

# COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 2022

At 7.00 pm

in the

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, MAIDENHEAD,

## SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

### PART I

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
	ii. Corporate Parenting Forum Annual Report and Strategy Progress Report  To consider the recommendation from the Corporate Parenting Forum	3 - 32

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Report Title:	Corporate Parenting Forum Annual Report and Strategy Progress Report
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Carroll, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health and Transformation
Meeting and Date:	Full Council - 22/11/2022
Responsible Officer(s):	Sarah Moran, Deputy Director of Social Care, Achieving for Children
Wards affected:	All

www.rbwm.gov.uk



## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The term 'corporate parenting' refers to the council's collective responsibility to provide the best possible care and protection for children and young people who are 'looked after' or 'in care'.

As a corporate parent, elected members and all council employees, have a legal and moral duty to provide the children in our care with the same level of support, care and protection any good parent would give to their own children. This means that looked after children should be cared about as well as cared for and that all aspects of their health, development and wellbeing should be promoted and assured.

We have recently reviewed the effectiveness of our corporate parenting forum and have adopted 5 workstreams which will be responsible for taking forward actions linked with the 5 key priorities.

The report, Appendix A, is our new revised corporate parenting strategy for 2022-25 and has been developed with input from our children in care and care leavers. Our strategy sets out our vision for how we will work with our children in care and care leavers and what our best hopes are for their futures.

## **DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Full Council notes the report and:

- i) **takes note of progress and updates being made at the Corporate Parenting Forum and the new revised corporate parenting strategy attached as appendix A.**

## 1. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

### Options

**Table: Options arising from this report**

Option	Comments
<p>Full Council notes the report and takes account of progress and updates being made at the Corporate Parenting Forum and the new revised corporate parenting strategy attached as appendix A.</p> <p><b>This is the recommended option</b></p>	<p>This was endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Forum</p>

## 2. KEY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 On the 25th February 2019 full Council agreed four key priorities to ensure that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead provides effective corporate parenting. These were:

- Working together with young people, councillors, professionals and partner services;
- Listening to our children and young people and act on their views; ensuring they know what to expect from us;
- Ensuring all professionals and Elected Members are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities;
- Supporting and encouraging our Children in Care and Care Leavers to achieve their full potential.

2.2 Kickback representatives attend Corporate Parenting Forum meetings and carry out an activity with attendees to highlight issues they are facing or inadequacies within Children's Service or RBWM as a whole. These activities are the highlight of these meetings as they are often very thought provoking and change for the better comes from them. Reports being discussed are presented in a format that is clear, concise and can be understood by the children and young people attending. Corporate Parenting Forum Members have attended sessions and events run by or for Kickback including the end of residential BBQ, Total Respect Training and Kickback meetings.

2.3 Following a self-assessment of the Corporate Parenting Forum and in line with the need to refresh our Corporate Parenting Strategy we recognised that we could and should aim to support our care experienced young people to achieve more over the next three years. We consulted with our children and young people, a range of

professionals who work directly with our care experienced young people and our councillors who are active in promoting the corporate parenting agenda. The outcome of the consultation was a refocus of the Corporate Parenting Forum.

2.4 In order to keep our PROMISE of '*we want you to be safe, healthy, happy and settled. We want you to be ambitious, have your voice heard and we want to support you at every step of your journey towards independence*'. It was agreed that we will have five work streams across RBWM to focus the support for our care experienced children and young people.

1. Physical and Mental Health
2. Education Training Employment
3. Safety Security and Permanence
4. Journey to Independence
5. Voice and communication

2.5 Each work stream will have a lead officer with staff from all agencies working with young people and will include an elected member from the Corporate Parenting Forum. The work streams will agree key priorities that RBWM can sign up to and will develop an action plan to drive forward the priority areas. It is important to recognise these will be officer work streams that will report into the Corporate Parenting Forum, driving the support for this vulnerable cohort as part of our corporate parenting responsibility..

2.6 Each of the work streams will report into the Corporate Parenting Forum and are scheduled throughout the year in our forward plan. Oversight at the Corporate Parenting Forum will be essential in identifying any emerging themes, challenges and cross cutting issues. The Corporate Parenting Forum will ensure that actions are progressed by lead officers, offer support and challenge any barriers and be accountable for driving forward the identified priorities.

2.7 A wider action plan will be developed incorporating all the key priorities from each workstream. Progress in relation to this action plan will be scrutinised by Elected Members, Officers and young people through the Corporate Parenting Forum which continues to be well represented by young people. We will review the new corporate parenting workstreams and their effectiveness annually.

### **3. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT**

N/A

## 6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Kickback has been consulted on the new corporate parenting strategy and the key priority areas. Their input and feedback has helped shape the new strategy and subsequent work streams.

## 7. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 The full implementation stages are set out in table 1

**Table 1: Implementation timetable**

Date	Details
December 2022	Initial workstream meetings
13/12/22	Presentation of action plans for all workstreams
December 2023	Review of Corporate Parenting Forum and workstreams

## 8. APPENDICES

8.1 This report is supported by one appendix:

- Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25

## 9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

N/A

## 10. CONSULTATION - N/A

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date Rtn
<i>Mandatory</i> :	<i>Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>		
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	14/11/22	15/11/22
Emma Duncan	Director of Law, Strategy and Public Health/ Monitoring Officer	14/11/22	15/11/22
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	14/11/22	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	14/11/22	
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	14/11/22	14/11/22
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive	N/A	
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	N/A	
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People	11/11/22	

<i>Heads of Service (where relevant)</i>			
	N/A		
<i>External (where relevant)</i>			
N/A			

