

Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED:** *All Wards*

**DECISION TIMETABLE:**

**EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY  
SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
CABINET  
FULL COUNCIL**

**1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005  
13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005  
24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005  
24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2005**

---

**IMPROVING CORPORATE PARENTING IN LEICESTER CITY**

---

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to secure commitment to the enhancement of the existing Corporate Parenting initiative, and agreement to its development plan.
- 1.2 The aim of the report is to:
- Highlight the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers and the role of the Corporate Parent
  - Emphasize the importance of Political leadership and Corporate Ownership
  - Establish the strategic direction and operational implementation of Corporate Parenting
  - Provide better opportunities for Looked After Children

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 Children and young people in care are amongst the most socially disadvantaged groups in England. Despite poor outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in the past, our vision needs to be a positive and aspirational one. As a group, Looked After Children have a normal range of distribution of abilities, and with the right experiences and environments being made available outcomes can be positive.
- 2.2 'Corporate Parenting' emphasizes the collective responsibility of local authorities to achieve good parenting and in broad terms, the whole Authority is expected to do what any good parent would do. Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on Health, Housing and Education Authorities to assist the Social Services authorities in carrying out their functions under the Act. Corporate Parenting is a way of harnessing their support for Looked After Children.
- 2.3 A vital aspect of Leicester City Council's approach to improving its performance on Children's Services is to develop Councillors' roles and responsibilities as corporate

parents for Looked after Children. Effective strategy and leadership are necessary in order to establish the priority being given by the council and the quality of planning, resources and support being brought to focus on this vulnerable group.

- 2.4 It is proposed that a Corporate Parenting Forum be created. The proposed forum will focus on both the strategic and practical issues, and demonstrate how the City Council's range of services and resources can be adapted to meet the needs of this group.

### **3. Recommendations for Education and Lifelong Learning and Social Services Scrutiny Committees (1<sup>st</sup> September 2005 and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2005 respectively)**

- 3.1 To enhance the Corporate Parenting initiative it is recommended that the each Scrutiny Panel agree to:

- 3.1.1 Nominate a Members' Scrutiny Champion for Looked After Children on both Scrutiny Committees

### **4. Recommendations for Cabinet (24<sup>th</sup> October 2005)**

- 4.1 To enhance the Corporate Parenting initiative it is recommended that the Cabinet agree to:

- 4.1.1 Nominate a Cabinet Corporate Parenting Champion  
4.1.2 Receive a report on progress from the Cabinet's Corporate Parenting Champion annually  
4.1.3 Refer to full Council for agreement of and support for the initiative  
4.1.4 Recommend that the Council:  
Confirms its commitment to improving outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers through its recognition of the importance of Corporate Parenting  
4.1.4 Marks this event with a child and young people friendly event at council  
4.1.5 Receives an annual report on Corporate Parenting developments

### **5. Headline Financial and Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 provides the basis for the City Council's role as a corporate parent to children in its care. It requires the whole Council to safeguard and promote their welfare. Section 27 of the same Act puts a responsibility on the Council to ask other authorities or agencies to assist them in that task.  
(Kamal Adatia, Barrister - Ext 7044)

- 5.2 The main resource requirements of the recommendations in this report will be the time commitment of Elected Members and Officers across the Council. However, resources of up to £15,000 for initial development and publicity will need to be found from existing Children's Services budgets in the Social Care and Health and Education and Lifelong Learning Departments, together with contributions in kind from other Departments. There may also be financial implications from specific actions arising from the project, which will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the time.

(Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, SC&H – Ext 8800)

**6. Report Authors/Officers to contact:**

Mark Fitzgerald  
Social Inclusion Project Officer  
Leicester Federation  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
16 New Walk  
Leicester  
LE1 6UB

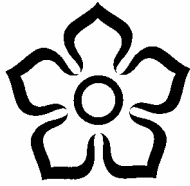
Hilal Barwany  
Project Manager  
Leicester Federation  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
16 New Walk  
Leicester  
LE1 6UB

Tel: 0116 252 8165  
Fax: 0116 233 3032  
Email: mark.fitzgerald@leicester.gov.uk

Tel: 0116 252 8191  
Fax: 0116 233 3032  
Email: barwh001@leicester.gov.uk

**DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision (Executive)</b>	No
<b>Reason</b>	Budget and Policy framework
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	No
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	Council



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED:** *All Wards*

## **FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**

**EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY  
SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
CABINET  
FULL COUNCIL**

**1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005  
13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005  
24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005  
24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2005**

