

Lambeth:
**Children
at the Heart
of Practice**

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024–2027



Lambeth

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About this document

Title: Corporate Parenting Strategy

Purpose: To set out Lambeth's Corporate Parenting vision and principles for the next 3 years

Updated by: Catherine Millington

Approved by: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: xxxxx

Version number: v1.2

Status: Proofing

Implementation date: Immediate

Review frequency: Refresh every 3 years

Next review date: April 2027



Forward



Andrew Carter
Corporate Director
Children, Families
and Education

Lambeth have a clear focus on more 'parenting' and less 'corporate'. We strive to ensure the services and support our children looked after and care leavers receive is of the quality we would expect for our own children. Corporate parenting is everyone's responsibility and Lambeth have a committed partnership approach ensuring we all take our responsibilities seriously. This corporate parenting three year strategy will support us in working together to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people and is the overarching framework that our corporate parenting annual business plan sits underneath to drive improvement and monitor our progress in delivering our high ambitions for all our children looked after and care experienced young people.



Councillor Ben Kind
Chair of the Corporate
Parenting Board and
Cabinet Member for
Children and Families

We want Lambeth to be the best borough for children to grow, develop and become adults regardless of that child or young person's background. This is especially true for our children looked after and care experienced young people and as their corporate parents, we are committed to providing the best support and services they need to live the happiest and healthiest lives possible. Lambeth work to provide seamless services to support our young people and take our responsibilities as a partnership seriously. I welcome this revised three year strategy, giving the partnership a clear direction and focus in supporting us to be the best corporate parents we can be to support our children and young people in achieving the best outcomes possible.



Visions of Success

Lambeth's Children in Care Council; 'Vision of Success' hopes this Corporate Parenting Strategy brings together all those that have a duty of care for the children and young people in Lambeth that rely on you.

Collectively, we want you to strive for your children and young people, who come from adverse backgrounds, have high aspirations so we can achieve our goals and dreams. Do so by providing resources, support, networks, and information through services. Strengthen your partnerships, not just locally but in the private and charity sectors too so you can strengthen the support system that each child and young people in care have access too. Especially those that are more vulnerable, like children with disabilities, do all that you can to increase their social mobility and independency.

A good corporate parent is *proactive* in looking after a young person's wellbeing, a good corporate parent checks in, a good corporate parent is a great role model for kids.

We want you to only accept the best for your children and young people and curate staff that genuinely care and seek to build us up. The result of a good corporate parent is that a young person from a care experience background feels equally nurtured and cared for, and that their life outcomes are equal or comparable to their peers.

Lastly, remember we are all individuals with a unique identity, look after us and protect our rights. If done correctly, this strategy will support us holistically and increase the likelihood of us becoming all that we can be.

Thank you, from Lambeth's Children in Care Council.

Introduction

Lambeth will be the best borough for children to grow, develop and become adults. This shared vision is ambitious and sets out the desire of staff and partners to achieve great things in Lambeth for our children and young people, including those who are looked after and are care experienced.

This three year strategy sets out Lambeth's vision and principles, underpinned by the voices of our children looked after and care experienced young people (care leavers) to support us in ensuring we have high aspirations for them. To achieve this, we need to maintain and grow our close working relationship with partners. Lambeth are committed to working in partnership with wider services and with children and young people to achieve this, underpinning this with a children's rights based approach to our work.





Our Approach

Vision and values

Our vision

Our Borough plan, Lambeth 2030: Our Future, Our Lambeth, guides the borough's work across council services and partnerships to ensure we all focus on the priorities of our residents. It sets out three key ambitions for Lambeth by 2030:

1. Making Lambeth neighbourhoods fit for the future
2. Making Lambeth one of the safest boroughs in London
3. Making Lambeth a place we can all call home

These three interlinked ambitions are connected by a 'golden thread' - which is a relentless focus on ensuring Lambeth's future as a borough of equity and justice.

Within the Children, Families and Education Directorate we want the best outcomes for our children and young people and our vision is:

Lambeth will be the best borough for children to

grow, develop and become adults. This shared vision is ambitious and sets out the desire of staff and partners to achieve great things in Lambeth for our children and young people, including those who are looked after and are care experienced.

As corporate parents:

Lambeth will be ambitious every day for every child looked after and care experienced young person, putting young people and their families/ carers at the heart of what we do, so that every child looked after achieves well, is safe and enjoys a secure and happy childhood, whilst accessing the right support to live independently and transition well and safely into adult life as responsible citizens.

We are committed that all children looked after and care experienced young people, regardless of their background, culture, ability or anything else feel welcome and supported to have the same opportunities to grow, learn, explore, have fun, feel safe and protected from discrimination.

Vision and values

Our values

Across Lambeth, we hold high aspirations for our children looked after and care experienced young people and hold high expectations for ourselves as corporate parents.

As a partnership, we will continuously ask ourselves:

- “Is this what a good parent would do?”
- “Would this be good enough for my child?”

