

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Parenting Panel 23.11.22
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Review of Corporate parenting Approach
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Shaun Hanks, Head of Service Corporate Parenting Jane Scott Transformation Lead
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Maria Gatland, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
<b>WARDS:</b>	All
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	NA

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

This report outlines the rationale, activity, themes, and recommendations to consider a new Corporate Parenting Approach.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no additional financial impact.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to:

1. Review and note the feedback from the consultation process
2. Review and decide on one of the recommended options for developing the Corporate Parenting Approach.

## **1 Corporate Parenting Consultation and Recommendations for a new Corporate Parenting Approach.**

### **1.1. Background and Context**

- 1.2. The Corporate Parenting Panel agreed that the membership and current approach required review to inform the next steps in developing the panels reach and impact.
- 1.3. A process of consultation with children, young people, foster carers, council members, council staff and partners has been undertaken over the previous two months. There has been considerable engagement and participation in sharing feedback regarding the understanding of Corporate Parenting responsibilities, function, and approach in Croydon. The feedback outlined in this report highlight's themes and factors to be considered in formulating a new approach.

## **2. CONSULTATION**

### **2.1.1 Children and Young People**

Children, Young People and Care Leavers were consulted using a variety of approaches. 6 who were living at distance in family homes, secure or custodial settings were visited individually by social workers. 10 were seen in a group setting led by service managers and supported by social workers over a 4-week period. 19 members of the Children in Care Council and community groups supporting young people. Consultation was undertaken during activities facilitated by E.M.P.I.R.E, during half term and at weekly meetings. There was a diverse mix of ethnicity and gender and ages ranging from 10 years old to 25 years old. It was notable that members of Children in Care Council's lived experience of the Corporate Parenting Panel enabled them to comment more specifically on principles of organisation and participation of Corporate Parenting Panel and its constitution. The Children with Disabilities Team were also consulted about how to include children and young people with unique needs in this consultation.

## **2.2 Children and Young People's Consultation Themes: -**

The concept of Corporate Parenting was not well understood by children, young people and care leavers who were consulted, and the connectivity between participation either in Corporate Parenting Panel or Consultation around the improvement of practice and policy which is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Panel, was underdeveloped. Some children felt 'over' consulted and could not see the benefit to them of this process. This prompted reflections about how we helped children and young people understand the concepts of Corporate Parenting, the language that we used, what our expectations were of them and how we co-ordinate participation across the directorate linked to Corporate Parenting Panel and Strategy. The Children in Care Council members were keen to consider the development of a specific Corporate Parenting pack that could be added to the entry into care booklet to help explain who was represented on the panel and the Corporate Parenting Approach underpinned by the development of a strategic aim.

**'What do we want Corporate Parenting Panel to achieve? And how is it different from any other service meetings the council has?'**

**2.3** Children and young people identified social workers as important individuals in their network of close meaningful relationships. They highlighted that their perception of Corporate Parenting Panel currently omits these significant relationships. They expressed a wish for the new Corporate Parenting Approach to include social workers, Personal Advisors and others who may be from relevant voluntary groups/partners. This would be informed by the development of a Corporate Parenting Strategy to focus and bring purpose to the work and discussions.

**2.4** The lived experience shared by those consulted consistently told us that the way in which they were included was key. Children living at distance especially focused on the relationship with their social worker, and how social workers were attuned to what children were sharing with them by being able to articulate in meetings or write down their wishes and feelings accurately in reports.

Children in the group also spoke about the many ways they understood that they were being listened to. **'I see you write it down [what we say] ...You seem like you take it all in [based on my summary that I give throughout conversation / after conversations with them] ...You say what we say in meetings.'** *I asked how they knew this, and they said that the teacher will tell them what I have said, as an example.*

**2.5.1** Children and young people consulted wanted a space to discuss their lived experience with Corporate Parenting panel members. The current structure invites a conversation but doesn't always allow a space that children and young people feel is conducive to them sharing what and how their lived experience is communicated. There were reflections on the range of meetings attended where children and young people shared their views and experiences through Looked After Children reviews, Pathway plans, PEPs, Health Assessments and asked, **'We attend a lot of meetings so if we are required to attend a Corporate Parenting panel or event, what is the benefit for us'** The capacity and structure for the Corporate Parenting Panel members to hear the lived experience of our children and young people is key to their engagement.

