Calderdale’s Corporate Parenting Strategy
2019 - 2021
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Foreword

As a Council, and as corporate parents and grandparents, we are committed to giving our children looked after and young people leaving care the support, care and opportunity we would want for our own children and grandchildren. We know that our children and young people face some very big and at times difficult challenges, and we have the same hopes and ambitions for them as those of every good parent and grandparent.

Calderdale Council has an ambition to be the best borough in the North, and we are working to realise our vision for 2024 to create a place known to be enterprising, talented, resilient, kind and distinctive. We will only achieve this if we give the best possible chance to children looked after and young people leaving care, and enable all children and young people who come into our care to reach their potential. Our corporate parent and grandparent strategy sets out how we will do this, and how we will know that we are getting it right for our children and young people.

We want our children and young people to flourish with good health, to be safe and happy, to do well in education, training and employment, and make the most of leisure opportunities, hobbies and interests. We want them to grow in confidence, be able to express their hopes, fears and experiences with trusted adults and know that their voices are heard and help shape both services and their own futures. We want them to have good quality care in stable placements that will support them as they make their way through childhood into adulthood and beyond. We recognise the importance of supporting the development of a positive identity in the diverse communities of Calderdale and other places where they may study or live. We want our young people to be equipped to lead independent lives and to make their way as adults in higher education, in good careers and jobs, and be financially secure. Also, if they themselves become a parent we will ensure they receive early, sensitive and effective support.

As elected members, senior officers, and as a council, we promote corporate parenting and grand parenting seeking out every opportunity to support our children and young people who are or have been looked after.

This matters to us. Let’s make it happen together.

Councillor Adam Wilkinson

Robin Tuddenham
Chief Executive

Julie Jenkins
Director, Children & Young People’s Service
Our Vision and Aims

“All children in Calderdale are happy, healthy, safe and successful, regardless of who is looking after them.”

As corporate parent and grandparents, we want to ensure that we make good decisions for children and young people. Becoming Looked After is a serious step in the life of a child or young person so we have robust systems in place ensuring that children and young people become looked after in a timely manner, with their best interest at the heart of decision making.

At the heart of our service delivery to our children and young people is our pledge and commitment as their corporate parent and grandparents to the 7 principles of corporate parenting as outlined in the statutory guidance;

1. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
2. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
4. 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
5. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
6. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines, for the first time in law, the role of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for children looked after and young people, and care leavers.

“Would this be good enough for my own child?”
Definition of Corporate Parenting

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. 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.

As corporate parents, it’s every councillor’s responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting these duties towards children in care and care leavers. Children can be in care in a range of different settings, with the authority acting as corporate parent to all of them.

Every councillor and officer within a council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child.

“I am passionate about corporate parenting because it recognises the need and commitment of professionals, which goes beyond usual work commitments. When people have asked me to explain corporate parenting it is something you not only say but it is something you feel. Being a care leaver and now a mother, has made me realise just how important it is to belong and feel wanted. Corporate parenting is about building an identity for our young people so that they are a part of something special, with an unwavering dedication. Families come in all shapes and forms, for the first time in my life I feel I am part of something, part of a big family– corporate brothers, sisters, parents etc. this makes me proud to be a care leaver.”

Caitlin – Calderdale young person
Corporate Parent/Grandparent Tips

1. “Please make sure I get all the information I need to help me make decisions”
   Make sure young people leaving care understand their options by giving them the information they need to make decisions.

2. “Meet me where I want to meet, it’s important I am comfortable and sometimes it needs to be neutral ground”
   Understand that a young person leaving care might not feel comfortable in a formal meeting room, or even in their own home. Ask where they are happy to meet; it might be at a coffee shop or in the park.

3. “Avoid the ‘jargon’ when you talk or write to me and about me”
   A young person leaving care has the right to understand what is going on with things that affect them, so make sure you use language they can understand and relate to.

