

# ONE MINUTE GUIDE

## Corporate Parenting

March 2019

### What is Corporate Parenting?

Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of the Council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children and young people who are looked after by Portsmouth City Council, or are under 25 years and were looked after by the Local Authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. The role of the Corporate Parent is intended to carry out many of the roles that a good and reasonable parent would. They may not be able to provide everything that a loving parent can, but they should provide the best possible support and care. It is a statutory role enshrined in the Children & Social Work Act 2017.

We must:

- Act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people.
- Encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, taking them into account whilst securing the best outcomes for them.
- Make sure they have access to services.
- Make sure they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work.
- Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

### Why is it important?

Corporate Parenting is one of the most important jobs that a council can do. When a child cannot safely stay at home, it is up to us, as the local authority, to step in and give them the care, support and stability that they deserve and need.

It is important to remember that just as not all children are the same, looked after children and care leavers are not one homogenous group. Therefore they need to be treated and supported as individuals. Whilst many children thrive in care, there are certain risks that particularly affect children in care and care leavers that corporate parents need to be aware of.

Children in care are three times more likely to go missing than their peers who are not in care. They are also disproportionately likely to be at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) than those in the general population (though the vast majority of CSE victims are living at home).

Care leavers are more likely to be homeless, unemployed, in prison and in mental health institutions than their peers. If we get it right for our young people when they are in care, it is more likely that they will experience positive outcomes, be supported into appropriate housing, so that they can retain tenancies; be encouraged into employment and or training to reach their potential and therefore be less vulnerable to mental health episodes and criminality. That is why we need to provide the right (and best) care at the right time for our young people.

## How do we do it?

Being a Corporate Parent means we do everything we can for every child in our care and every care leaver, to give them the opportunities that other children receive. This covers everything from keeping an eye on their progress at school/college, to looking after their health and wellbeing, to preparing them for life as independent adults. It also means supporting them as adults up to the age of 25 years. We need to be more ambitious for our children in care, encourage them to dream big and take chances even if they do not feel they can. Help them build confidence and self-belief. Support them to take up work experiences, build networks of relationships including with their families. We provide high-quality care (usually foster care for looked after children), but where young people cannot live in a family setting, identifying the right care provision for them. We advocate for our young people, we ensure their views are heard and acted upon. We help them make sense of their life experiences and repair relationships that they can build on for their future. We allow our young people to make mistakes without demonising them, so that they can learn from them. We help our young people to have fun and to love themselves through positive activities and stable placements.

All Corporate Parents should seek to stay informed about how our looked after children and care leavers are doing. We keep councillors informed through a monthly newsletter and also the Corporate Parenting Board meets quarterly, focusing on key themes and outcomes for our looked after children and care leavers and ensuring our partner agencies are fully briefed on the progress of how our children are doing.

## For more information:

Stronger Futures 2 - Strand 3, Excellent Care Board work packages can be accessed [here](#)

LGA Corporate Parenting resource pack - visit their website [here](#)

Our Pledge to our young people can be accessed [here](#)

The Corporate Parenting Strategy can be accessed [here](#)