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cllr Carroll Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation	Yes
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### REPORT HISTORY


<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>	<b>To follow item?</b>
For information	No	Yes

Report Author: Sarah Moran, Deputy Director of Social Care Achieving for Children
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# Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025







**As our Children in Care and Care Leavers, we want every ONE of you to reach your full potential and to be happy, safe, and secure while you feel cared for, valued and respected.**

# Contents

<b>Foreword by us</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Royal Borough's Children in Care and Care Leavers</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A letter from you</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>You said, we did with you</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Our promise to you</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Our Priorities 2022-25</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PRIORITY 1: Your emotional wellbeing and physical health</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PRIORITY 2: Your education, training and employment</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PRIORITY 3: Your safety, security and permanency</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PRIORITY 4: Your journey to independence</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PRIORITY 5: Your voice and our communication with you</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Taking this Strategy Forward</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>You said, we will do alongside you</b>	<b>24</b>

## Foreword by us

### Cabinet Member Cllr Stuart Carroll and AfC DCS, Lin Ferguson



Cllr Stuart Carroll  
Cabinet Member for Adult Social  
Care, Health, Mental Health and  
Children's Services

As your corporate Parents in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, our vision, pledge and commitment to you is that you will have everything that good parents want for you.

We want you to be happy and healthy (both physically and emotionally), to feel safe, secure and protected from harm and exploitation and to feel supported each step of the way towards independence; but only when you are ready.

Most of all we want to support your ambitions and aspirations so that you can achieve whatever you want to achieve, whilst feeling cared for, valued and respected.

#### We will do this by:

- ensuring that everyone is working together with you - Elected Members, people working for the council and people working for other agencies
- really listening to what you have to tell us and doing something with it, to improve our support to you and to make our services even better
- being honest with you and always involving you in important decisions
- ensuring you know what to expect from us - we need to get better at explaining things!
- ensuring that Elected Members and people working for the council and other agencies know what being good corporate parents means
- supporting you all of the way, whatever that takes.



Lin Ferguson  
AfC - Director of Children's  
Services

It is with great pleasure that we introduce our new Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2022-2025. As a council we deliver lots of services, but our most important one is looking after and supporting you. We take our responsibilities to you very seriously, but sometimes we might not get things totally right. We want you to feel able to tell us when that happens, so we can put it right for you. Together we will achieve great things.

# Introduction

**When you come into 'care', the council, with support from its partners, becomes your 'Corporate Parent'. This probably sounds really weird to you, so what does it really mean? Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of all Elected Members, council staff and partner agencies to provide the best possible support and protection to you as our Children in Care and Care Leavers, right up to the age of 25.**

When you come into care, we have a big responsibility, as your corporate parents' to act and treat you in the same way that a good parent would act and treat their own child. Every good parent wants the best for their child; to see their child flourish with good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school, to enjoy good relationships with friends, to make the most of leisure opportunities, hobbies and interests and to progress towards adulthood ready to lead an independent life. This might be going into higher education, training or employment, being confident and financially secure. As corporate parents, we should continually ask ourselves two questions:

- Would this be good enough for my child?
- What can we do to put it right?

That's why the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead has the same goals for you as any good parent would and takes very seriously the moral and legal responsibility for supporting you to live happy and fulfilling lives.

## The Legal Context

This collective responsibility, with everybody working together in your best interests, was first laid out in the Children Act back in 1989, probably before you were even born! The Children and Social Work Act 2017 then outlined 7 key corporate parenting principles that we should always consider when caring for you. These are:

- to act in your best interests and promote your physical and mental health and wellbeing
- to encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account your views, wishes and feelings
- to help you gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the council and its partners
- to promote high aspirations for you and seek to secure the best outcomes for you
- for you to be safe and to have stability in your home life, your relationships and your education
- to prepare you for adulthood and independent living

The Royal Borough will do this with its partners. By partners we mean colleagues who work in health settings, the police, housing, education and others.

The Corporate Parenting Forum of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) is also delighted to be able to share this new updated Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2022-2025. This has been developed based on what you have said to us, and what Elected Members, council staff and staff from other agencies have said to us.

This Strategy outlines our priorities for supporting you and sets a framework for the council and its partners to be held accountable for the pledges we have made to you.

# The Royal Borough's Children in Care and Care Leavers

## Did you know?

In the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead we have a relatively small and stable Children in Care and Care Leaver Population.



### 140 Children in Care (June 2022)

Our numbers of Children in Care (CiC), for the last three years, have ranged between 120-140. We have seen a growing number of CiC recently, due to a receiving more Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. The most recently published Windsor and Maidenhead CiC rate (37 per 100,000) is lower than national (67) statistical neighbours (46). This has been the trend over a number of years and some of this is down to the robust practice of placing CiC within their family and community, wherever possible.

### 54 of our Care Leavers are aged between 16-18 and 67 aged between 18-25

This age range has largely been consistent over the last three years

### 121 Care Leavers (June 2022)

This figure has largely been consistent over the last year, with 122 in June 2021

### Just over 70% of our CiC are subject to a legal order

This represents a slight decrease over time.

### 97% of Children in Care had been visited within timescales within the 12 months

This represents an improved trajectory on previous years (92% and 95%)

### Over 40% of our Children in Care are over the age of 10

The 16+ age group being the largest cohort (over 40%). This is a slight decrease since 2018/19, but still remains higher than national (24%) and inner London (36%) averages.

### We are regularly 'in touch' with 97% of our Care Leavers

This has been consistently high since 2020



**100% of CiC Statutory Reviews were held within timescale**

This is a consistently high area of performance overall.