4. “Remember if I cannot trust you with the small things in my life I will find it hard to trust you with the big things”
   Be open and honest at all times, trust can be hard won but easily broken by a missed appointment or giving the wrong information.

5. “Help us have opportunities to get involved in the ‘family business’ for example work experience and apprenticeships”
   If a young person leaving care would like the opportunity to gain work experience with Calderdale Council, then help by making them aware of opportunities and how to find out about ways they can get involved.

6. “Please respect and recognise ‘my life journey’ and have an understanding of my viewpoints because of my experience”
   Young people leaving care may have had a very different life experience to you, so respect their point of view and respect why they may feel or react as they do.

7. “Simply get to know me and take time to listen and show an interest in my interests”
   Taking time to get to know and understand our young people leaving care can have positive effects on not only them, but the world around them.

8. “Ask me my opinion, my ideas and always work with me and not against”
   Our young people leaving care deserve to be heard about decisions that affect them. Their opinions matter and always need to be considered with care and respect.

9. “This is your job, but it’s my life!” - Kayla
   As a corporate parent and grandparent remember just one decision you make or conversation you have could affect a young person leaving care for the rest of their life. Always be mindful of our commitment to have the same hopes and aspirations as every good parent and grandparent to enable our young people to experience happy and fulfilling lives.

10. “Please remember, I am just child developing my own identity not just another statistic.”
    Be patient and listen to our young people leaving care before offering guidance and advice. Don’t define them by what is written about them. Understand that our young people are growing, learning and developing their own identities every day.

As an employee of Calderdale Council, you have a responsibility as a Corporate Parent or Grandparent, but what does this mean?

Take a look at the intranet for more details and to see the Corporate Parent/Grandparent pledge.

Calderdale Council has a ‘local offer’ for our care leavers, please visit:

www.calderdale.gov.uk/localoffer

For helpful impartial advice please contact the Children’s Rights and Advocacy Service:

Email: CRAAdmin@calderdale.gov.uk
Tel: 01422 288251
Our role and responsibilities

- **Councillors**
  All Councillors are in the unique position to promote opportunities for our children looked and young people leaving care through their political power and influence, their connections to the community, schools, health services, local businesses, employers and voluntary organisations. Good corporate parenting and grand parenting requires ownership and leadership at the most senior level. As corporate parents and grandparents, it is the responsibility of all elected members that there is a joined up, effective and holistic approach to meeting the needs of looked after children and young people leaving care through policy and planning. When policy is being set or plans are agreed it is important to consider opportunities for improving outcomes for children looked after and young people leaving care.

- **All Council Services**
  All council officers have a shared corporate parenting responsibility and can make an important collective contribution to corporate parenting and Grandparenting is how it can deliver better opportunities for children looked after and young people leaving care up to the age of 25 years. Our 10 Top Tips for all Council officers written by our children and young people about what it means to them Corporate Parents and Grandparents;

- **Virtual School**
  The Virtual School plays a key strategic role to make sure that corporate parenting responsibilities of Calderdale Council, with regard to the education of Children who are Looked After are met. The service promotes achievement, raises attainment and ensures equality of opportunity to enhance the life chances of all our Children who are Looked After.

- **Schools, Colleges and other Education Providers**
  Our partners have a range of responsibilities including ensuring that every child looked after has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and is supported to achieve their potential. Supporting children looked after and young people leaving care in school, college and university. School governors have statutory responsibilities which include monitoring the progress made by children looked after. Schools must engage with the Virtual School and respect of their cooperating parenting role.
• **Health Service Providers**
  Health providers have important responsibilities for improving the health, both physical and psychological, of all looked after children. Health assessments must be undertaken and Specialist nurses for looked after children must ensure that Personal Health Plans (Health Passports) are developed with the child or young person and that they are fully implemented.

