



# **CORPORATE PARENTING FORUM**

**Annual Report**

**2013 / 2014**

## DEFINITION OF CORPORATE PARENTING AND THE ROLE OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING FORUM

Corporate Parenting is 'the collective responsibility across services and across local authorities to safeguard and promote the life chances of Looked after Children.' The Terms of Reference for Swansea City and County Council state that the purpose of the Corporate Parenting Forum is to encourage all agencies and individuals to work together to deliver good outcomes for Looked After Children.

### **The Legal Responsibilities of the Elected Members and the Lead Member**

Every elected member of Swansea City and County Council has legal responsibilities under the Children Act 2004, as a corporate parent to the children in the care of the council. It is the responsibility of all Councillors to be satisfied that there is:

- Effective policy in place
- Mechanisms to support the participation of Looked After Children
- Good scrutiny to inform improvement

Lead members are responsible for:

- Overseeing partnerships and plans
- Promoting cooperation between authority and partners
- Leading Improvements in corporate parenting
- Promoting policy innovation and implementation
- Ensuring that Looked After Children are seen as a priority by the authority and planning partnerships

***The revised Terms of Reference were approved by Council on the 24 November 2011 and are attached as Appendix 1.***

### **Background**

The term 'Looked After' refers to any child or young person for whom the authority has, or shares parental responsibility, or for whom the authority provides care and accommodation to the child or young person on behalf of their parents. Every Council has a legal duty to act as 'corporate parent' for each and every child and young person that is looked after, whether this is a result of a voluntary agreement with their parents or under a care order made by the court.

The history of children and young people's welfare legislation has given rise to a variety of official powers and functions that have failed to ensure the appropriate outcomes for children. The Children's Act of 1989 allocated duties to local authorities, courts, parents and other agencies to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted, The subsequent Children's Act of 2004 was intended to bring all local government functions of children's welfare and education together and to better regulate official intervention in the interests of children and young people following a continuing failure to protect children such as Victoria Climbié.

In 2005 guidelines setting out the responsibility of elected members as Corporate Parents were developed with a further review in 2009 and the production of 'If this were my child' . . The Corporate Parenting Forum for Swansea City and County Council was originally established on 26 February 2009 to ensure that there is a joined up, effective and holistic approach to meeting the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Swansea. The original Terms of Reference were subsequently amended following a review of the role of Councillors as Corporate Parents which was reported in November 2010. Since then the Scrutiny committee has agreed that an annual report by the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Forum should be presented to the Council with a report on progress and recommendations. The relevant legal definitions are attached as Appendix 2.

## STATUTORY DUTIES

The relevant statutory responsibilities of the Local Authority relating to the Corporate Parenting, and Children In Need are contained in the following legislation.

**The Children Act 1989** provides the basic framework for services for children, and defines Local Authorities' responsibilities towards the care of children. In Part 3 it places a general duty on the Local Authority to provide support for children in need and their families;

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need;
- So far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families;

**The Children Act 2004** outlines the importance of co-operation between partners to improve wellbeing. It defines the relevant partners, and requires a plan which sets out the Authority's Strategy for discharging their responsibilities in this area, in improving the wellbeing of children. It provides for Lead Directors and Members who are responsible for co-ordinating and overseeing arrangements for the Local Authority and for Health to ensure effective working together.

These Leads as specified in The Children Act 2004, (Section 27) are as follows;

	<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>ABMU Health Board.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Lead Director for Children and Young People's Services	Chris Sivers,	Director of People	Christine Williams	Acting Director of Nursing
Lead/ Non Officer Member for Children and Young People's Services	Councillor Will Evans	Cabinet member for Learning and skills.	Gaynor Richards	Children's champion for ABMU. (Director, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service).

**The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010** places a number of duties, including action on child poverty, and the participation of children and young people in decision making by the Local Authority. This was strengthened by the **Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011** which places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and makes a number of other provisions relating to children's rights in Wales. The rights that most apply to Looked After Children include:

- Educational attainment (Article 29)
- Participation (Article 12)
- Confidence (Article 14)
- Health (Article 24)
- Wellbeing (Article 19)

**The Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010** is intended by the Welsh Government to develop an earlier intervention to mental health problems and is supposed to be available to all ages as it is 'age blind' legislation. So far implementation has primarily focused on adult services. The focus for children and young people has been in the provision of Advocacy services for children and young people who become involuntary hospital in-patients.

This year the Corporate Parenting Forum has received a full report on the Response to the Children's Commissioners report, *'Missing Voices'*, which places a number of expectations on the Local Authority in carrying out its duties to looked after children and other groups of children in need. It plans to receive an Annual Report from the Tros Gynnal service, and keep progress under review.