**35 young people over the age of 16 live in semi-independent accommodation**

This represents a small increase on previous years

**In the last 12 months, we have received 57 new Children into Care**

This is an increase on the previous two years of 10.

**60% of our CiC have homes in one of our AfC IFA foster placements. This includes 'Connected Carers'.**

This is a slight reduction over time and we are looking at this whilst at the same time prioritising and promoting our foster carer recruitment and retention activities.

**7% of our Children in Care are currently living in residential provision.**

This has been a consistent number since 2020.

**13 Care Leavers are 'staying put' with their foster carers**

The number of 'staying put' arrangements have increased year on year for the past three years.

**In the last 12 months, three Children in Care have been placed for adoption**

This figure is line in with the previous three years

**29% of Children in Care are placed more than 20 miles from their home**

This means that 71% of our Children in Care are placed within 20 miles of their home. Due to the small size of our borough and the high number of surrounding boroughs, we find this a more helpful performance indicator than the percentage of Children in Care placed 'out of borough'.



**69% of our Children in Care for a duration of 2.5 years and under the age of 16 have been in the same placement for two years or more.**

Placement stability is one of our top priorities and we have seen, with a few blips, a positive trajectory over the past three years. Robust Placement Planning Meetings and regular Stability Meetings, when required, have supported this improvement.



**12.1% of Care Leavers (16-25) are not in education, employment or training (Spring Term 2022)**

The NEET figures for this cohort reduced by 15.9% on the same point last academic year to 12.1%. This is lower (positive) than 36% nationally.

**11.6% of KS5 students are not in education, employment or training (Spring Term 2022)**

This is well below the national average for Children in Care (positive) which is 28.5%

**95% of our Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation.**

This is an improvement on previous years (91% and 90%)

**8.5% average absence data for Children in Care (Spring Term 2022)  
OC2 Cohort - 6.9%**

This is below the national average (positive) of 9.1% for Children in Care

**22.6% persistent absence data for Children in Care (Spring Term 2022)**

This is below the national average (positive) of 30.4%. A whole school attendance strategy is in place.

**There have not been any Permanent Exclusions for Children in Care for over five years**

**17.5% of our Children in Care enrolled at university in the 2021/22 academic year**

Although this is lower than the national average for non Children in Care, it is nearly three times higher (positive) than those who are Children in Care (6%)

**95.9% of statutory school age CiC attend good or outstanding schools (Spring Term 2022)**

August 2022

*Dear Corporate Parents,*

Thank you for asking us to put our views into our new Strategy. In our letter before the last Strategy update in 2018 we challenged you to “prove us wrong” that we are not just names on pieces of paper. We wanted you to get to know us better and in turn we would get to know you and what you do better.

Of course we know that Covid and lockdown really got in the way of us being able to do some of this. We want to thank those of you who came to our Zoom meetings or to our sessions when we got back being face to face. We hope that over the coming months we will see more of you and that we can create a plan together to communicate better with each other. We like you being a human face to us, we like it when you put your trainers on and come to play football with us, we like when you do arts and crafts with us and not just be a big scary name like Corporate Parent.

We know that there has been a lot of progress made in recent times and we appreciate all the hard work you do and we know you now always ask “would this be good enough for my own child” to make sure the service we get is the best it can be.

We've got birthday cards from you which is nice. Some of us get to chair our own review meetings which we love. Can you help more of us to be comfortable doing this in the future? Many of us have very good relationships with our Social Workers and PA's. We like when they support us and help us and set targets to be achieved within timescales. We hate when some of them leave without saying goodbye or introducing us to a new worker.

Kickback is one of our favourite things and we love spending time with young people with similar stories and trying new things. It helps us feel a part of something special. Can you help us get more young people involved?

We are placed in care without any say in the where, with who or for how long. We want you on our side and not be told it's just our perception of things if we differ. We know some rules are there to protect us but please don't beat about the bush; just explain things honestly and listen to our opinions and let's work things out together.

Our foster carers sometimes threaten us with “telling our Social Worker” if we are naughty or misbehave and professionals still sometimes use BIG words that we don't understand even though this is a feature of our Total Respect Training. Can this training be mandatory for all staff?

We want things to be easy like visiting our friends, getting driving lessons, writing a CV, helping with university applications, getting a passport or getting access to our savings to be easy - we should not have to wait too long for these things to happen.

We want you to trust us, we want to trust us. Help us to grow our aspirations and be the best version of ourselves we can be. So while you are not our mum and dad and cannot fix everything for us we really want you to try to make the simple things in life be less complicated for us. We need more help to become independent adults. We are not just foster kids - we are human beings and we need your help.

*From, Kickback*



You have told us not to call you 'cases'. We have heard this and we will call you by your name and nothing else.

You would like to know who to call when your social worker is on leave. We have set up a phone number to call where someone will help you if your social worker or personal advisor is on leave.

You want somewhere to go when you have a 'gripe' and don't want to formally complain. We have set up the gripe corner and we will keep this under review with you.

You said that we needed to be better at supporting your education, training or employment post 16. We have set up a Virtual College.

You said we should continue giving you the opportunity to participate and influence council decision making. We set up the Girl's Policy Forum and have re-established the Youth Council.

You said we need to 'sort out' our cultural allowances for you. We have agreed a new process for organizing cultural allowances.

You said that our Pathway Plan document was not young person friendly. We worked alongside you to produce and implement a new young person friendly document.

You want social workers to respond quicker when you contact them. Workers will now let you know within 24 hours that they have your message and will give you a full response within 48 hours unless urgent.

You said that Care Leavers up to 25 should have Council Tax Exemption. Full Council has agreed Council Tax Exemption for you up to the age of 25.