The answers to these questions will underpin our conversations, work and support with children looked after and care experienced young people. Every good parent knows that children need a safe and secure environment in which to grow and thrive. Parents support and protect their children against the dangers and risks they may face. Parents are ambitious for them and want them to reach their full potential. Parents celebrate and share their children’s achievements. A good parent is also a good listener, responding positively to what their children say.

A child or young person cared for by the council has the right to expect everything from a corporate

parent that would be expected from a good parent within a safe, secure and supportive home.

We will listen to the lived experiences of our children looked after and care experienced young people and involve them in shaping our support and services

We understand that children and young people have the right to be listened to, to freely express their views on all matters that affect them and the right to freedom of expression, through association and access to information. Across our services we will continuously listen to children and young people to understand their needs, experiences and views to influence practice, service, policy change and decision making. We will be actively interested in their successes and problems and celebrate their achievements.

We will recognise all children looked after and care experienced young people as individuals

We will be effective and trustworthy corporate parents for our children looked after and care experienced young people irrespective of their age, gender,



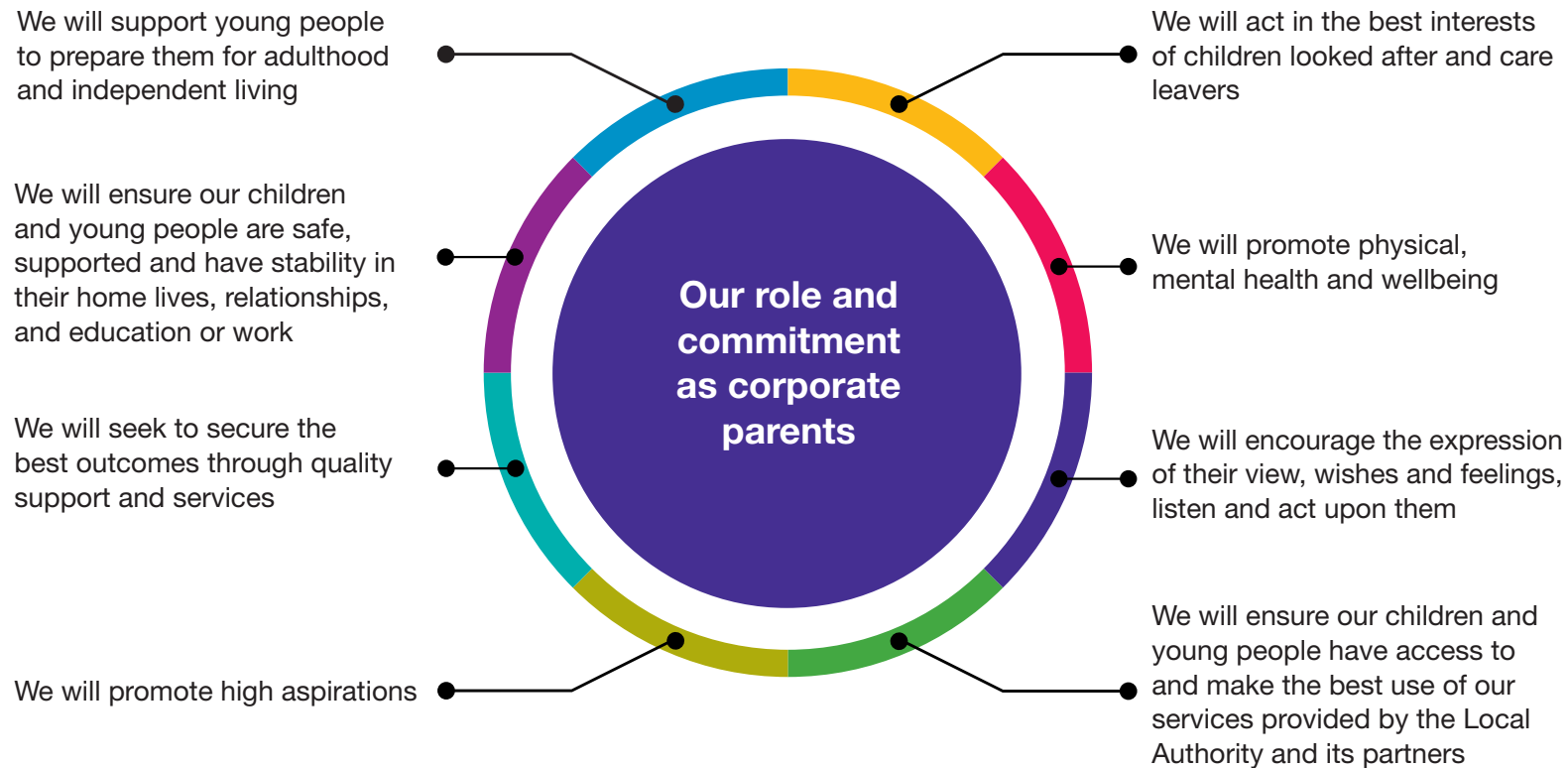
sexuality, ethnicity, faith, disability or anything else. We recognise that children come into care for different reasons with different needs. We will ensure that provision is bespoke and builds on universal and preventative services. We will ensure our young people have good quality support, advice and information when they leave our care. We will support children and young people to understand their own history and celebrate their own culture and identity.