This will fit well as the Council progresses its intention to take Due Regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12. This states that *children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.*

The Forum has also been tasked with maintaining a health check on progress on the Children's Commissioner's report, Lost After Care, and intends to receive regular updates on progress.

## NATIONAL POLICY

**If This Were My Child**, was a joint publication from the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), and reminded all elected members and officers of the Council of their legal and moral duty encompassing education, health and welfare, leisure and holidays, culture and /or religion and what recognition and praise they receive. It was also stated that:

- Each Looked After Child should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- That the Children Act 1989 places a duty on the NHS, Local Authority housing and education to assist social services with Corporate Parenting
- The Children Act 2004 places a duty on the local authority, the NHS and other key partners to co-operate to improve the wellbeing of children in their area.

- Members should seek to ensure that provision of all public services used by Looked After Children and young people is high quality, 'joined up' and takes account of their need
- Collaboration occurs across a range of council services and key partners such as the health service, early years provision, education settings, further, higher and training providers, YOT, providers of social housing, leisure and youth services, and services contracted out to private providers.
- The Lead Member has a responsibility for improvements in Corporate Parenting
- Planning arrangements should facilitate an effective and holistic approach to meeting the needs of Looked After Children
- Adult services support Looked After Child leaving Care and their families.
- That there is clear political commitment and leadership for Looked After Children expressed in strategic and business plans.
- Members receive accurate information and find out about the basic range and quality of services faced and received by such children in their area.

**The Minister's Letter to Elected Members** was sent in June 2012, to reinforce the messages from *'If this Were My Child'*, to incoming council administrations and relevant Lead Members

**Questions that require answers on a minimum of a yearly basis:**

- 1) **How many Looked After Children, care leavers, children at risk and children in need are there? How old are they and what help do they require?**
- 2) **How many Looked After Children are placed out of county and what is the process for placement?**
- 3) **How are these out of area children and young people supported by social care, education, health and their local friends / families?**
- 4) **How many Looked After Children are from ethnic minorities?**
- 5) **How many Looked After Children are disabled and where are they placed?**
- 6) **How many emergency episodes are there and how are they managed?**
- 7) **How many Looked After Children are on the Child Protection Register and for what reason?**
- 8) **How many children and young people are subject to guardianship?**
- 9) **How many times a year are children and young people moved?**
- 10) **How many episodes of being Looked After has each child or young person experienced?**
- 11) **How many Looked After Children are being educated in a PRU?**
- 12) **How many Looked After Children have a PEP and are expected to meet the national qualification?**
- 13) **What is the level of school attendance for Looked After Children?**
- 14) **How many Looked After Children have used the advocacy service**
- 15) **How many Looked After Children have a leaving care plan and at what age did it start?**
- 16) **How many Looked After Children have had the opportunity to develop life skills before leaving care?**
- 17) **How many Looked After Children have been able to stay with their foster carers between the age of 16-18?**

- 18) **How many children and young people maintain contact with social services up to the age of 24?**
- 19) **Are there any problems with recruitment and retention of staff?**
- 20) **What management systems are there in place to support front line staff working with Looked After Children?**
- 21) **What training is available for foster carers and what is the uptake?**
- 22) **How many children and young people have received treatment from mental health services?**
- 23) **Holistic health assessment – including immunisations**

## CORPORATE POLICY

**Swansea's Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2011 – 2014** stated that all children and Young People should live in safe, stable and caring families, and that the Corporate Parenting Forum should be strengthened. As Corporate Parents the current indicator is to reduce the number of Looked After Children. This plan was replaced by '**The One Swansea Plan 2013**', published by the Swansea Local Service Board. It can be found at <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=52292>. The purpose of this plan is to improve the wellbeing of people in Swansea by ensuring that professionals and the public work together on a shared set of outcomes and challenges. Looked after children are mentioned twice in the new single plan; on pages 22 (school readiness) and p27 (school attendance) Care leavers are not mentioned. Swansea Council has been the first to adopt the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Young people want to have a voice, and a choice, and do not want to be different. The Corporate Parenting Forum has continued to take an active role in listening to Looked After Children and young people, and putting their views at the heart of the work plan. Bi-annual meetings have continued often led by the young people. The Forum has also heard reports of how the service is building in listening to children and young people throughout the service such as

- Restorative Practice,
- Use of Signs of Safety tools for working with children and young people
- Expansion and increasing accessibility of the independent professional advocacy service
- Involving Looked after Children and Care Leavers in the Big Conversations, including the budget consultation, alongside representatives from School Councils, and therefore offering their perspective on the proposals.