You said you want to know about new social workers and those on the Corporate Parenting Forum. In co-production with you we have developed and implemented the 'About Me' document.

You said that we needed a specialist service for you. We set up a dedicated Children in Care/Care Leavers Service for you.

## Our promise to you

This pledge has been developed with you because everyone who works in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and its partners want to ensure that all of you have the same chances as any other young people. In the following pages, we confirm our pledges to you if you are in our care or are a Care Leaver.

# OUR PROMISE...

...to you as our Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead children in care and care leavers, even if you are living outside of the borough at the moment.



These promises are commitments to you agreed by everyone who works in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and their partners, because we want you to be the very best version of you that you can be.

We want you to be safe, healthy, happy and settled. We want you to be ambitious, have your voice heard and we want to support you at every step of your journey towards independence.



## KEEP YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- We want to know about the important people in your life and support you to see them in a way that is safe for you.
- We will work together with you to help you understand what is happening to you and why
- We will talk with you and listen to your opinion when we are arranging for you to see family and friends.
- We will enable you to live with family and near friends wherever possible.
- If you are not allowed to see someone, your social worker or personal advisor will make sure you understand the reasons why.

## GETTING READY FOR INDEPENDENCE

- You will only leave care when you are ready to do so.
- We will give you the support you need when you leave care and help prepare you for independence the best way we can. This means you will have a personal advisor to support you from 16 and you can continue with this support until you are 25, if you want or need it.
- If you have been in care for 12 months, we will open a savings account for you. You will have a say about how your money is managed and once you are 18 you can make withdrawals.
- We will ensure you have a national insurance number and a passport.
- Once you leave school, we will help you to get the best chances for training, further education and employment via the Virtual College.
- We will help you to learn all the practical skills you will need to live independently when you are ready, such as managing budgets and cooking.
- We will make sure you have the right place to live at all times and help you find and settle into a new home emotionally, financially, securely and safely.
- We will make every effort to help you remain living with your foster carer after 18 and up to the age of 21 if you wish. This is called 'staying put'.

## GET YOU A GOOD EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

- When you are in care, we will give you the support you need to do really well in education and help you to enjoy your interests and hobbies.
- We will respect your confidentiality in nursery, school or college and agree with you where and when you are comfortable to have any meetings about being in care.
- We will have high aspirations for you and will help you to make the most of your talents.
- We will help you to achieve good grades at school and go to college or university if that's what you want.
- We will make sure you have a place at a good school and that you attend regularly, that you have access to a computer and study resources.
- At school there will be support from a designated teacher and you will have a high quality personal education plan.
- We will only change your school if this is absolutely necessary.
- If you are a care leaver, your Pathway Plan will have clear information about what support will be available when you leave care, go to university or undertake an apprenticeship, vocational training or get a job.

## KEEPING HEALTHY AND HAPPY

- We will make sure that you get regular health and dental checks and that you are able to stay healthy.
- We will get you the right information and find the right emotional support for you if you would like to talk about your worries or you need help with your feelings.
- We will provide you with information about how to keep safe and inform you about risk taking behaviour.
- We will help you to understand why you are in care and make sense of your life story.
- We will support you in engaging with positive leisure activities and hobbies that you enjoy and make you happy.
- Information about your health will be kept confidential and only shared with you and people who need to know like your carer and doctor.
- We will give you your health passport and your health history when you are 18.

## YOUR SAFETY, STABILITY AND PERMANENCY

- We want you to feel safe and promise to do all we can to look after you and keep you protected from harm.
- If you feel threatened or are hurt, need help or are worried about anything, we will make sure you know where to go for help and that carers, social workers, personal advisors and teachers support you.
- We will provide you with a safe home to live with suitable, well-trained carers, where you will be happy, taken care of and you will only move if absolutely necessary.
- We will give you all the information about your new home, your new carers and the area you are going to be living.
- You will be given information about the support you can get from Youth Services, our youth engagement officer, social workers and personal advisors.
- You will have a written care plan or pathway plan that says how we will take care of you - it is reviewed every six months. This will all be done with you.
- We will use the plan to make arrangements with you for the future so that as much as possible, you do not have to deal with unexpected changes.
- If you get in trouble we will make sure that the right adult is there to offer you help.

## YOUR VOICE: MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- We will ask you what you want and listen to what you say. We can't promise to do everything, but when we can't, we will explain why not.
- We will always make sure that you are involved in the decisions made about your life and we will find ways to help you tell us your views.
- We want to know what you think about the support you are given and the services that we provide and help us to shape and develop the service for the better.
- There will be opportunities to be involved in interviewing and training staff with our Total Respect Training.
- We will make sure you know your rights and what services and support you can have. We will have a Local Offer that is accessible to you and easy for you to understand.
- You will be given information and support about how to get help from an advocate or to make a complaint. We have the Gripe Corner available to you to if you are frustrated with something in the service and there are other electronic ways to give feedback to us like the Have My Say app.
- We will encourage and support you to be as involved in your review meeting as you want and also encourage you to be part of our Children in Care Council, Kickback or the Care Leavers Hub.

