



Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	15 October 2021
Subject:	Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

Summary:

Looked After Children (Children in Care) and Care Leavers are amongst some of the most vulnerable people in our community. By the nature of their life experiences, prior to coming into care, they have more often than not have experienced abuse, neglect, and considerable harm. This group of young people have therefore nearly always experienced significant childhood trauma.

The young people in the care of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) are legally our responsibility and we therefore have a parenting responsibility to them. This report and accompanying presentation seeks to outline what those responsibilities are and bring to life how good corporate parenting can greatly improve the lives and outcomes for our young people.

Actions Required:

Members of the Committee are requested to review and comment on the report and presentation, and consider their role and how best to enhance and discharge their Corporate Parenting duty.

1. Background

The role that the County Council has to play in looking after children is one of the most important things we do. The term 'corporate parent' is broadly understood as being Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children. However, this also includes those working directly in Children's Services, Elected Members, and wider statutory partners in District Councils, the Police and Health. Corporate parenting is an important part of the role of all Members and it is vital that all parts of a local authority, beyond those directly responsible for children in care and pathway planning, recognise they have a key role too.

The Lead Member and all Members are responsible for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, are addressed. In doing so, Members and officers need to work closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and well-being of children and young people in our care.

Local authorities have a unique responsibility to the children they look after and their care leavers (relevant and former relevant children). In this context, the Local Authority is 'corporate parent' to these children and young people, and the critical question we should continually ask ourselves is 'would this be good enough for my child?'

A strong ethos of corporate parenting means that a sense of vision and responsibility towards the children they look after and their care leavers is a priority for everyone. We should recognise that looked-after children have the same needs – to be loved, cared for and feel safe - as other children. There are unique challenges that looked-after children and care leavers face that need to be considered when thinking about how to discharge our duty.

It's worthy to note that more than 60% of children become looked-after due to abuse, neglect or experiencing direct harm. These young people are far more likely to have poorer educational and health outcomes than their peers. Local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and well-being for the long term.

Attached at Appendix A is a copy of the Department for Education (DfE) guidance that outlines Corporate Parenting. A presentation will be provided to the Committee at the meeting.

2. Conclusion

Members are requested to review the report and presentation and consider how they can best work to support excellent outcomes for our Children in Care and those Leaving Care.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers - Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018)

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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