- 1) **The Corporate Parenting Forum is concerned to increase the profile for Looked After Children within the Single Plan. To further raise the profile in 2014- 2015 the Corporate Parenting Forum will develop a strategy for Looked After Children** which will focus on how to achieve aspirations for and of children and young people, and additional awareness and training needs, to enable the forum to continue to evaluate against outcomes, and change where necessary.

## ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT THE FORUM

The Corporate Parenting Forum is one of a number of special interest Forums in Swansea. It is a permanent body, established within the Constitution to support all agencies and individuals to work together, to facilitate the development of positive relationships, to monitor the delivery of quality services and to identify where there are gaps within and across services that hinder the implementation of good practice and outcomes for Looked After Children. Recommendations are communicated to the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing.

The Looked After Children's Enquiry Panel report of April 2013 was welcomed by the Corporate Parenting Forum as a positive step to deepening strategic knowledge of the needs of Looked after Children. It acknowledged that the prevention of family breakdown was critical and reinforced the view of the Corporate Parenting Forum that the availability of local stable foster placements is crucial. It is important that the existing Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and the Corporate Parenting Forum work together

The Corporate Parenting Forum meets every two months throughout the year. This is to allow for other pieces of work to take place in the intervening months. Details of meetings and other events held by the Forum are at Appendix 4. The other events are;

- Training for Councillors on Corporate Parenting took place this year and 38 Councillors have now received training.
- Bi-annual Corporate Parenting Challenges were held in July and January of each year. A list of attendance is attached at Appendix 3.

The Forum is supported by an officer from Democratic Services for the administration of its business. Professionally, it is the task of the Planning Officer for Children and Family Services based in the Commissioning Support Unit to provide advice and support. The Children's Rights and Participation Officer has the role of co-ordinating the support for Corporate Parents to listen to the views of the Looked After Children, and care leavers. The Head of Child and Family Services has prioritised his attendance.

## BUDGET

The Corporate Parenting Forum currently has no budget. Activities, such as running the Corporate Parenting challenges, and producing the updated Corporate Parenting pages for the Swansea Cares packs, are being funded within the participation budget of Social Services.

The Scrutiny letter on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2013 required support arrangements to be kept under review, and financial requirements to be established. This letter confirmed that the Scrutiny Programme Committee was happy with progress made, and asked for a progress report. The response was sent on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, by the previous Chair, Councillor John Davies. It indicated that more might be done to improve the profile of Corporate Parenting, including the development of a Corporate Parenting Strategy for the Council.

## SERVICE USERS

Since its re launch, the Corporate Parenting Forum has been keen to listen to the views of Looked After Children, and Corporate Parenting Forum Challenges have been set up with this in mind. These have taken place in July 2013 and January 2014.

Young people have always told Corporate Parents;

*“We need you to have big eyes to take in all the information, big ears to listen and big mouths to speak for us and make the changes we need”.*

As a response to the suggestion of the young people, the year has seen the production of additional pages for the Swansea Cares Pack so that improved information on Corporate Parenting will be provided in the handbook for every Looked After Child in Swansea. This includes photographs of the Corporate Parenting Members, advice from the Children and young people about what Corporate Parents should be like, and what they should do.

The Summer challenge was held in Down to Earth, Murton on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2013. The consultation morning was part of a weekend of activities for the young people.

Reviews were the focus of this session, in line with Article 25 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children who are looked after by the local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly. 11 young people, 3 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), and 9 Councillors attended the session, and worked together in 3 mixed groups. They worked through a series of challenges and activities both practical and workshop based. These were designed to give everyone the opportunity to learn informally together and look at better ways of working together and around the issues surrounding the independent review process.

Activities included;

**IRO hot seat** in which the IRO had three minutes to introduce themselves, tell the group what they believed were the most important parts of their job and what a review was for. Questions were then taken from the group. **Speed dating and priorities** – 2 groups faced each other in a circle and had 1 minute per person to discuss “how to work better with young people in reviews”. A BIG LIST of priorities was voted on and the most important were ranked highest up the list.

The 3 with the most votes were;

- Paper work needs to be better
- Make it more interesting – doodles etc
- Involve young people, during all of review (start – mid – end)

**Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) standards** were produced, based upon the Wales Participation Standards. Including Information, It’s your choice, No discrimination, Respect, You get something out of it, Feedback, Improving how we work. Many suggestions were received, and these were developed in a further session in October.