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

**Lin Ferguson**, Achieving for Children Director of Children's Services (Windsor & Maidenhead)

E: [lin.ferguson@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:lin.ferguson@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

**Sarah Moran**, Deputy Director Children's Social Care (Windsor & Maidenhead)

E: [sarah.moran@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:sarah.moran@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

**Gripe Corner**: where you can email when things annoy or frustrate you or to share good news stories too

E: [gripecorner@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:gripecorner@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

**Single Point of Access (SPA)**: Who you can call in an emergency or if you are seriously worried about something

T: 01628 683150 opt 5

**Children in Care, Leaving Care, Children and Young People with Disability Service**

E: [cypds@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:cypds@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

**Children in Care Council (Kickback)**:

E: [kickback@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:kickback@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

**RBWM Youth Council**:

E: [youthcouncil@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:youthcouncil@rbwm.gov.uk)

**Virtual School and College**: 020 8831 6037

**Complaints**: 01628 683857

**Specialist LAC Nurse**: 01753 638687

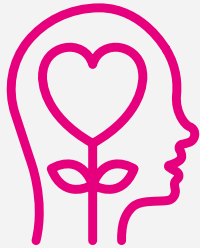
E: [BE.LAC@nhs.net](mailto:BE.LAC@nhs.net)

**Ofsted complaints**: 03001 234666

# Our Priorities 2022-25

## At a glance

We have shaped these priorities based on your feedback and feedback from foster carers, Royal Borough staff and staff from other agencies. This section sets out each priority in turn, highlighting the themes for improvement and how we intend to achieve success. It aims to ensure that you are happy, healthy and secure.



Your physical and mental health and wellbeing



Your voice, including how we communicate with you



Your education, training and employment

# YOU



Your safety, stability and permanency



Your journey to independence



Underpinning all of these priorities above will be your identity and diversity - the 'unique you'

# Our Priorities 2022-25

## The Unique You

**Underpinning all of the five priorities is the importance of your identity and personal characteristics - the 'unique you'.**

**We will treat you and support you to be the unique individuals that you are, so that you understand your background and feel confident and assured about your identity.**

**We believe that your identity, including your race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation and abilities are fundamental considerations when supporting you at every stage of your journey. We fundamentally believe that you should aspire to be who you want to be, regardless of your personal characteristics.**

We want you to celebrate who you are, but we also recognise that we have a duty to support you with this. A recent piece of project work highlighted that your social worker and other staff need to do more to understand your personal characteristics and how these may impact on your identity and your sense of self. We want you to know that we are committed to doing this.

The Black Lives Matters agenda highlighted systemic racism in society and reinforced the responsibility we have to tackle racial inequalities and deliver on our ambition to be an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory service, council and local partnership.

We are committed to supporting you if you identify as LGBTQIA, or are unsure whether you might be LGBTQIA and we are actively working to improve the way we use data and knowledge of the services that could help you the most. We will listen to you to really understand how we can best tailor support to your individual needs. We want you to feel proud and comfortable with who you are.

We are committed to supporting you if you come out as trans or if you are unsure about whether you might be trans. We know it is likely that you will need support in areas specific to thinking about your gender identity and we will go on the journey with you.

We are committed to supporting you if you have disabilities or learning difficulties. We know how much you can achieve and we want to support you to be the very best that you can be.

It is also very important to mention the importance of poverty and deprivation on your sense of identity. We recognise the links between deprivation and coming into care and we are committed to understanding the impact of this on you and your family and pledge to tackle inequalities and unfairness in all its forms.

### **We have more to do, but we are committed to:**

- Improving our identity and equality data and ensuring that we consider the effectiveness of our work with you through evidence from quality assurance activities. We need to address any gaps and understand the impact of discrimination and inequality on your experiences.
- Improving the understanding of our staff so that they can create safe spaces for you to be open about your identity and what is important to you and know how best to support your individual experiences so that you feel safe, well supported and can thrive.
- Understanding how we can best support you if you are an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker
- Ensuring that staff are knowledgeable and clear with you about your rights.
- Monitoring our performance as corporate parents in relation to your race and ethnicity, through regular engagement with foster carers and you; obtaining routine feedback and reporting to the Corporate Parenting Forum.

## **Our Priorities 2022-25**

### **PRIORITY 1: Your emotional wellbeing and physical health**

**We will support and encourage you, as a partnership, to live a happy and healthy lifestyle, ensuring that everyone pulls together to support your emotional wellbeing and physical health. Supporting your emotional wellbeing and physical health is our number one concern.**

Many of you may have had a really hard start in life and will have experienced trauma and what we call 'adverse childhood experiences'. If you are one of our unaccompanied asylum seeking young people, you may well be separated from your family, friends and community.

Being happy and confident is a key factor in looking after your emotional wellbeing, particularly when it comes to your race, sexuality, disability and gender. It's therefore crucial that we encourage you to be comfortable with who you are and demonstrate sensitivity and inclusivity of difference in order for you to thrive.

Your Specialist Nurse for Children in Care will support you as a Child in Care and we have worked hard to ensure you get your health history and passport on your eighteenth birthday.

We now have a Mental Health Coordinator in place and have regular meetings to ensure that if you have emotional wellbeing concerns, that we work together to get you the right support to meet your needs, from the right place at the right time.

#### **We have more to do, but we are committed to:**

- Providing a holistic health and dental assessment within four weeks of you entering care, and annually thereafter (or six-monthly for Under 5's). Our health team will listen to your problems and understand your needs, reviewing your physical health, growth and development.
- Providing an enhanced offer around your emotional wellbeing, particularly if you are a Care Leaver. Alongside this and as part of our offer to you, we will actively pursue free prescriptions for you up to the age of 25, if you are a Care Leaver, along with dental and eye care.
- Making sure that you know how to access health services and adult services. If you need support from adult services, we will work with our colleagues to improve the transitional arrangements for you, so you receive ongoing support after you reach the age of 18.
- We will consider how we can best support your emotional wellbeing needs by talking to you and agreeing a plan in our Wellbeing Panel.
- If you have substance misuse issues, we will intervene early to provide all the support you might need.
- We will ensure that information about your health is kept confidential and only shared with you and the people who need to know, such as your carer and doctor.
- We will address and tackle the specific inequalities faced by you if you have disabilities.