**2.5.2** Children in Care Council members especially asked for the experience of Corporate Parenting Panel to be curated differently, with separate spaces for children looked after and care leavers to meet and discuss issues of concern with Corporate Parenting Panel and to facilitate different feedback loops where agendas could be agreed with them and updates on progress be provided. Reference was made to Croydon's Pledge and how this was used or could be used in the future. This highlights to what extent there is co-production between the Corporate Parenting Panel, children, young people and care leavers when we facilitate formal council member meetings.

**2.5.3** There were parallels here with children living at a distance. They noted how they were seeing action happening in tangible ways and being updated about this mattered **'I know my social worker is listening to me when things happen, actions'**. Some children wondered about how other platforms could assist them to participate in Corporate Parenting activities, such as Tik Tok, WhatsApp or an app, with the aim of experiencing being listened to through action.

**2.5.4** There was a request that Corporate Parenting Panel members meet with Children in Care council members during Children in Care Council activities or social events, to demonstrate commitment and develop relationships. This paralleled other feedback about the requirement to widen the ways in which children and young people were seen by their social worker and were able to spend time with them, especially where those children lived at distance.

### **2.5.5 Foster carers**

A conversation with the Croydon Foster care Association was undertaken as part of the consultation process. The association represents the diversity of the fostering households. It was acknowledged that Croydon foster carers provide

for the majority but not all children who are looked after by Croydon Council and there is a wider caring community represented in independent fostering agencies, residential and semi-independent provision.

### **2.5.5 Foster carer Themes**

Foster carers considered that it was important to focus on Children Looked After and Care Experienced Young People as the key cohort for Corporate Parenting activity. Foster carers stated that the current Corporate Parenting representation was good but that the way the panel 'works' needs to be different.

There were reflections on the need for children and young people to be more actively prepared before and after panel in its current format. There was a view that the current panel activity feels like a consideration of reports rather than holding a plan in mind and driving activity to achieve the plan objectives. This would correlate with the next stage of activity required which will be to develop a Corporate Parenting Strategy to drive the focus and activity of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

There were parallels with children and young people's feedback in that foster carers highlighted wanting more interaction with Corporate Parenting members. Ideas expressed were, Corporate Parents visits to key groups, the Children in Care Council, Croydon Foster Carer Association, to understand the lived experiences. Foster carers wanted plans to be co-produced with the Corporate Parenting Panel that reflect shared aims and objectives between children, care experienced young people, foster carers and other significant groups

Foster carers acknowledged the importance of their contribution alongside a wider caring network, Independent Fostering Agencies, Residential and Semi-independent provision and how this is collectively represented in Corporate Parenting focus and activity.

Equality and Diversity needs to be a priority theme in understanding lived experiences and how the understanding is incorporated and supported into the new approach.

### **2.5.6 Councillors**

Councillors were consulted regarding their views through the option of joining one of three, face to face and online meetings, to discuss ideas and share views. A slide deck was circulated with information related to ideas and models from other local authorities to inform feedback.