The February 2014 session gave an opportunity for the Corporate Parents to review the various pieces of work done over the last year, which included information from the leaving care and residential settings, the Viewpoint questionnaire, Advocacy, as well as an update on the IRO work. 4 Councillors (including one member of Cabinet), 11 Young People, and 7 Professionals participated. At each station a young person and an adult introduced the work.

Young people's priorities for Corporate Parents were recorded.

1. Young people's emotional health is important
2. Make placing siblings together a priority
3. They should know what children and young people who are looked after think about what needs to be changed
4. Should be more activities for LAC CYPs.
5. They should meet Foster Carers and Residential Care Workers to see they are interested in CYP and know what they are doing.

Quotes;

*"Not sure what advocacy is.."*

*"Not that I'm listened too or anything – I'm just a kid"*

*"Sometimes you guys don't mix us with the right carers. You should put more thought into it as its not just about the money.*

*Stop ending placements because they might be too expensive but kids might be settled and happy there!!"*

A number of next steps were identified by the group, and they especially wanted to be involved in change as this helps develop trust through regular sessions to work through issues and develop ideas together. There was also emphasis on spreading the message more widely throughout the Council, and keeping the momentum going. They suggested;

- The best advocates for Looked After Children(LAC) and Children and Young People (CYP) are LAC CYP
- Need to create opportunities for LAC CYP to spread the message, and get their voice heard on a bigger scale – council and city wide
- The Corporate Parenting Forum (CPF) need to circulate to a wider council/cabinet audience
- Corporate parents include housing, education, Development and Outreach – whole CCS not just SS and Councillors
- Advocacy needs to be highlighted and awareness raised as a priority for everybody
- Young people present to CPF and full council within next 6 months
- Peer mentors are helping to get messages across to younger people – support from SYHSP.
- Video blogs will be developed for use by young people who do not want to be present
- Need to celebrate the work already done
- Link to rights of the child/ UNCRC need to be better communicated.
- We need to develop the skills of young people so they can help decide on future services.

Discussions are in hand as to how to support the young people to make these presentations.

## ACTIVITIES DURING 2013 / 2014

### Work plan.

1. The development of a themed approach to bimonthly meetings has been implemented so as to increase understanding and awareness of service developments, and the involvement and observations of all departments and agencies. This process is on-going and will need and should promote improved partnership and ownership.
2. Regular reporting on The Child and Family Services Strategic Delivery Plan Performance Report on Looked After Children, has been regularly augmented by advice from the Head of Service. This report is regularly reviewed, and has recently been amended to include reporting on adoption, and on the Looked After Children Reduction Strategy. Much of the information required by the Corporate Parenting Forum is included in this format.

The Forum is working towards developing a jointly owned strategic direction and work plan in early in the 2014 year. The main focus of the strategy will be:

- **preventative intervention that is promptly and intensively delivered where required and supports families, and the range of local services**
- **improved communication between the Council and Looked After Children**
- **the need to review Councillors job descriptions to ensure responsibility for Looked After Children is clearly articulated**
- **mandatory training on Corporate Parenting for all Councillors.**

### Care Leavers

1. This has been a focus for the Forum in 2013, following up on the Scrutiny Committee's report, and Lost After Care from the Children's Commissioner. A detailed report was prepared and considered, and a decision made to follow this up every 6 months.
2. Corporate Parenting Challenges and Training are useful to Councillors as they are able to meet care leavers and understand concerns directly.
3. Swansea has a good record on keeping care leavers in placement at 16 and 17 and is already increasing its conversion foster placements scheme (for care leavers who are stable in placement, and their carer would like them) this is in anticipation that the recommendations of the 'When I am Ready' consultation, will be included in the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill.

### Corporate Parenting Training

1. Corporate Parenting Training was held on 25 October 2013, and was attended by 27 Councillors. When added to the attendees from last year, a total of 38 Councillors have attended training, out of 72.

2. An overview was provided by the Head of Service focusing on who are the looked after children in Swansea, what are their needs, who is responsible and how are services organised.
3. Smaller topic workshops were each supported by an information pack, prepared and delivered by multi agency group of staff, including Accommodation Services, Health, Education and young people's views.
4. 18 Evaluation sheets were received, 15 councillors, two officers, and one voluntary sector person. Of those who completed the evaluation form – all felt the course was good or very good, and would recommend it to others with similar roles.
5. Following this evaluation, the Corporate Parenting Forum again recommended that this training be provided as part of the mandatory training to all Councillors, and this will become part of the new strategy for Corporate Parenting. Appendix 5 details the Evaluation Report.
6. The Education department also runs Looked After training for Councillors as School Governors, and has recently produced Guidance on what Councillors can expect on Looked After children in a Head Teacher's Report. Appendix 6 details the Attendance at this training, and includes the details of the Guidance mentioned above. All School Governors should be aware of this training and the Guidance available on their role.