## **Our Priorities 2022-25**

### **PRIORITY 2: Your education, training and employment**

**We will champion you at all times and help you flourish in education, training or employment, supporting lifelong learning and the pursuit of your interests.**

**Ensuring that you are in good education, employment, apprenticeships and training will always be a priority for us as we know they offer the greatest opportunities for you to build a successful career and future. This includes making the necessary adaptations if you have special educational needs or disabilities, to ensure you have an equal chance to succeed.**

You are unique and have your own interests and hobbies. These provide fantastic opportunities for you to release stress or frustrations, improve your mental wellbeing and feel connected to something you love. Therefore, in Windsor and Maidenhead, we will always maintain high aspirations for you and support you to make the most of your talents.

#### **We have more to do, but we are committed to:**

- Continuing our close partnership working with AfC Virtual School/College, which ensures monitoring, support and advice for you throughout the year.
- Ensuring that you achieve your full academic potential and make the most of your talents, whilst targeting support to those from Black, Asian, and other ethnic backgrounds, where needed.
- Identifying if you have any Special Education Needs (SEN) or disabilities and meet these needs through an Education Health Care Plan or other SEN Support; helping you to overcome any barriers to educational achievement.
- Continuing to analyse correlations between race and educational attainment and employment, ensuring our approaches address disproportionality in attainment.
- Helping you to achieve your potential through education, training and good quality employment.
- Making sure you have a place at a good or outstanding school or college and that you are attending regularly through daily Welfare Call Attendance checks. We will follow up any concerns on the same day, closely monitor weekly attendance data and collaborate with schools and carers to overcome any reasons for school absence.
- Guaranteeing that you have access to digital devices, study resources, tuition and a high quality Personal Education Plan. This plan will set aspirational targets, which the network will support you to meet.
- Ensuring you have excellent support from a Designated Teacher at your school, who will keep in regular contact with the Virtual School and College. When you come into care or change school, the Personal Education Plan timeframe is 20 days.
- Ensuring that you have a Pathway Plan that has clear information about what support is available once you leave care, go to university or undertake vocational training/ apprenticeships; also connecting you into training, coaching and other opportunities.
- Ensuring that you are ready to engage in learning, by providing emotional support and encouragement through mentoring.
- Ensuring that the 'family firm' (the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Council) offers you, where appropriate, a work shadowing opportunity, a traineeship or an apprenticeship. These should be ring fenced where appropriate..
- Setting up a local Business Fair for local businesses and challenging them about how they can best support you. We will provide training and support to them as needed.
- Speaking to colleagues in Human Resources to ensure you can be included in any Workforce Strategy, if you are a Care Leaver, with a guaranteed interview with a contextual offer for entry points.
- Developing an incentive scheme for you if you are seeking work.
- Reducing our 'not in education, training or employment' (NEET) figure even further.



### **PRIORITY 3: Your safety, security and permanency**

**We will ensure that you are safe from harm, experience stability, have somewhere suitable to live and be cared for by excellent carers.**

**We will work harder to ensure that you receive the right support at the right time so that you can remain with your family or within your community, if this is safe for you. We will celebrate your family successes, but if concerns about your safety or wellbeing persist, we will take swift action to ensure you have a safe and secure place to live - even if this means having to come into the care of the local authority.**

As corporate parents, we listen to and train our carers to have all the tools they need to be the best 'carer' or you. We also understand the importance of support networks and want to make sure that you have adults you can rely on and trust.

We know that uprooting you from your home or having to change where you live can be really tough, so we will continue to work hard to find you somewhere to live that will allow you to flourish.

#### **We have more to do, but we are committed to:**

- Providing you with a safe home to live with carers who are suitable and well trained.
- Trying to identify the right 'carer match' for you, in relation to things like your culture.
- We will work towards no longer applying 'intentionality' to you if you are a Care Leaver and that you are given priority in housing allocation. We will also listen to the type of housing that you would like.
- Support you, if you are moving into your own place, by funding things like Wifi, carpets, a cooker, fridge freezer and a microwave.
- Pursuing further training/Taster Flats to promote a 'try before you buy' option.
- Ensuring that you are never offered a property that is not good enough for our own children.
- Only moving you if it is absolutely necessary.
- Continuing to help you to find stability, build trust with professionals and identify risks early to avoid you being unsafe or entering the criminal justice system.
- Giving you all the information we can about your new home, carers and area you will be living in. You will be given information about the support available from youth services, including on education, training and careers and signposting to services.
- Listening to your views and negotiating boundaries and rules as part of 'Placement Planning Meetings'.
- Drawing on the rich experience of our foster carers and enabling them to provide you with caring, respectful and safe care.
- Continuing to challenge ourselves to offer the best services and develop our approaches to achieving your stability and permanency.
- Continuing to explore family and friend placements in order for you to return to your family if that is in your best interests.

### **PRIORITY 4: Your journey to independence**

**We will help prepare you for the world of work and support you to become an active citizen when you leave care. We are committed to preparing you for independence in the best way possible and at a pace agreed with you.**

It is important that we start talking to you about slowly building your independence, in small steps, as would be expected of any good parent. You may need more support than others, or you may need less or different support. The point is that we will agree with you what this should look like and work with you to do it in a timescale that works for you. We will never 'throw you into adulthood' at 18, but work with you, even if that takes a longer time, to make sure you are ready at every stage of your journey.