---

## **IMPROVING CORPORATE PARENTING IN LEICESTER CITY**

---

# **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

## **Report**

### **1. Corporate Parenting**

- 1.1 'Corporate Parenting' emphasizes the collective responsibility of local authorities to achieve good parenting and in broad terms, the whole Authority is expected to do what any good parent would do.
- 1.2 Once Leicester City Council has taken the profound and difficult decision to remove a child, short-term or long-term, from his or her family, it is the duty of the *whole* local authority to 'safeguard and promote his welfare' (1989 Children Act, Section 22(3)(a)). The whole authority therefore needs to consider if they have a key role to play in supporting these children; *our* children.
- 1.3 The responsibility of the Corporate Parent endures as long as the child is Looked After and in certain circumstances duties may be owed until the age of up to 24 years.
- 1.4 It is important to bear in mind that it is not just Social Services that have an impact on these children. Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on Health, Housing and Education Authorities to assist the Social Services authorities in carrying out their functions under the Act – this includes assisting in their Corporate Parenting functions.
- 1.5 With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 the new duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children (part of the Children Act 2004) came

into force. Section 52 (Children Act 2004) amends Section 22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989, so that local authorities must give particular attention to the educational implications of any decisions about the welfare of looked after children. It is a key plank of the government's drive to improve outcomes for this group and is likely to become an early priority for the corporate parenting programme.

- 1.6.1 While the Children Act 2004 is designed to help achieve better outcomes for all children and young people, looked after children and care leavers are a particular focus. All statutory inspections of child care services will include an examination of how well the group are served, how this is reflected in their social, economic, and health outcomes, and what their subjective experience of services has been. Experience in other local authorities has demonstrated that effective Corporate Parenting can have a beneficial impact, particularly when children and young people themselves are closely involved.
- 1.7 The Local Area Agreement is being developed as part of the Children and Young Peoples Plan that will be in place from April 2006. Looked After Children are a key priority group for all agencies locally, and will be highlighted within the Local Area Agreement, particularly in relation to educational attainment.

## **2. Looked After Children**

- 2.1 Children and young people in care are among the most socially disadvantaged groups in England. In Leicester, over three quarters of Looked After children are in care because they have been abused and/or neglected. They are at high risk of:
- poor health
  - delinquency and criminal behaviour
  - homelessness
  - dependency on drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and
  - teenage pregnancy (and all its concomitant problems).
- 2.2 Looked After Children are significantly over represented in the Youth Justice system. In 2002 the Home Office recorded that 50% of children in young offender institutions nationally have been, or still were, in local authority care.
- 2.3 Looked After Children and young people have specific care, health and social needs, which should have the highest of priorities across the Council. Corporate Parenting seeks to harness the resources of the whole Authority to meet the needs of the children who require our Care. There are approximately 470 children in the care of Leicester City at any one time.
- 2.4 Nationally, Black and Minority Ethnic children are over-represented in care, although this is not the case locally. Black and Minority Ethnic children are in general under-represented, apart from Dual heritage children who appear to be over-represented.

## **3. The Education of Looked After Children**

- 3.1 Research by the Social Exclusion Unit<sup>1</sup> has indicated that nationally, a large number of Looked After Children have had poor experiences in education:
- 6 out of 10 have been bullied
  - They are 13 times more likely to be permanently excluded than their peers
  - Only eight per cent of 16 year olds who had spent at least one year in care in 2001 achieved five A\*– C grades at GCSE, compared to half of all young people.
  - In Key Stage tests at age seven, 11 and 14, they also had poor results
  - Just one per cent of Looked After children go on to university.

#### **4. The Health of Looked After Children**

- 4.1 Children looked after by local authorities have usually already been identified as children in need in the community and some will have been in need of protection. Many have profoundly increased health needs in comparison with children and young people from comparable socio-economic backgrounds. They may well have health needs arising from:
- living in families affected by drugs, alcohol or domestic violence;
  - special needs or a disability;
  - coming from highly mobile families.
- 4.2 Looked After Children may have experienced poorer access to services including universal services such as dental services, immunisations, routine child health surveillance and health promotion because of language or cultural barriers.
- 4.3 Evidence suggests that many mental health difficulties are missed in this group of children and young people, in particular the effects of grief and loss and the resulting depression, particularly in younger children.
- 4.4 Looked After Children may be less likely to access drug education and support at school and it is crucial that other opportunities are available for them to receive the information and support that they need.