### **Integrated Family Support Service**

A presentation by the Integrated Family Support Service, was provided to the Forum to increase awareness of Preventative services supporting families at risk of breakdown. The Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) developments, focuses on families whose children are on the cusp of care. In addition to the presentation and discussion, Forum members attended the Launch in the Spring.

### **Wellbeing**

Following on from this, the Principal Officer for Wellbeing provided an update on the forthcoming Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill, and the wider local arrangements to prevent family breakdown. She reminded the forum that the specialist services provided by social services for children in need rest on the provision of universal services, (such as education and health services), and those provided in the community. This approach has reduced numbers of children becoming reliant on social work. She brought the forum up to date with recent research, and a case study which illustrated many of the points.

As a result of the presentation, the Corporate Parenting Forum endorsed the Looked After Children Reduction Strategy, and sought reassurance of the support for the Strategy by the Children and Young People's Partnership.

### **Advocacy**

The Forum received an update on Advocacy at its March meeting, following the 2014 review of Children's Commissioner's 'Missing Voices' report. They considered the response, and the Action Plan, and endorsed the approach. This requires elected

Members to be well informed about the statutory responsibilities they have to provide advocacy. Members will need information and Training, and the role of the Forum in taking this forward.

## **Disability**

A special meeting was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> April to allow time to deal with the final topic on the work plan for 2014. This meeting was devoted to a presentation on Looked after Children and Disability. It was led by Social Services, with the support of Education and Health colleagues. It covered the work of the Social Services Child Disability Team, and the looked after Children Health and Education teams, covering their roles and capacity, and drew out some important highlights on the needs and services provided for this specialist group. A number of case examples were used to illustrate. Details of attendance at Corporate Parenting forum events are at Appendix 3 and 4.

## **NEXT STEPS FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING FORUM**

Having carried out a full work plan for last year, the Forum now feels in a position to review the work of the first 2 years of this administration. This review will be based on the

- Responsibilities outlined in the Deputy Minister's letter
- What looked after children and young people and care leavers have told us about their views.

The focus will be on;

- What is required to be developed across partners to ensure that Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Swansea are able to access a service that meets their needs as identified in the Deputy Minister's letter.
- Review of the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Forum.
- Review of the Statement of Corporate Parenting.

The outcome of the review will be a Swansea Corporate Parenting Strategy, which will demonstrate that the local authority and its partners are committed to Looked After Children and have a vision about what it wants to achieve. It will provide a focal point for all agencies, staff, and children and young people to understand what the objectives for the service are – and to hold the Council to account if they are not delivered.

As it is important that the strategy is owned locally, the process of drafting, agreeing and reviewing the strategy will be an inclusive one, starting with a workshop for the first meeting of the new Council year. Invitations are planned to a wider range of people than the current membership, to ensure sufficient knowledge is available to the workshop.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **1. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF CORPORATE PARENTING FORUM**

**1.1** Some children and Young People need additional help and support because of their needs and circumstances. In some cases this requires that they are looked after by the Local Authority. The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Forum will be to encourage all agencies and individuals to work together to deliver good outcomes for Looked After Children.

**1.2** To do this, the Forum members will:

- Listen and communicate the views of Looked After Children and Young People
- Develop an annual action plan to deliver its purpose
- Establish Task and Finish groups as required
- Raise the profile of issues affecting Looked After Children and Young People.

### **1.3 Statutory Basis of the group and accountability**

Corporate parenting places collective responsibility on authorities to provide good parenting for all children in their care. It requires ownership and leadership at a senior level, this includes all elected members.

The Corporate Parenting Forum will report annually to Council.

Reports will be made available to all interested organisations, including the Cabinet member for Social Services and Child and Family Overview and Scrutiny Board, CYP Overview and Scrutiny Board, and the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Specific matters of interest or concern will be forwarded to the appropriate Council Member.

### **1.4 Membership**

- (i) The Chair and Councillor Members will be appointed by the Council. A Vice Chair shall be elected from the representatives present.
- (ii) The Forum will be representative of the Local Authority, Foster Carers, Accommodation Team managers, Looked After Children / Care Leavers, Health, Education and Housing.