#### **Councillors Themes**

During discussions with councillors there was an appetite for further participation work that engaged a wider spectrum of children and young

people's voices. This was highlighted in particular by Coventry City Council, which was rated as 'Good' in their last Ofsted. In this example the Participation team sights Corporate Parents on the experiences and outcomes for children and young people and facilitate an annual survey. In addition, subgroups are set up with a specific focus linked to the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The participation teamwork with children and young people to engage with the subgroup agenda and how to work with a range of professionals, carers, voluntary sector members to progress activity and report back to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Councillors also expressed interest in the Co-chairing model of Corporate Parenting where a child or care experienced young person Co-chairs with the CYP Member Chair. This model is highlighted as an area of good practice in Bournemouth and Gloucestershire. Gloucestershire is particularly praised by Ofsted for its approach to participation of children and young people. This model has also developed a shadow Corporate Parenting Panel where children and care experienced young people mirror the activity of a formal panel meeting with the inclusion of select Corporate Parenting Panel members. Creating a safer space for children and young people to drive the agenda and express their views with support from the participation team. This activity creates a greater interface and dialogue between the shadow and main Corporate Parenting Panel. It is important to note that discussions with Gloucestershire raised the important issue that the current well-functioning model of co-chair and shadow Corporate Parenting Panel has taken ten years to develop. \*

Elements that supported the above preferred options were also explored and included attention to: -

Ensuring that options incorporate consideration of transitions for children and young people and that a new approach improves communication amongst all.

Developing a phased approach to the development of Corporate Parenting in Croydon. Small, significant steps that are achievable and reflect aspects of this consultation with a review built in to consider a further phase of developing the approach.

A programme of visits to see different types of accommodation and meet children and young people in their own environments. Meeting Foster carers and Independent Providers.

Six monthly workshops to refresh and refocus. Ensure we are developing the new Corporate Parenting Approach effectively. Aspirational speaker events, incorporated into Corporate Parenting Activity.

Development of meaningful data that supports the new approach and can be useful for all members.

Development of Corporate Parenting guides, information and website would help develop the profile and understanding of the Corporate Parenting role, responsibilities.

### **2.5.7 Social Work Consultation**

Social workers and managers were consulted in service meetings and engaged in considering two key questions about their understanding of Corporate Parenting responsibilities and the current Corporate Parenting Panel arrangements and their views about what would help to improve the approach going forward.

#### **Social Work Themes.**

Most social workers and social work managers understood the roles and responsibilities of Corporate Parents. They were less clear about the current function and impact of the Corporate Parenting approach in Croydon.

They were keen to share their views and to help the Corporate Parenting Panel understand some of the good work and challenges in promoting positive experiences and outcomes for children and care experienced young people. They wanted their views to inform progress and development. They suggested sharing by mentimeter, an interactive presentation tool, their views, and ideas. Contributing to subgroup activity.

They considered a Co-Chair arrangement between a care experienced adult and Corporate Parenting member with support, to be a positive development. Ensuring that the care experienced adult received a good level of support before, during and after panel meetings. Ideas were shared related to a young person Ambassador model. Where young people were supported to share and offer consultation to Corporate Parenting members.

They shared that they would value participating in 6 monthly workshops to develop shared understanding of areas of need and to understand lived experiences in the context of the Social Graces to ensure equality and diversity was integrated into the outcomes of the workshops. They would welcome Corporate Parenting members to join them in Team/Service Meetings to focus on specific themes and share views and ideas.

### **2.5.8 Partner Consultation.**

Partner Consultation has been undertaken on an individual basis.

#### **Partner Themes.**

Most partners understand the Corporate Parenting Role and Responsibilities. Dependant upon their interaction with the current Corporate Parenting Panel and the degree of interaction, frequency of interaction with children and care experienced young people, the responses were varied in terms of their

understanding of the reach and impact of the current Corporate Parenting approach.

There are examples of colleagues in digital services, planning and regeneration understanding the essence of the Corporate Parenting Principles. Equally there was a real appetite to contribute to ensuring that children and young people achieved their potential and that we are aspirational in our work with them

### **Summary of Overarching Themes**

There has been a real commitment to sharing ideas and views from many perspectives to contribute to a revised Corporate Parenting Approach. Core areas that have been explored from different perspectives are as follows:

