



Report of the Cabinet Member for Care Services

Council – 25 January 2024

Corporate Parenting Pledges

Purpose:	This report will outline work completed with care experienced children and young people based in Swansea, regarding the council's duty to be Corporate Parents. The report will outline the seven pledge areas related to children's rights that have been co-produced between councillors and young people.
Policy Framework:	Part 2, General Functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children)
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Corporate Parenting Board
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) This report and the attached pledges are forwarded to full council for approval.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report will outline the work completed with care experienced children and young people in Swansea and the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure we are fulfilling our duties as corporate parents.

2. Background

- 2.1 Councillors, as Corporate Parents, have an important role to play in ensuring that every child in the council's care receives the best care possible. We have a legal and moral duty to provide the level of support, care, and protection any good parent would give their child. Our staff should strive to provide the level of care they would like their own children to receive.
- 2.2 The role of the Corporate Parent for Looked After Children is arguably the most important role of a council. This role includes promoting the children's health, education, social and emotional needs. The term 'Corporate Parent' recognises that meeting the diverse needs of these young people requires co-operation between council service areas and other organisations, such as health, education, the police, and partner agencies.
- 2.3 Corporate Parenting responsibilities fall to everyone working across the council, not just the Corporate Parenting Board. To support a stronger approach to corporate parenting, Welsh Government aspires to expand this duty across the wider public sector. Swansea has proudly signed up to the Welsh Government Corporate Parenting Charter – A promise from Wales and holds the principles of corporate parenting outlined in this legislation with due regard. The Corporate Parenting Board take seriously the needs of those children and young people and the impact of any decisions that they (young people) and the council make. Councillors may have opportunities to do this through their Corporate Parenting Board or Cabinet roles, or as part of our Scrutiny responsibilities.
- 2.4 Article 12 of the UNCRC makes it clear that children and young people have the right to participate in decisions which affect their lives. The introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 promoted greater voice and control for all people in Wales, and children should be no exception to this.
- 2.5 The Corporate Parenting Board worked with a group of young people to explore the area's most important to them, and to prioritise some actions to work on. This work has helped us shape the Corporate Parenting pledges (Appendix A) that the Corporate Parenting Board have signed up to deliver. These are:
- No barriers to opportunity
 - Good education/good employment
 - Healthy relationships
 - Safe place to live
 - Mental health
 - Love, family, and friendship
 - Happiness

- 2.6 Swansea Council pledge to work with children and young people to:
- Ensure they (young people) have equal access to opportunities.
 - Provide all children and young people with access to a good education and job prospects.
 - Model to young people what healthy relationships look like and help them achieve this in their own lives.
 - Make sure all young people feel safe where they live; ensure mental health services are available to support young people as and when they need them.
 - Promote family time and lifelong connected networks for children and young people; and focus on young people's happiness as well as their safety.
- 2.7 If agreed, the pledges will be circulated among key forums in Child and Family Services (including Principal Officer Group, Senior Management Team and in our Newsletter), along with being shared as part of the wider Social Services Director's briefing for staff across the Directorate to have an awareness of it. We would look to launch the pledges formally on the Council's website and ask Corporate Parent leads from across the Authority to identify appropriate mechanisms to share in their own Services. Alongside this, we would encourage wider public sector engagement such as health and South Wales Police, to encourage partners to support the board and our young people in turning these pledges into achievable actions for delivery with the hope that the necessary sign-up and commitment from a variety of agencies will support appropriate action against these pledge areas. Lead officers and members will be expected to report on the progress and participation in these areas to future Corporate Parenting Board meetings.

3. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 3.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 3.4 The IIA screening process outlined there is no reputational risk to the council or any negative impact on any protected characteristics. The impacts are positive. (Appendix B – IIA)

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, it may lead to decisions being taken at a later date that may have costs attached. Any such costs will need to be managed within departmental resources at that time with due regard to the Council's medium term financial plan.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A Corporate Parenting Pledges
Appendix B IIA