

Corporate Parenting Board Constitution

1. Purpose and Role

1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board ('the Board') assists the Council in fulfilling its legal obligations and responsibilities towards children in care and children leaving care, under the Children Act 1989, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children's Act 2004 and any other relevant legislation. The role of local authorities and seven key corporate parenting principles are set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

1.2 The seven key corporate parenting principles are:

- To act in the best interests, and promote physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

1.3 The Council will through the Corporate Parenting Board ensure that relevant partners understand how they can assist it to apply the principles in relation to the services those partners may provide.

1.4 The key aims of the Corporate Parenting Board are therefore to:

- Ensure the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all the children and young people in its care.
- Scrutinise the work of the Strategic Corporate Parenting Group to ensure it is effectively delivering the Board's priorities.
- Develop and embed a strong corporate parenting ethos in Sandwell, which means that everyone from elected council members and the Chief Executive down to front line staff in the Council and in partner agencies are concerned about those children we care for and care experienced young people as if they were their own.
- Act strategically to ensure that looked after children we care for and care experienced young people are effectively supported to reach their potential through the provision of excellent parenting, high quality education, opportunities to develop their talents and skills, and effective support for their transition to adulthood.
- Set high expectations and promote stable relationships for all children we care for and care experienced young people.
- Celebrate the achievements of children we care for and care experienced young people.
- Make recommendations to the relevant committees and forums regarding key decisions for the benefit of children we care for and care experienced young people.

1.5 It will achieve this by:

- Raising awareness of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities and developing expertise and knowledge among elected members, officers and partners.
- Monitoring and reviewing the quality and effectiveness of services for children we care for and care experienced young people delivered by corporate parents: the Council, partner agencies and commissioned services.

- Engaging with partner agencies, confirming expectations and scrutinising the quality of all services delivered to children we care for and care experienced young people.
- Challenging and holding all partners to account for their role in the delivery of services to children we care for and care experienced young people.
- Overseeing the implementation of the Pledge, Corporate Parenting Strategy and Corporate Parenting Action Plan.
- Maintaining an overview of the needs of children we care for and care experienced young people.
- Receiving reports on the outcomes of regulatory visits and inspections of provision for children we care for and care experienced young people.
- Listening to the voices of children we care for and care experienced young people in order to understand their experience of the services provided to them.
- Facilitating children and young people's participation and co-production within the decision-making process.

2. Status of the Board

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is accountable to the Full Council of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and will make an Annual Report to the Council that will be presented by children we care for and care experienced young people, with the support of the Corporate Parenting Board Chair and Sandwell Children's Trust's Voice team.
- 2.2 A number of groups which contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Parenting principles and strategy will report into the Board. These include the Strategic Health Group, the Virtual School Management Committee and the Strategic Corporate Parenting Group.

3. Chair

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Board will be co-chaired by the Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Chair of the Forum for Independent Young Adults. If either Chair is absent, the Co-Chair, will chair in their place.

4. Membership

4.1 The Board will be made up of:

- i. Chair or Representative of the Voices of Sandwell Forum (VOS);
- ii. Chair or Representative of the Forum for Independent Young Adults (FIYA);
- iii. Eight Elected Members of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC), including the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, and the leader or deputy leader of the opposition;
- iv. Leader or the deputy leader of the Council;
- v. Chair and Vice- Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board;
- vi. Chair of Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) Board;
- vii. Chief Executive Officer (SCT);
 - a. Director of Family Help and Protection (SCT);
- viii. Director of Corporate Parenting (SCT);
 - a. Director of Resources and Governance (SCT);

- ix. Executive Director for Children and Education (SMBC);
 - a. Assistant Director for Education Support Services (SMBC);
 - x. Assistant Director for Commissioning, Partnerships and Improvement (SMBC);
 - a. Assistant Director for Education Services (SMBC);
 - xi. Representative of the Black Country Integrated Care Board;
 - xii. Representative of West Midlands Police.
- 4.2 The substitute member(s) may attend in place of the substantive member(s) should the substantive member(s) be unable to attend.
- 4.3 Permanent Attendees of the Board will also attend regular meetings to include but not be limited to:
- i. SCT staff who support the FIYA and VOS Forums;
 - ii. Corporate Parenting Project Officer or Senior Commissioning Manager for Statutory Services;
 - iii. Democratic Services or minute taker;
 - iv. Representative of the Directorate of Housing.
- 4.4 The Board will call on the professional advice and assistance of Advisors to the Board when required, as follows:

Sandwell Council Officers

Sandwell Children's Trust Officers

Relevant Partner Agencies:

- Associate Director of Safeguarding and Partnerships - Black Country Integrated Care Board
- Designated Doctor for Looked After Children
- Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
- West Midlands Police
- Black Country Foundation Partnership Trust CAMHS Service
- Representative of Sandwell Foster Care Association

Other relevant agencies (to attend as appropriate):

- West Midlands Fire Service
- Adoption@Heart
- Department for Work and Pensions

- 4.5 Other staff from the Council, Sandwell Children's Trust, relevant partner agencies and other partner organisations will attend and report to the Board as required.

5 Pledge and promises

- 5.1 All board members and officers are to sign 5 pledges and 25 promises developed by the young people from the forums for children who we care for (VOS) and children who we have cared for (FIYA).

6. Meeting Frequency

- 6.1 The Board will meet every 10 weeks, in accordance with a programme of meetings agreed annually at the start of each municipal year.
- 6.2 Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Co-Chairs at times to be determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Co-Chairs.

7. Quorum

- 7.1 At least two elected members, one senior officer from Sandwell Children's Trust, one young person from Voices of Sandwell Forum (VOS) or the Forum for Independent Young Adults Forum (FIYA) and one senior officer from the Council.
- 7.2 Where a meeting is inquorate, the meeting may go ahead, to discuss information items only, and the minutes of the meeting shall be qualified with a statement that the meeting was inquorate.

8. Ways of Working

- 8.1 To ensure that the principles are delivered, the Corporate Parenting Board will work with children we care for and care experienced young people to create and keep under review a Corporate Parenting Strategy which identifies priorities that will drive the work of the Board, and a dynamic action plan which implements the strategy.
- 8.2 Leads will be identified to take forward the priorities within the action plan. Where appropriate, task and finish groups will be established to take forward specific priorities or actions. There will be regular updates on the delivery of the strategy and the action plan to Corporate Parenting Board. These updates will be underpinned by review of a data dashboard, which will be used to understand where outcomes are improving or where there are gaps or issues which need to be addressed.
- 8.3 In addition, each Corporate Parenting Board meeting will receive a review report on a specific issue relating to the corporate parenting principles to enable Board members to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue and direct further action where appropriate. An annual programme of reviews will be agreed at a working planning session prior to the first meeting of each Municipal Year.

9. Administration

- 9.1 Agenda and supporting papers will be circulated 1 week before any meeting.

10. Decision Making

- 10.1 Decisions are reached by consensus. If a vote on any matter is necessary, in the event of an equality of votes, the person presiding shall have a second and casting vote.
- 10.2 Any member may request that their vote (for or against) or their abstention shall be recorded.

11. Reporting

- 11.1 The Board may make reports and recommendations on the work of the Board directly to any relevant council body, officer, partnership or partner body, and will report to the full Council on an annual basis.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1 Meetings of the Board are not open to the public.

13. Disorderly Conduct

- 13.1 If any member of the Board, or an attendee, persistently disregards the ruling of the person chairing the meeting, by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs the business of the meeting, the person chairing the meeting may direct that person or those persons leave the meeting or that the meeting be adjourned for a specified period.