We will champion children looked after and care experienced young people in everything we do

All council officers, elected members and partners will champion children looked after and care experienced young people within all our work to ensure their individual needs are recognised and met. We will question, and where necessary challenge, aspects of services to ensure they have a focus on children looked after and care experienced young people. This role should be active, not passive, as corporate parents are ultimately responsible for the quality of care provided and securing good outcomes for our children and young people.

Our Principles

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 outlined the seven key corporate parenting principles which local authorities should have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to children looked after and care experienced young people



Our principles

Lambeth’s Corporate Guardians Model

Corporate Guardians are an extension to our corporate parenting model in practice in our residential placements and fostering placements. As Corporate Guardians we have outlined what this model means through a variety of concepts and approaches that we wish to see in all placements regardless of the provider. We will be using this approach to manage any placement we make and to review how we are improving outcomes for children and young people.



Participation

As stated at the beginning of this strategy, the voices of children looked after and care experienced young people are at the heart of everything we do. Aligned to our Children’s Social Care Participation strategy, we define participation as:



Children and young people’s involvement in individual decisions that affect their own lives, as well as collective involvement in matters that affect them



As corporate parents, Lambeth is committed to ensuring all children looked after and care experienced young people whom we are working with, who have the capacity to form their own views, will have the right to express those freely in all matters that affect them. Their views will be given due weight and this will be a process, not a one off event. We understand that by meaningful participation, this will enable children and young people to have an influence on their own outcomes. As corporate parents we are fully committed to meaningful participation by young people to understand their needs, experiences and views to influence practice, services, policy and decision making.

Our principles of participation

Lambeth adopts the following guiding principles enshrined within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which also align to the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative:

- Children and young people have the right to be listened to, to freely express their views on all matters that affect them and the right to freedom of expression, through association and access to information
- Measures will be put in place to encourage and facilitate their participation in accordance with their age, maturity and any special educational needs or disability
- Participation will promote the best interests of the child/ young person and enhance their personal development
- All children and young people have an equal right to participation without discrimination
- All children and young people have the right to be protected from manipulation, violence, abuse and exploitation



In addition to these principles, we will:

- Ensure equal opportunity for all children and young people known to social care to participate, including those who may not usually engage and most disadvantaged
- Support children and young people to engage and participate meaningfully with access to training, information and support to build their skills and confidence and participate in local, regional and national decision making
- Communicate to children and young people in a child friendly and accessible way in accordance with their age, levels of understanding and taking into account any special educational needs or disability
- Communicate in a variety of languages to suit the needs of specific groups of children and young people
- Use communication tools to ensure a clear feedback loop with children and young people known to social care, which has a line of sight to senior leaders

In their words

What our children and young people are telling corporate parents



Our Priorities

Lambeth produce a Corporate Parenting Annual Business Plan which sits underneath this strategy and clearly sets out the detailed actions for the respective year against the strategies priorities.

Lambeth have four clear corporate parenting priorities:

A culture of corporate parenting is embedded within Lambeth

To continue to embed the corporate parenting culture across the Lambeth partnership and ensure the needs of children looked after and care experienced young people are at the forefront of everything we do

- Corporate parenting governance and business
- Understanding of performance, reviews, inspections and consultations to drive continuous improvement
- Ensure the voices of children looked after and care experienced young people are central to the agenda

Health and well-being

Children looked after and care experienced young people are healthy and have the right services and opportunities to engage in positive activities and to support their health and well-being

- Assessments, planning and information
- Mental health, emotional wellbeing, physical health
- Engagement in positive activities

Our Priorities

Care experienced young people (care leavers)

To ensure Lambeth's care experienced young people have the rights support offer in place as they move into adult life and independent living. To listen to and work with care experienced young people to understand and utilise their experiences and engage a full range of partners to support this group of young people

- Access to information and Lambeth's offer
- High quality and targeted multi-agency pathway plans developed in collaboration with care leavers
- Education, training and employment
- Care experienced young people access housing of good quality and access the support they need
- Focus on transitional safeguarding

Lambeth Produce an annual corporate parenting business plan which clearly sets out the detailed actions against the 4 priorities for the year. The annual business plan is widely consulted on and developed through our corporate parenting governance structure and services.

Safe, supported and celebrated

To work to keep children and young people safe, with the right support and services in place and to celebrate their achievements

- The voice of the child
- Minimising risks for children looked after and care experienced young people
- Understanding our looked after population and meeting their needs
- Young inspectors programme
- Additional support services
- Information, planning and review
- Identification
- Complaints
- Celebration

Lambeth produce an annual corporate parenting business plan, which clearly sets out the detailed annual priorities for that year. The annual plan is developed and widely consulted on through our corporate parenting governance structure and our annual corporate parenting conference.