Lots of people can be involved in supporting you - it is a real team effort with you at the centre! This could include your own family, foster carers, residential key workers, social workers, teachers from your school, teachers from the Virtual School, Youth Workers, CAMHS/other therapeutic support, housing officers. We know that at times you may find it hard to work with us, or to reach out for support. We will work with you to find a way forward that works for you, but your safety and wellbeing will always be our priority.

#### **We have more to do, but we are committed to:**

- Making every effort to help you remain living with your foster carer after the age of 18. This is called 'staying put'.
- Ensuring that you can safely build the time you spend with your friends independently, when this is right for you. We have given foster carers 'delegated responsibilities' to let you stay over at a friend's house without having to ask the social worker permission. However your foster carer will need to be satisfied that you will be safe where you are going. Please don't get mad when you are asked for some details - your carers are only doing what a good parent would!
- Delivering an independence programme on a range of issues that will be important to you as you get older. This could include managing budgets, applying for jobs, household maintenance, keeping safe and healthy, making and maintaining good relationships, accessing universal services, shopping and cooking.
- Ensuring you have a National Insurance Number, passport and savings account.
- Supporting you if you are a young parent.
- Ensuring you have a Personal Advisor from the age of 16, up until the age of 25 if you want this and ensuring that you are fully involved in all decisions.

## **Our Priorities 2022-25**

### **PRIORITY 5: Your voice and our communication with you**

**We want you to see in practice that we are serious about making sure that what you have to say counts. We want you to see our actions and not just our words.**

It is very important that you are involved in decision making about your own life. However it is also important that you help us to understand what is working well and what is not working well, so that you can help us to improve the services we offer to other children and young people.

We have a range of ways in which you can have a say in what happens in your own life. You can speak to your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), Social Worker or Personal Adviser. You can also fill in the Electronic Feedback Form and/or the My Say app.

Our Children in Care and Care Leavers have also helped us to co-produce and improve how we deliver our services and you can be involved in this too. Some of the things that this has recently included have been designing a new, young person friendly Pathway Planning document, getting Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers up to the age of 25, creating a dedicated CiC and Care Leavers Service, changing arrangements for you being able to make contact with someone when your Social Worker or Personal Adviser is away. You can do this by being involved in the Children in Care Council (Kickback), the Care Leavers Hub and the Corporate Parenting Forum, even if you don't live in the borough.

#### **We have more to do, but we are committed to:**

- Improving our published local offer so you can be clear about what support is available to you. This will include a 21-25 year old offer, an offer for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers, an offer for Care Leavers entering or leaving custody, an offer for Care Leavers as Parents, an offer for Care Leavers going into Further Education or University and a digital offer - broadband, laptops, mobile data etc. We are committed to making this a format that is easily accessible and easy to read.
- Improving how we engage with you if you are one of our older Care Leavers, so we can support you and you can support us to make our offer even better.
- Setting up a regular Advisory Group with the Director of Children's Services.
- Employing a Care Leaver to help us improve our social media communication with you. This is really important particularly if you live out of the borough.
- Sending you a regular newsletter and this will include what was discussed at the Corporate Parenting Forum.
- Making your Total Respect training mandatory for staff.

# Taking this Strategy Forward

## The Corporate Parenting Forum

### We will take this Strategy forward via the Corporate Parenting Forum

#### The aim of our Forum

The aim of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead's Corporate Parenting Forum is to ensure that the council is carrying out its responsibilities to you as good corporate parents, whether you are a Child in Care or a Care Leaver.

#### The remit of our Forum

- To provide leadership across the council and amongst its partners to help promote your safety and your health and wellbeing, whether you are one of our Children in Care or one of our Care Leavers
- To take responsibility for the quality of the services you receive from us
- To share expertise and knowledge to help find solutions to complex issues
- To agree what services and support should be prioritised for you
- To listen to you and involve you in discussions and decision making.

#### The key objectives of our Forum

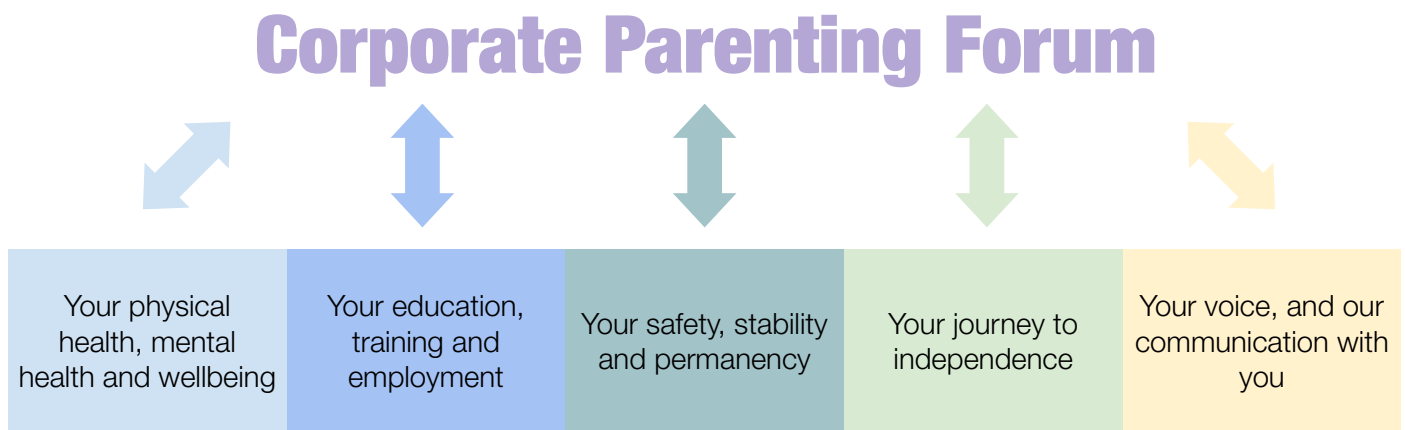
- To continue to raise awareness of and promote commitment to the corporate parenting role across the whole council and its partners, so that we are the best corporate parents that we can be
- To 'change hearts and minds' - to lead attitudinal and behavioural change across the whole council so that corporate parenting is seen as everyone's responsibility
- To make sure that Elected Members receive relevant information, briefings and training
- To inform, advise and make recommendations to the Cabinet and Full Council on key issues that affect you. For example, we did this when we took your recommendation about Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers up to the age of 25.
- To monitor how well council departments and partner agencies such as health and the police, are working together in order to put you at the centre of everything we do, so we are doing all that we can together to support you to be safe, happy and secure.
- To make sure that we are making progress on our 5 key priorities and take action if we are not, by holding to account departments or partner agencies that are not helping to deliver on our priorities.
- To monitor the performance of the council and its partners against the promises we made to you in the pledge.
- To regularly look at performance data, outcomes from quality assurance activities (like audits) and by talking to you, to see whether we are making a positive difference to your lives.
- To make sure we have the right types of homes for you to live in, at the right time for you. We have something called a Sufficiency Strategy and the Forum needs to regularly look at this to make sure we get this right.
- To really listen to what you have to say and ensure that what you have to say is central to the work of the Forum.
- To make sure we have people at the Forum who can make a difference and make decisions.