- The development of a co-chair. A young person is supported to co-chair the Corporate Parenting Panel with participation support. The young person co-chair represents views of children and young people in the Children in Care Council and across the children looked after and care experienced population.
- The development of a space, subgroup, or shadow Corporate Parenting Panel which supports children and young people's views, lived experiences and where they are able to work alongside other members of the Corporate Panel on a specific focus related to priorities identified in a Corporate Parenting Strategy \*Please note the previous reference to the development period for an effective shadow corporate parenting Panel
- The development of subgroups to action and monitor agreed core activities and feedback to each Corporate Parenting meeting.
- Programme of visits and meetings between Corporate Parenting Members and children, care experienced young people in their chosen environments. Visits and meetings with Foster Carers and the wider caring network.
- The development of guides and information for different audiences on the role, function and focus of Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Clear commitment and activity that promotes the integration of the Social Graces to promote equality and diversity which will underpin the activity of the Corporate Parenting Approach.

### **Options for a new Corporate Parenting Approach.**

- 1 The development of a Co-Chair** A Co-chairing model of Corporate Parenting where a child or care experienced young person Co-chairs with the CYP Member Chair.  
This option provides a natural progression from the current Corporate Parenting Approach. There would need to be work undertaken to develop the parameters of the role, recruit and determine remuneration and support.
  
- 2 The development of a Shadow Corporate Parenting Panel.** Where children and care experienced young people mirror the activity of a formal panel meeting with the inclusion of select Corporate Parenting Panel members. Creating a safer space for children and young people to drive the agenda and express their views with support from the participation team. Improving the interface between the shadow and main Corporate Parenting Panel. This model has taken ten years to develop to a well-functioning approach in Gloucestershire.  
This option requires a developed Participation Strategy and model, Resource implications are commensurate with the activity. In addition, the following to be considered as additional areas to support the options above.
  - The commitment to actively ensuring that the Social Graces are used to facilitate Corporate Parenting activity that promotes the understanding and incorporation of difference into development activity
  - Information and Guides are developed to promote the understanding of the Croydon Corporate Parenting Approach.
  - Six monthly workshops organised on specific topics, themes. Providing an opportunity to review challenges and progress.
  - Programme of visits and meetings between Corporate Parenting Members, children, care experienced young people, carers.
  - The development of 1 pilot subgroup to drive and monitor priority focus areas.

### **Corporate Parenting Strategy.**

The development of a Corporate Parenting Strategy is a significant driver in the improvement of Corporate Parenting Impact in local authorities. Those local authorities that have a 'Good or Outstanding Ofsted grading will demonstrate a Corporate Parenting Strategy that correlates with key priority areas and a Corporate Parenting Panel Approach that effectively drives this work and delivers good to outstanding outcomes for children and young people.

### **Overall Recommendations.**

The Corporate Parenting Approach consultation process has provided an opportunity to listen and consider key themes and ideas that particularly overlap between contributors. From the feedback collated and reviewed within the context of how the



current Corporate Parenting Panel function and the wider organisational context it is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Panel consider:

A Corporate Parenting Strategy to be developed going forward: -

- 1 A Corporate Parenting Strategy to be developed going forward.
- 2 A new approach that incorporates the development of a co-chair with the CYP lead member.
- 3 A pilot subgroup, which creates a safer space for children and young peoples lived experience to be heard and applied to a specific focussed priority,
- 4 The visibility and function of the new Corporate Parenting Approach is supported by information and guides alongside a programme of visits to meet with children, young people and care providers, which informs the understanding of how the new approach will make a difference and have an improved impact on children's outcomes.

### **3. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1. **Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations**  
**None**

3.2. **The effect of the decision**  
**N/A**

3.3. **Risks-N/A**

3.4. **Options -N/A**

3.5. **Future savings/efficiencies**  
Improvement in Corporate Parenting Approach and shared Strategic Vision will improve joint working across departments.

**4. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**  
**N/A**

**5. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**  
**N/A**

**6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**  
**N/A**

**7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**  
**N/A**

**8. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**  
N/A

**9. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1. WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

**NO**

**10. Approved by: Róisín Madden Director; Children's Social Care**

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**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**  
No Appendices

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**  
No Background Documents.