## **1.5 Group Management and Activity**

- (i) The Forum will meet bi monthly.
- (ii) Support arrangements will be kept under review; the Forum will be supported by the Principal Officer for Accommodation and the Planning and Commissioning Officer for Child and Family Services
- (iii) The Forum will be serviced by Democratic Services which will draft the agenda
- (iv) The Forum will establish its financial requirements and keep any allocated budget under review
- (v) The Forum will receive monthly performance data on Looked After Children.
- (vi) The Forum will ask Looked After Children and Young People how it can best help them and what they want the relationship to be.
- (vii) These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually in June.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **2. LEGAL DEFINITIONS FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING FORUM**

#### **2.1 Looked After Child**

The term 'Looked After' was introduced by the Children Act 1989. Although there are two different groups of children / Young People who may become “looked after”, the Children Act emphasises that the duties owed to them by local authorities are the same.

##### Section 20; Provision of Accommodation for Children: General

1. Every Local Authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appears to them to require accommodation as a result of;
  - (a) There being no person who has parental responsibility for him
  - (b) His being lost or having been abandoned; or
  - (c) The person who has been caring for him being prevented (whether or not permanently and for whatever reason) from providing him with suitable accommodation or care.
  
2. Before providing accommodation under this section, a Local Authority shall, so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with the child’s welfare;
  - (a) ascertain the child’s wishes and feelings regarding the provision of accommodation  
  
and
  - (b) give due consideration (having regard to his age and understanding) to such wishes of the child as they have been able to ascertain.
  
3. A Local Authority may not provide accommodation under this section for any child if any person who has parental responsibility for him objects.
  
4. Any person who has parental responsibility for a child may at any time remove the child from accommodation provided by or on behalf of the Local Authority under this section.

##### Section 31; Care and Supervision

1. On the application of any Local Authority, the court may make an order placing the child with respect to whom the application is made in the care of a designated Local Authority.
  
2. A court may only make a care order if it is satisfied that the child concerned is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; and that the harm, or likelihood of harm, is attributable to the care given to the child, or likely to be given to him if the

order were not made, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give to him; or the child's being beyond parental control.

3. No care order or supervision order may be made with respect to a child who has reached the age of seventeen (or sixteen, in the case of a child who is married). No care order may be made with respect to a child until the court has considered a section 31A plan.

## **2.2 Care Leavers**

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 created new and stronger duties on Local Authorities to support care leavers up to at least 18 with the main aims of ensuring that:

- Young People do not leave care until they are ready.
- They receive more effective support once they have left.

The main purpose of the Act is to help Young People who have been looked after by the Local Authority to move from care into living independently in as stable a fashion as possible. To do this it amends the Children Act (Part 111, introducing new Sections 23 and 24). These now place a duty on local authorities to assess and meet the care and support needs of 'eligible and relevant' children and Young People and to assist those who are 'former relevant' Young People.

'Eligible' can be thought of as Young People who have been in Local Authority care for over 13 weeks when they turn 16 and 'Relevant' refers to this being a full time care responsibility (e.g. not for short breaks where the parent retains all responsibilities) former relevant are over 18 and did meet the above criteria.

Other duties are the duty to keep in touch with all care leavers who qualify the need for Pathway Plans, the new role of the Personal Adviser, and simplified and extended financial support.



## APPENDIX 3

### Attendance for Corporate Parenting Events 2013 - 2014

	Event	Date	Members	Officers	Foster Parents	Health	Voluntary Sector	Young people
1	Corporate Parenting Forum	17 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	2	7	0	0	0	
2	LAC Achievement Awards	8 <sup>th</sup> May 2013						
3	Corporate Parenting Forum	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	8	1	0	1	1	
4	Corporate Parenting Challenge.	7 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	9	9			4	11
5	Corporate Parenting Forum	9 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2013	5	10	1	1	1	
6	Corporate Parenting Training	25 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2013	27	11		2	1	3
7	Corporate Parenting Forum	11 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2013	8	8 plus 2 from IFSS,	1	1	1	
8	Corporate Parenting Forum.	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	6	12	0	4	1	
9	Corporate Parenting Challenge.	Sat 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	4, including Cabinet Member	7	0		1	11
10	Corporate Parenting Forum.	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	5	7	0	2	1	
11	Special Corporate Parenting Forum	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2014	5	13	2	1	0	