#### **5. Outcomes for the Future**

- 5.1 Despite poor outcomes in the past, our vision needs to be positive and aspirational. As a group Looked After Children have a normal range of distribution of abilities and with the right experiences and environments being made available outcomes can be positive.
- 5.2 Corporate Parenting is a key mechanism by which Members and Officers can ensure that for children and young people in its care, Leicester City Council is providing:
- Warm, welcoming and safe accommodation; a place to call home.
  - Good quality care, nurturing supportive and meaningful relationships that encourage the growth of self-esteem, confidence and resilience; enabling young people to cope with change and difficult times

- The highest standard of education, wherever possible in mainstream schools.
- Opportunities and encouragement for self-development and keeping fit and healthy.
- Opportunities for the transition to work, including open days and work placements.
- Assistance with the transition from care to looking after themselves.
- Placement stability that will avoid disruption and maintain continuity of care, education placements and relationships

## **6. The importance of Political leadership and Corporate Ownership**

6.1 Robust strategic thinking and purposeful leadership play a powerful role in determining the quality of services that support Children in Care. Effective strategy and leadership are necessary in order to establish the priority being given by the council and the quality of planning, resources and support being brought to focus on this vulnerable group.

6.2 The Department for Education and Skills and the Local Government Information Unit have produced a document “If This Were My Child”<sup>2</sup>, which outlines the responsibilities of Councillors as Corporate Parents. Amongst its messages it stresses the need for robust structures to oversee Corporate Parenting across the whole Authority. The proposed arrangements for Leicester City are based on the recommendations in this document.

6.3 “If This Were My Child” states clearly:

- that councillors have a clear responsibility to ensure that the services being provided to children in their care are of the highest quality
- that councillors have no greater responsibility than when they act as corporate parent
- that the role of councillors is crucial not just in drawing up policies, but in setting standards and seeing that they are met
- that councillors should be involved in the setting of a vision and strategic objectives for Looked After Children.

## **7. Co-ordinating Agencies and Creating Accountability**

7.1 The Green Paper “Every Child Matters” published in September 2003 and the Children Act 2004 gives local government the leading role in pulling together and co-ordinating other relevant agencies in relation to Children’s Services. The Paper recognises the considerable experience of Local Authorities in supporting children through a range of services and sees a clear line of accountability through them. The act places elected local authorities at the helm of local partnerships delivering better outcomes for children, and places a duty on many agencies to co-operate with local authorities in the promotion of the well being of children.

7.2 A vital aspect of councils’ approaches to improving their performances on Children’s Services is to develop Councillors’ roles and responsibilities as corporate parents for Looked after Children.

