people to have a good social network • Promote smoking cessation and healthy lifestyles 	

Active Citizenship

Why this is important	What we are aiming for
<p>Active Citizenship embodies the core principles of the Lundy model of participation, which is why, we work to ensure the voice of the child is always heard. We want care experienced young people to know that they will be listened to and what they say will be taken seriously. Young people should be informed of their rights, like their right to vote, ask for advocacy or make a complaint, and know what to do if they don't feel like we are upholding our responsibilities to them as corporate parents.</p>	<p>The local authority is an active, strong, and committed corporate parent and emulates what a good parent should be.</p> <p>Through the delivery of the transitions strategy and commissioning strategy there is evidence of achieving the pledges across the partnership.</p>

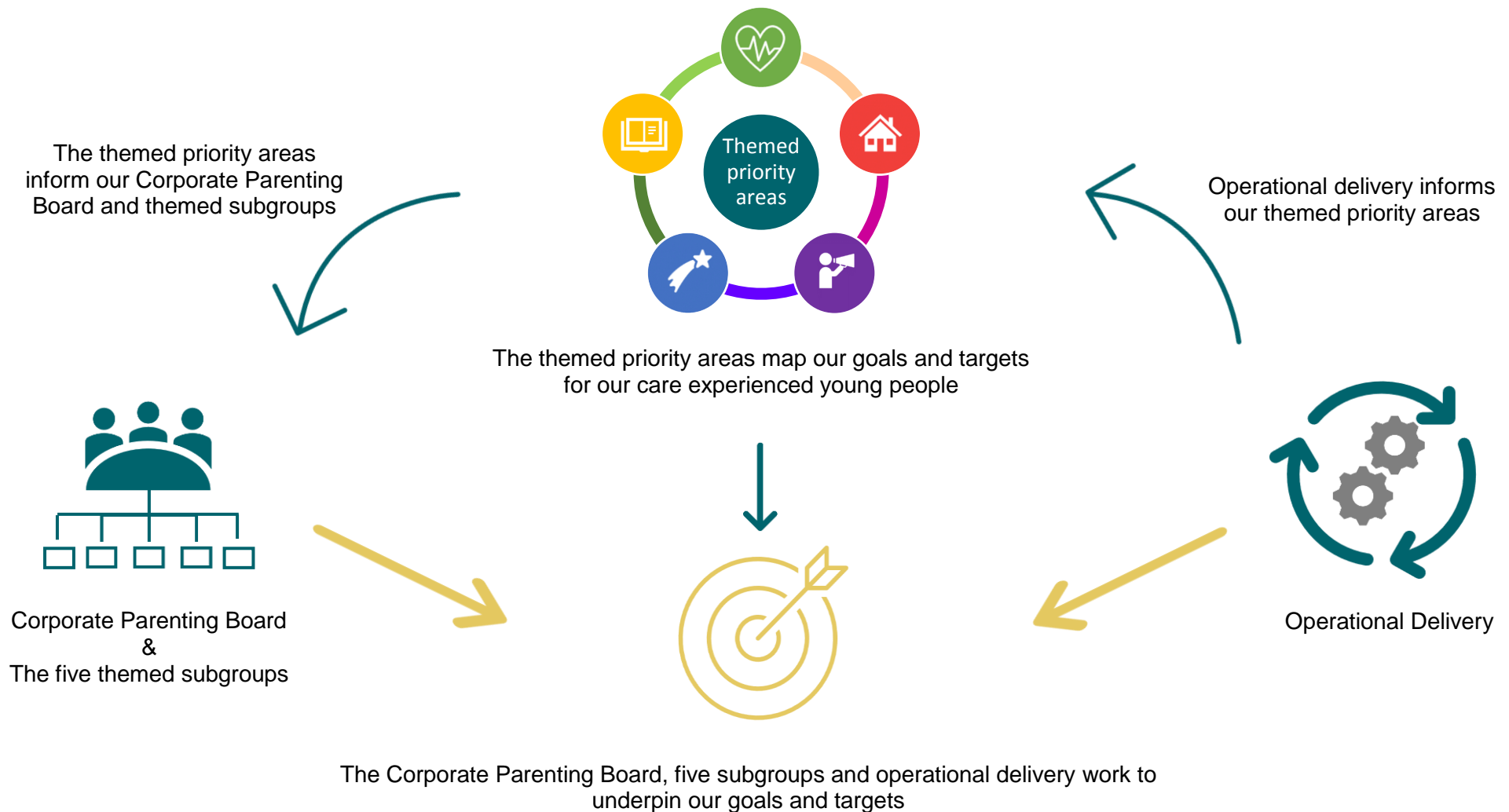
How we support the theme as a corporate parent