## APPENDIX 4

### Dates of Meetings and Events held by the Corporate Parenting Forum 2013 - 2014 and key topics covered.

Date of Forum meeting	Areas covered	Recommendations progressed
17 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	<p>This meeting was inquorate, but on advice was able to discuss issues.</p> <p>Presentation of Draft Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Forum.</p> <p>Discussion on receipt of Scrutiny Letter.</p> <p>LAC Performance report</p> <p>Work plan timetable</p>	<p>To provide the opportunity for Members and officers to review and comment on the Annual report of the Forum.</p> <p>To plan response.</p> <p>To ensure Members are aware of developments in the LAC population.</p> <p>To suggest a thematic approach to the work of the Forum, to allow for increased understanding of the issues.</p>
8 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	Future Champions LAC Achievement Awards.	
8 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	<p>Introduction of new Forum Chair, and new Members of the Forum.</p> <p>Notice of Corporate Parenting Training 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013.</p> <p>Update on Lost After Care Health Check.</p> <p>Review of Terms of reference.</p>	<p>To strengthen the Forum.</p> <p>To inform and involve Members in the development of future plans</p> <p>To act on Scrutiny recommendation that Corporate Parents maintain a health check on Swansea's response to this report by the Children's commissioner.</p> <p>To request further information from the Head of Service for the Care Leavers group.</p> <p>To ensure the Terms of reference are reviewed annually, as required and as part of the Annual report of the Forum to Council.</p>

Date of Forum meeting	Areas covered	Recommendations progressed
	<p>Symud Ymlaen Project.</p> <p>To receive the LAC performance report</p>	<p>To receive an update on this project due to end shortly and is much valued by care leavers.</p> <p>To ensure Members are aware of developments in the LAC population.</p>
5 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	Corporate Parenting Challenge	<p>Corporate Parents and Looked After Children meet and listen to each other in a Young person friendly venue.</p> <p>To develop awareness and understanding of the right of young people who are looked after away from home to have their cases reviewed, and so improve attendance and ownership by young people of their reviews.</p> <p>To have lunch together.</p>
9 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2013	<p>Update on Lost After Care Health Check, and Advocacy arrangements.</p> <p>To receive a report on Looked After Children and Offending.</p> <p>To receive the LAC performance report</p>	<p>To provide answers to questions raised at the last meeting,</p> <p>To decide on a bi annual report on care leavers.</p> <p>To write to Health Board re their Advocacy provision.</p> <p>To make the Forum aware of new management arrangements under Western Bay.</p> <p>To gain support of the Corporate Parenting Forum to the principle of joint working on guidance on accommodation issues.</p> <p>To ensure Members are aware of developments in the LAC population.</p>

<b>Date of Forum meeting</b>	<b>Areas covered</b>	<b>Recommendations progressed</b>
25 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	Corporate Parenting Forum training event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of Corporate Parenting, and the responsibilities of Councillors.</li> <li>• The Council's statutory responsibilities to children and young people in their care, and information on what we provide for children in need.</li> <li>• Opportunity for looked after children and young people to contribute to training decision makers. .</li> <li>• To explore key issues in relation to the care, health and education for looked after children, and meet key staff, and discuss how elected Members can influence change.</li> </ul>
11 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2013	<p>Evaluation report on Corporate Parenting Training.</p> <p>Integrated Family support Service Presentation (IFSS)</p> <p>To receive the LAC performance report.</p> <p>Looked After children Education Scrutiny report and Home tuition and higher education bursary grants.</p>	<p>To provide information to assist Members decide on next steps for the Training.</p> <p>To enable Forum members to understand the aims and operation of this key service to prevent family breakdown.</p> <p>To ensure Members are aware of developments in the LAC population.</p> <p>For Information.</p>

<b>Date of Forum meeting</b>	<b>Areas covered</b>	<b>Recommendations progressed</b>
13 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	<p>Evaluation of the Corporate Parenting Training event. (see below)</p> <p>Further discussion on Western bay</p> <p>Research on LAC funding.</p> <p>Wellbeing Presentation.</p> <p>Update on upcoming Inspections.</p> <p>To receive the LAC performance report</p>	<p>The Task and Finish report recommended that this training be mandatory for all Councillors.</p> <p>Clarification of issues going forward.</p> <p>Contact made with Professor Paul Rees who will update as necessary.</p> <p>The Forum endorsed the LAC reduction Strategy.</p> <p>The need for enhanced links to Prevention and Early Intervention was highlighted.</p> <p>To make Members aware that there is a National Thematic Inspection on Vulnerable Looked After Children at the end of March.</p> <p>To ensure Members are aware of developments in the LAC population.</p>
Sat 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Corporate Parenting Challenge	<p>Overview of Participation activities for 2013.</p> <p>Developments of a plan for the next steps.</p>
10 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	<p>Advocacy report</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Forum Annual Report</p>	<p>Endorsement of response to Children's Commissioner's Missing Voices Report.</p> <p>Invitation to Advocacy service provider, Tros Gynnal to update the Forum on their Annual report when produced.</p> <p>Draft for discussion. Members invited to comment.</p> <p>Establishment of a working group to plan Workshop to discuss next years work plan.</p>

	<p>Looked After Children Performance report</p> <p>Good news and Partner Updates</p>	<p>Requests were made for information .</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Verbal updates from Education, the Youth offending service,</p>
<p>Special Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014</p>	<p>To receive a presentation on Looked After Children and Disability.</p>	<p>This Presentation was co-ordinated across the 3 services, Social Services, Education, and Health to give a rounded overview of this specialist area.</p>

## APPENDIX 5

Corporate Parenting Training Evaluation.