# Our Priorities 2022-25

## How we will meet these objectives

Based on feedback from you, we agree that the best way to take forward our Corporate Parenting Strategy and make the positive differences we all want to see is to change the structure and format of our Corporate Parenting Forum. We will:

- Create five themed workstreams of the Corporate Parenting Forum, based on the five key priorities in this Corporate Parenting Strategy. These groups will directly feed into the Corporate Parenting Forum (see below). Each workstream will be chaired by a senior subject expert, who can also make decisions. Each workstream will have an Elected Member Champion and relevant operational champions who can contribute meaningfully to the topic. You will be a very important part of these workstreams so we can co-produce work alongside you. Each workstream will construct a terms of reference and an action plan to deliver on its specific responsibilities from the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The individual work streams will meet on a regular basis.



- Each workstream will report directly into the Corporate Parenting Forum and the Forum will provide scrutiny and challenge to ensure that progress is being made. Progress will be evidenced by relevant data, quality assurance activity and feedback from you and identified gaps will be actively addressed.
- The membership, agenda items and the frequency of the Corporate Parenting Forum will be reviewed. This is so that the right people attend this important Forum. The Forum will invite individuals or groups who can assist the Forum in understanding your needs and experiences better, help make service improvements and support you in having improved outcomes.

### **The Corporate Parenting Forum will:**

1. Scrutinise and challenge the progress and effectiveness of the five workstreams against their action plans. This might include data, quality assurance activity etc.
2. Maintain the practice of our Children in Care Council (KICKBACK) and our Care Leavers Hub taking full responsibility for an agenda item at every meeting.
3. Consider and agree what training should be offered to Elected Members, council and partner staff
4. Consider and agree key diary dates - e.g. barbecues, take over days.
5. Agree what needs to be presented to Cabinet or Full Council
6. Maintain a 'risk log' outlining areas where there are concerns or service gaps and agree how these should be escalated.
7. Receive, scrutinise and challenge reports, at least annually - Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Service; Annual Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Report, Annual Participation Report; Annual Report on your Health; Annual Report of Educational Achievement and destinations; Annual Children in Care Impact Report; Annual Care Leavers Impact Report; Annual report on how well we are safeguarding you. We will continue our practice of creating young person friendly versions of these reports.
8. Celebrate your individual and/or collective achievements at important events like your Achievement Awards.
9. Receive information about compliments and complaints made by you.

### **Membership of the Corporate Parenting Forum**

- The Corporate Parenting Forum will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
- There will be at least 5 Elected Members and substitutes, by adopting the usual appointment arrangements.
- Representatives from Kickback and the Care Leavers Hub
- There will be 2 lay members; one who is care experienced and one with experience of fostering
- The Lead Officers for the Corporate Parenting Forum will be:
  1. AfC Director of Children's Services
  2. AfC Deputy Director of Social Care
  3. AfC Associate Director of Children in Care and Care Leavers
  4. AfC Executive Headteacher of the Virtual School and College (also known as the Associate Director for the Educational Achievements of children and young people with a social worker)
  5. AfC Team Manager for Children in Care or Care Leavers
  6. RBWM Senior Council Officer
  7. Senior Health Officer
  8. The Executive Director of People will attend periodically

Members of the Forum will be required to attend appropriate training and be subject to a check by the Vetting and Barring Scheme as appropriate.

### **Reporting mechanisms**

- The progress of this Strategy will be overseen by the Corporate Parenting Forum and will be reported to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- The Corporate Parenting Forum will meet at least 4 times a year
- The normal rules for Panel quoracy will apply.

We will improve access to emotional wellbeing support for you as our Care Leavers

We will ensure that you have the most appropriate homes (fostering, residential, staying put, semi-independent and independent) when you need it.

We will re-vamp your Corporate Parenting Forum so we can make a real difference.

We will work with our leisure service colleagues to agree an enhanced package for you as our CiC and Care Leavers

We will ensure that the 'family firm' is offering shadowing opportunities, traineeships, apprenticeships, and jobs to you as our Care Leavers and will hold a Business Fair for local businesses.

We will enhance our published local offer for you, particularly for specific areas.

We will hold a local business fair to encourage local businesses to support you as our Care Leavers

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