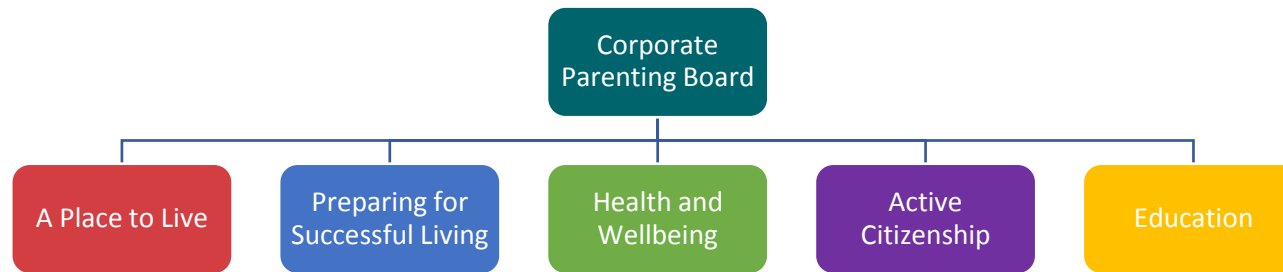
- Promote membership of Generation Select, Care Experienced Consultants and Co-Producers
- Inform young people of their rights
- Use coproduction to shape service development
- Ensure young people are aware of the Children in Care Pledge and the Care Leavers' Pledge
- Advocate for care experienced children and young people
- Be accountable to young people for the pledges we make to them
- Put young people's voices at the heart of decision making
- Contribute to creating the right space for young people's voices to be heard
- Embed the Lundy model in everyday practice
- Encourage political literacy for care experienced young people

Education	
Why this is important	What we are aiming for
<p>We want to raise the aspirations of children looked after so they feel confident to pursue their hopes and dreams as they move through formal education. We recognise, however, that education can take many forms and therefore aim to facilitate better opportunities to access hobbies, cultural experiences, music, and art. To do this, we must also actively support carers from the beginning, as they accompany young people on their education journey.</p>	<p>There is a clear offer through commissioned services that supports the education of young people.</p> <p>There are clear pathways for care experienced young people to access services.</p>
How we support the theme as a corporate parent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children with homework • Support schools to be good or outstanding • Inform Personal Education Plans • Facilitate young people's attendance at school • Encourage or facilitate hobbies for young people • Celebrate the achievements of care experienced young people • Enable foster carers to create the best environment for young people to learn 	

Delivering our Priorities

To help us make sure that everyone can be the best corporate parent they can be, we have developed five thematic groups for stakeholders with specific corporate parenting responsibilities to meet with care experienced children and young people. The groups include senior officers from across the council and the wider partnership, elected members, children and young people and their carer's.





The Corporate Parenting Board aims to improve the life chances of Leicester City's children who are looked after and care experienced young people through the development of a joint approach to the delivery of services.

To support the Corporate Parenting Board, there are five subgroups which bring together professionals, young people and carers. The subgroups align to the themes which set out priority areas and ambitions.

The objectives of the Corporate Parenting Board are to:

Each one is focused on a specific area and members of each subgroup are responsible for:

- listen to the voices of children and young people in our care and those leaving care, and to use what we learn to improve services and outcomes
- take the lead for the children and young people in our care and leaving care, raising awareness and priorities across all agencies, making sure all agencies' responsibilities toward children who are looked after, and care experienced young people are being met
- promote the role of all elected members as corporate parents and to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place to enable all members to fulfil their statutory responsibilities
- review the Corporate Parenting Strategy and related action plans annually to ensure that these are effective

- attending all scheduled subgroup meetings where possible and if necessary, nominate a proxy
- wholeheartedly championing the ethos of Corporate Parenting 'as if this were my child' within all aspects of their work
- supporting care experienced young people to fully engage in meetings including discussions on agenda setting, post meeting de-briefings and peer support when required
- create the right space, voice, and audience for young people to be able to influence the decisions that impact on them as underpinned by the Lundy model
- progress actions outside of the meetings to support the work of the group

Priorities for 2023

- Develop with young people a training module to be introduced for all staff on the principles of corporate parenting.
- Implement a framework for the Let's T.A.L.K (Think About Leicester's Kids) principle when planning and evaluating services or redesigning existing ones.
- Agree our priorities for delivery across our five corporate parenting themes and promote opportunities for participation and engagement in shaping and delivering improvements across services.
- Review progress and agree our performance and quality assurance measures to reflect the "as if this were my child" approach.
- Promote more opportunities for children and young people to meet and engage with members of the corporate parenting board to better understand the needs of care experienced children and young people.
- Expand opportunities for mentoring, work shadowing, takeover day offers, and apprenticeships, training, and employment across the council and wider partnership.
- Ensure that there are clear pathways for care experienced young people to access services.
- Promote the Children in Care and Care Leaver pledges to ensure they are embedded with all partners and review our progress and impact on delivery of the pledges.
- Ensure that our arrangements for transitions and commissioning evidence delivery of our pledges across the partnership.