### **25<sup>th</sup> October 2013.**

This training was attended by 27 Councillors, plus Councillor Jane Harris, the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Forum, who attended both morning and afternoon sessions.

This adds to the 22 Councillors attending last year, making 50 participants in total, and we are in the process of working out the few double attendees, and who has not received the training in preparation for the 2014 session.

We received 23 evaluation forms from Councillors, and 1 from a senior case worker from an Assembly Member.

13 Councillors found the Training very useful,  
8 found it useful,  
1 found it not useful.

Comments received included;

- Young People played a big part,
- Very useful especially to hear the voices of young people
- Opens your eyes,
- As a Governor, I will put in place the things I learned today. And will now ask more searching questions.
- I will be better informed in the decisions I take
- Have a better understanding of LAC needs,
- Ask more questions, and have more empathy for situations,
- More focus on young people,
- Hopefully more awareness, compassion and understanding,
- Raise awareness to bring to the forefront within Council Services
- We could have done with more time in each group.
- More detailed discussions with my head teacher,
- To feel free to offer my services and become more involved,
- Knowledge of social services, care system, and views of looked after. Use knowledge when decision making
- I will be finding out how many LAC are in my ward.

21 out of the 23 would recommend the course to others.

Criticisms included that there was too much information in a short time, and the room was crowded and noisy, so it was hard to hear.

One person felt the set up was not so good as last year, requiring more movement from participants, and that the afternoon session was not well enough attended, and should have been cancelled.

Further Training needs identified were;

- More time for greater depth of information and discussion,
- Greater insight into the topic,
- More understanding of systems being implemented,
- Generally more information,
- Would be advantageous in view of legislation,
- Attachment theory as a driver for LAC policy,
- To find out more about the many reasons that make children become looked after,
- Would appreciate courses to update me on changes to policy and Outcomes,
- Training course updated annually and six monthly,



## APPENDIX 6

Councillor's attendance at LAC training for school governors and information governors can expect to receive in a head teachers report.

<b>Date of training</b>	<b>No. of Councillors attending</b>	<b>Schools where Councillors are serving as governors</b>
26 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	0	
18 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	0	
22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2013	1	Danygraig Primary St Thomas Community Primary
18 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	1	Hendrefoilan Primary Olchfa School

### **Information Governors could expect to receive in a Head Teachers Report in respect of: Looked After Children**

The following information has been prepared for Governors to advise them of the type of information they could expect to see in a Head teacher's termly report in relation to Looked After Children (LAC). This information is not conclusive and some head teacher's may wish to include additional information. However, care is urged to ensure the individual identity of children is not divulged in any way.

#### **Policy**

All schools need to have a Policy for Looked After Children. This Policy should be reviewed periodically as with all other school policies.

#### **Designated Teacher and Governor**

All schools are required to have a designated person with specific responsibility for LAC. This information should be included in the staffing update of the head teacher's report.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 all governing bodies are required to have a designated governor with responsibility for LAC.

#### **Report to Include**

An update on the numbers of LAC eg currently 10 this has increased from 8 last term due to another two children becoming looked after in the interim period. If children have joined the school as a result of becoming looked after and being placed with foster carers or family in the catchment area this information could also be included.

Confirmation that statutory aged children ie those aged between 5 and 16, have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place. Each LAC is required to have a PEP in place within 20 school days of becoming looked after. The Report could include the day/date the PEP was finalised.

How new LAC have settled at the school and any special arrangements the school has put in place to help new children settle eg a buddy system, additional support in classroom, Circle Time etc.

Information on the academic progress of LAC and any additional information eg the number of LAC who have Special Education Needs, Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulty etc.

If a LAC is attending more than one site or alternative provision eg Pathway, Home Tuition from Looked After Children Project Workers etc.

Update on any liaison with other agencies eg Behaviour Support, or if the pupil's behaviour is a particular cause for concern and they have been excluded from school or could be facing permanent exclusion.

Prepared by: Kathryn Thomas (Manager School, Governor and Student Services)  
10<sup>th</sup> April 2012