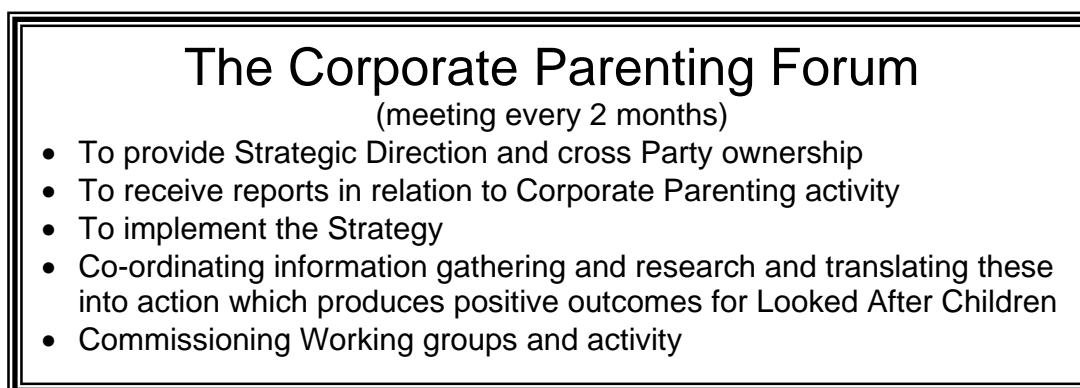
## **8. Building on Success**

- 8.1 Corporate Parenting was launched in the City Council in 1997, and since then the initiative has continued to deliver improved services for looked after children, care leavers and their carers, by co-operative working throughout the Council.
- 8.2 The R.A.L.A.C. (Raising the Attainments of Looked After Children) team is a resource funded across Departments which co-ordinates work to improve educational outcomes for Looked After Children. Since the Team's formation the wide range of support available to students and carers has meant that educational outcomes for Looked After Children have continued to improve. With help from colleagues in other departments the Team has developed the annual Celebrating Success events to recognise the range of academic, behavioural and life achievements of looked after children. Certificates and vouchers are awarded to acknowledge the efforts made by young people and their carers.
- 8.3 A well-established working protocol exists between the Housing and Social Care and Health departments. Care leavers aged 16-17 are not required to undergo a standard assessment of their ability to sustain and maintain a tenancy, as the Housing Department will accept the Social Care and Health Department Leaving Care Team worker's assessment of the young person's capacity and abilities to take on the responsibilities of a tenancy, and of their understanding of the potential implications of not fulfilling the obligations consequent to that legally binding agreement.
- 8.4 All care leavers aged 16+ are also automatically awarded the maximum possible points for homelessness at the point at which they start actively seeking a tenancy. Once young people leaving care are granted a tenancy they become subject to the same rules and procedures as other tenants. In practice local area housing officers will work co-operatively with Leaving Care Team members to address problems as they arise.
- 8.5 Joint work between Departments has provided free Leisure Passes for looked after children, their carers and the families of carers, to enable better access to, and involvement in sport and recreational activities.
- 8.6 Departments working together have been able to provide apprenticeship opportunities to meet the employment and training needs of looked after children.
- 8.7 Under the umbrella of the Corporate Parenting initiative, all of the above developments continue to demonstrate that looked after children are a shared priority for the whole Council. The success of existing Corporate Parenting activities is reflected in key indicators, and by building on existing achievements there is scope to enhance the initiative even further.
- 8.8 Developing the impact of corporate leadership and commitment to the council's children in care can be achieved through strategic objectives and policies that offer coherence throughout the council. The new Corporate Parenting forum will provide a useful opportunity for all tiers in the Council to be well-informed and have an up-to-date understanding of current issues for Leicester's looked after children and care leavers. The forum will enable elected members to better exercise their responsibilities as corporate parents.



- 8.9 The inclusion in the Corporate Parenting Forum of senior officers responsible for strategic direction and resource allocation will signify enhanced commitment – both symbolically and in terms of operational accountability – to corporate parenting. Corporate strategic coherence will encourage and enable individual Departments better to understand the contribution they can make.
- 8.10 Corporate strategic coherence, allied with operational outputs and impact, will also provide evidence for the new integrated inspection regimes for children’s services.
- 8.11 The inclusion of young people as active members of the Corporate Parenting Forum will aid members’ and officers’ understanding of what the forum can do to ‘make a difference’. It also offers a sound platform for responding to Article 39 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that: “Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social integration of a child victim of any form of neglect, exploitation or abuse, torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child”. It is proposed that until looked after Young People are prepared and willing to attend in their own right, that their views should be represented by the Service Manager for Safeguarding Looked After Children.

## 9. Corporate Parenting Forum



#### Councillors on the Forum:

- Cabinet Lead for Social Care & Health
- Cabinet Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning
- Chair & Spokespeople from SC&H and E&LL Scrutiny Committees

#### Officers on the Forum:

- Service Director of Children’s Services and/or Head of Service (Children’s Resources)
- Nominated Looked After Children’s Lead from each Department (6 Officers)
- Service Manager from Looked After Children’s Service
- Social Inclusion Project Officer
- Service Manager for Safeguarding Looked After Children (until such time as Young People are able and prepared to attend for themselves)

## **10. Terms of Reference**

- 10.1 The Terms of Reference of the new Corporate Parenting Forum are attached as Appendix A.

## **11. Wider Corporate Parenting Activity**

- 11.1 In order to add value to the existing Social Care and Health Departments 'Looking After Children Well' steering group and this Paper's proposals for Corporate Parenting, the Leicester Federation will be establishing a Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership, (MALAP).
- 11.2 This corporate parenting approach has been chosen to capture an idea which goes beyond the familiar concept and which demonstrates the commitment of all partner agencies to improving outcomes for Looked After Children/care leavers. As with child protection, corporate parenting means that Looked After Children become every body's business.