• **Police and Youth Offending Service**
  Reducing offending is the joint responsibility of the Police, Children’s Services and the Youth Offending Team and to maximise the role of Corporate Parenting and achieve the best life chances for this vulnerable group of young people. The Calderdale children looked after and reducing criminalisation protocol and procedures ensures effective inter-agency planning and the active involvement of all relevant agencies/services. Where concerns were raised in relation to behaviours which could result in entry in to the criminal justice system the following procedures would be followed:
  •     Restorative Principles;
  •     Learning and Development;
  •     Practice
  •     Individual Service Responsibilities.

• **Housing Providers**
  Calderdale Council and the social housing providers have an essential role to play to provide good quality accommodation for young people leaving care who are ready to live more independently. The Council and providers work together to ensure that young people are supported to find employment that does not conflict with their ability to meet rent payments.

• **Community Organisations**
  There is a wide range of community organisations who provide important services and support for children looked after and young people leaving care, including advice and guidance, mentoring, supported housing, and drug and alcohol services. These services are vital for preventing young people leaving care needing the intervention of statutory services.
Calderdale Councils Key Strategic Plans

Our vision and aims
“All children in Calderdale are happy, healthy, safe and successful, regardless of who is looking after them.”

As corporate parent and grandparents, we want to ensure that we make good decisions for children and young people. Becoming Looked After is a serious step in the life of a child or young person so we have robust systems in place ensuring that children and young people become looked after in a timely manner, with their best interest at the heart of decision making.

Our strategic priorities
- Start healthy and stay healthy
- Be safe at home, in the school and in the community
- Enjoy learning and achieve their best
- Develop social skills and take part in activities
- Have a voice in decisions that affect their lives
- Stay in education and get a job

Leadership and the Corporate Parenting Panel
This Strategy will be adopted by Full Council. The Calderdale County Council Cabinet Member for Children and Families has the lead political role in ensuring this strategy is taken forward and the Director for Children’s Services providing the strategic service leadership. The Corporate Parenting Panel will be responsible for the monitoring of the identified key objectives in the Children looked after and leaving care strategy 2018 – 2021.

Calderdale’s children looked after and young people leaving care

At the end of March 2019, Calderdale council was caring for 338 Children looked after and young people, including unaccompanied asylum seeker children and young people.

At 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2019 Calderdale was actively supporting 203 young people aged between 15 ½ and 25 years leaving care. A further 95 young people aged 21 to 25 years were not yet engaged under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 extension of offer.