## **12. Standards**

- 12.1 The new Corporate Parenting Forum needs to consider the following inspection standards:
- Leadership on improving outcomes for children in care is clear and at a senior level
  - Prioritisation – the health, educational achievement, emotional and social development of children in care is a high priority of the council
  - Corporate parenting is a high priority and councillors and senior officers are demonstrably committed to it
  - Achievements of children in care are recognised and celebrated
  - Clear protocols on funding prevent inter-agency or inter-department disputes and delays
  - Targets for the achievement and care of Looked After Children are in place, consistent across the departments and owned at a senior level

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **1. Financial Implications**

- 1.1 The main resource requirements of the recommendations in this report will be the time commitment of Elected Members and Officers across the Council. However, resources of up to £15,000 for initial development and publicity will need to be found from existing Children's Services budgets in the Social Care and Health and Education and Lifelong Learning Departments, together with contributions in kind from other Departments. There may also be financial implications from specific actions arising from the project, which will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis at the time.  
(Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, SC&H – Ext 8800)

## 2. Legal Implications

- 2.1 Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 provides the basis for the City Council's role as a corporate parent to children in its care. It requires the whole Council to safeguard and promote their welfare. Section 27 of the same Act puts a responsibility on the Council to ask other authorities or agencies to assist them in that task.
- 2.2 Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 amends Section 22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989 to create a duty to pay particular attention to the educational implications of decisions about the welfare of looked after children.
- 2.3 The responsibility of the Corporate Parent endures as long as the child is Looked After and in certain circumstances duties may be owed until the age of up to 24 years.

(Kamal Adatia, Barrister, ext 7044)

## 3. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within Supporting Information
Equal Opportunities	<b>Yes</b>	2.1, 2.4
Policy	<b>Yes</b>	<i>The whole report</i>
Sustainable and Environmental	<b>No</b>	
Crime and Disorder	<b>Yes</b>	2.2
Human Rights Act	<b>Yes</b>	8.11
Elderly/People on Low Income	<b>No</b>	

## 4. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

<sup>1</sup>“A Better Education for children in care”, Social Exclusion Unit

<sup>2</sup>“If This Were My Child”, Department for Education and Skills and the Local Government Information Unit

## 5. Consultations

Andrew Cozens, Deputy Chief Executive  
Andrew Bunyan, Service Director, Social Care & Health  
Louise Goll, Director of Achievement & Innovation, Education and Lifelong Learning  
Penny Hajek Head of Service Children's Resources, Social Care & Health  
Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, Social Care & Health  
David Oldershaw, Service Director, Social Care & Health  
Kamal Adatia, Barrister, Legal Services, Resources, Access and Diversity  
Richard Whitehouse, Manager of Effectiveness Strategies, Education and Lifelong Learning  
Adrian Paterson, Service Director, Education and Lifelong Learning

David Wilkin, Head of Education Finance, Education and Lifelong Learning

**6. Report Authors**

Mark Fitzgerald  
Social Inclusion Project Officer  
Leicester Federation  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
16 New Walk  
Leicester  
LE1 6UB

Tel: 0116 252 6195  
Fax: 0116 233 3032  
Email: mark.fitzgerald@leicester.gov.uk

Hilal Barwany  
Project Manager  
Leicester Federation  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
16 New Walk  
Leicester  
LE1 6UB

Tel: 0116 252 6195  
Fax: 0116 233 3032  
Email: barwh001@leicester.gov.uk

## Appendix A

### **Corporate Parenting Forum Terms of Reference**

1. To secure member involvement and commitment throughout the council, to deliver better outcomes for Looked After Children
2. To ensure that Leicester City Council has provided the following for children and young people in its care:
  - Warm, welcoming and safe accommodation, a place to call home.
  - Good quality care, nurturing supportive and meaningful relationships that encourage the growth of self-esteem, confidence and resilience; enabling young people to cope with change and difficult times
  - The highest standard of education; wherever possible in mainstream schools.
  - Opportunities and encouragement for self-development and keeping fit and healthy.
  - Opportunities for the transition to work, including open days and work placements.
  - Assistance with the transition from care to looking after themselves.
  - Placement stability that will avoid disruption and maintain continuity of care, education placements and relationships
3. To make a commitment to prioritising the needs of Looked After Children and their carers
4. To provide clear strategic direction in relation to Corporate Parenting
5. To have the ambition to raise the standards of core services
6. To promote achievement and help to build (and meet) aspirations by supporting the Celebrating Success Awards ceremonies.
7. To listen to the views of young people and their carers, and to involve them in the assessment and creation of services.
8. To be creative and flexible in meeting the needs of Looked After Children.
9. To monitor the Council's provision for Looked After Children
10. Co-ordinating information gathering and research and ensuring that reporting systems are in place which reflect the qualities of services for Looked After Children
11. Commissioning Working groups and activity arising from Corporate Parenting forum meetings
12. To identify resources for Corporate Parenting and use these to good effect
13. To oversee the provision of work placements and apprenticeships for Looked After Children by the City Council.
14. To identify best practice in other Councils, and to import these ideas as appropriate.