The ambitions we have for our children looked after and care leavers, and the ambitions we have for service delivery to ensure best possible outcomes are laid out in the Children looked after and leaving care strategy 2018 – 2021
## Corporate parenting Action plan 2019-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we do?</th>
<th>How will we do it?</th>
<th>Who will do it?</th>
<th>How will we measure success?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst Councillors, Officers and partner agencies.</td>
<td>Include Corporate parenting workshops within mandatory induction programme for Councillors.</td>
<td>Member Learning and Development Advisor</td>
<td>All elected members are aware of corporate parenting responsibilities.</td>
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<td>Our pledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Councillors signed up to both the care leavers and the Children looked after pledge.</td>
<td>As part of induction for newly elected members.</td>
<td>Lead Member and Member Learning and Development Advisor.</td>
<td>All members have signed the pledge and are aware of corporate parenting responsibilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Invite the children in care council to Full Council to present the pledge.</td>
<td>Supported and facilitated by the Voice and Influence Team and Pathways Leaving Care Service participation leads.</td>
<td>Right 2voice and UnO attend Full Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All newly appointed employees signed to the pledge.</td>
<td>As part of induction pack.</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>All employees are aware of corporate parenting responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All currently approved foster carers signed the Children Looked after pledge.</td>
<td>Circulated annually with payment policy.</td>
<td>Fostering service</td>
<td>All currently approved foster carers have signed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All newly approved foster carers signing the pledge.</td>
<td>As part of the Foster Carer Agreement.</td>
<td>Fostering service</td>
<td>All currently newly approved foster carers have signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected members have a clear understanding and awareness of the issues for children looked after and care leavers in the authority area and those placed out of area.</td>
<td>Quarterly reporting to corporate parenting panel.</td>
<td>Service Manager Children looked after</td>
<td>Compliance with reporting schedule. Minutes reflect questioning and challenge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Annual children looked after and care leavers report to Cabinet.</td>
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10 | Corporate Parent and Grandparent Strategy Calderdale Council - 2019 to 2021
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scrutiny</strong></td>
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<td>Be aware and responsive in our role of corporate parent and grandparent to children placed out of area and or with independent providers.</td>
<td>Corporate parenting panel / People Scrutiny to question and challenge officers in relation to this cohort of children and young people. Children in Care Council to ensure that the voices of those placed with independent providers are heard.</td>
<td>Corporate parenting panel and scrutiny to evidence awareness of the particular vulnerability of this cohort. Right 2voice and UnO consider, plan and action how to involve this group. supported and facilitated by the Voice and Influence Team and Pathways Leaving Care Service participation leads.</td>
<td>Compliance with reporting schedule. Minutes to record and reflect questioning and challenge. Evidence of inclusivity at Right2Voice and UnO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation 41 and 44 visits</td>
<td>Elected members to be willing to share cross party responsibility to increase the pool of members</td>
<td>Service Manager Children Looked after</td>
<td>Sufficient numbers of elected members to undertake this function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities for our children and young people</strong></td>
<td>Council and partners providing work experience opportunities for care leavers. Heads of service across the Council to encourage their services to identify work experience placements for our children and young people.</td>
<td>Heads of service</td>
<td>Baseline survey to capture willingness and opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of the impact of decision making across the Council on looked after children and care leavers. for example when procuring large contracts are there opportunities for our young people in terms of work experience and or apprenticeship opportunities.</td>
<td>Chief executive’s office to review how this can be achieved under current decision making processes</td>
<td>Chief executive’s office in consultation Right2Voice and UnO.</td>
<td>Part of the Council Social Value planning and procurement approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What will we do?</td>
<td>How will we do it?</td>
<td>Who will do it?</td>
<td>How will we measure success?</td>
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<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>Who will do it?</strong></td>
<td><strong>How will we measure success?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with children looked after and young people leaving care so that they can have a say in how decisions are made about the services that affect them, and so that they can influence those decisions.</td>
<td>Ensure Right2Voice and UnO are linked in with the youth parliament. Right2Voice and UnO are routinely consulted on major decisions.</td>
<td>Elected members and officers to ensure that there is evidence of appropriate consultation. Voice and Influence Team and Pathways Leaving Care Service participation leads.</td>
<td>Evidence in service plans about how young people’s voices have influenced service delivery. Participation Strategy Action Plan and outcomes.</td>
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<td>Young person’s versions of reports to corporate parenting panel will have as equal value as the full version of the report.</td>
<td>Reports will only be accepted if accompanied by a young person’s version. Feedback to the authors on the quality of those reports will be given by the young people.</td>
<td>Reporting officers Right2voice and UnO supported and facilitated by the Voice and Influence Team and Pathways Leaving Care Service participation leads.</td>
<td>Minutes of corporate parenting panel Positive feedback from young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The annual celebration events for children looked after and young people leaving care is supported practically by the Council and elected members</td>
<td>Elected members support the event with senior leaders from the Council.</td>
<td>Service manager children looked after, Director of Children’s Services and Lead Member</td>
<td>Cross party representation at the events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual report of “You said we did” to be presented to the children in care council, so that our children and young people can evaluate progress and commitment to corporate parenting.</td>
<td>Each council department will be asked to contribute to a survey and results feedback to the young people.</td>
<td>Director of Children’s Services</td>
<td>Evidence of progress and commitment to corporate parenting to inform development of this plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

- Children Looked After Pledge
- Leaving Care Pledge
- Children and young people’s strategic priorities
- Children looked after and leaving care strategy 2018 – 2021
- Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference
- Participation Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2021
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Applying corporate parenting principles to care and pathway planning
  Statutory guidance for local authorities