

# Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 - 2021



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## Foreword and Introduction

Looking after the children and young people in our care is one of the most important things councils do. 'Corporate Parenting', is the term used to refer to the collective responsibility of the council to provide the best possible care and protection for children and young people who are 'looked after' or leaving care.

*"Once a child is in care all members and officers of the council, as their corporate parents, need to be concerned about that child as if it were their own. This concern should encompass their education, their health and welfare, what they do in their leisure time and holidays, how they celebrate their culture and how they receive praise and encouragement for their achievements"*

[If this were my child, Department for Education and Skills (DFES) 2003]

### What's important to children and young people in our care?

... help with finding a home

... listening to what we want

... seeing more of my family

Hull City Council is the corporate parent and grandparent to over 800 children and young people and we have high aspirations for every one of them. As responsible parents we care about our children's safety, health, their education and their leisure interests, their friendships and their futures.

Corporate parenting requires a high level of commitment from across the council and the support of all council employees and elected members as well as partner agencies. In Hull we have strengthened the corporate parenting role to provide a demonstrable commitment to improving outcomes for the children and young people in our care.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy describes how we will develop our current arrangements and is built around a vision and set of principles, which form the basis for all the work we do. The strategy covers six key objectives.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy is supported by Hull City Council's Children in Care Sufficiency Plan, which describes how we secure accommodation within the local area to meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers.

The strategy is also supported by the Early Help & Intervention Framework which seeks to support families to stay together, where it is safe to do so, by ensuring that children in need and their families are provided with the help they need at the earliest opportunity. In circumstances where 'care' cannot be avoided we will apply the principle to achieve a speedy rehabilitation with the birth family in a way that safeguards the child and promotes the child's well-being.



**Niki Clemo**  
Director of Children, Young  
People and Family Services



**Councillor Peter Clark**  
Chair of the Corporate Parenting  
Board and Portfolio Holder for  
Learning Skills and Safeguarding  
Children



**Matt Jukes**  
Chief Executive

## What we will do

### 1. Vision

*We want every child and young person in our care to achieve the best possible outcomes with the opportunities to enjoy life, be safe from harm and to have the support they need to help them be successful adults.*

We want all children and young people in our care to grow up in a loving and safe home; having a healthy and fun childhood. We want them to do their best at school, succeed in whatever they put their mind to and to be able to access excellent help and support when they need it. We want them to have their ideas and views heard and taken seriously in helping to decide and plan what they need. We want them to be active citizens and enjoy living in a city which welcomes and treats all people fairly and equally and does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

### 2. Objectives and Promise to Children in Care

The children and young people in our care tell us that they don't want to be treated differently from other children and young people. They want to develop trusting relationships with the people who have responsibility for their care and to know where to go if they have problems.

In 2014, the Young Voices Influencing Care group agreed a pledge with the council. This was reviewed and amended in 2019 into a 'promise'. The promise informs the corporate parenting objectives:

## OUR PROMISE

The Promise to children and young people in care was developed by members of Young Voices Influencing Care in 2019 and consulted on widely with children and young people in care. It sets out Hull City Council's Corporate Parenting Board's commitment to children and young people in our care.

- We promise to work with you to make sure you feel safe and comfortable in your home environment.
- We promise to provide suitable contact arrangements with family members who are important to you.
- We promise to work alongside your family and support you to return home if it is in your best interest.
- We promise to encourage you to get involved in clubs and activities so that you can make new friends and develop your interests.
- We promise to keep you safe from harm where you live, at school and in the city.
- We promise to support you with any health and emotional needs.
- We promise to help you do your best at school and give you support when you need it.
- We promise to support you in taking up employment, education or training opportunities after you leave school.
- We promise to support you to become independent successful adults with access to appropriate accommodation when you need it.

1. Ensure that children, young people and their carers are central to and actively participate in decision making around their care plans and for any changes to the support they receive.

2. Work with looked after children and care leavers to make sure they feel safe and comfortable in their home environment.

3. Make sure that all looked after children and care leavers receive a good education from early years to further education.

4. Address the health needs of looked after children and care leavers with easy access to mainstream services and specialist services where necessary.

5. Provide opportunities for children and young people to have positive experiences and access to cultural, sports and leisure opportunities.

6. Help young people successfully move into adulthood at a time that is right for them.

### 3. Principles

The following principles underpin our approach to corporate parenting. We will:

- Ensure that, if a child has to enter care, the first consideration will be given to a family placement. In circumstances where care cannot be avoided the aim will be to achieve a speedy rehabilitation with the birth family in a way that safeguards the child and promotes the child's well-being.
- Ensure that when being looked after, sibling groups are placed together wherever possible, unless their individual needs determine this to be inappropriate.
- Help children develop effective relationships with their carers and to maintain contact with brothers, sisters and birth parents/families in line with their care plan. We will also work with carers to help increase their emotional resilience and practical skills in caring for vulnerable children, particularly those with complex needs.
- Be ambitious for all our children and young people encouraging and supporting their personal development in order to ensure that they maximise their potential.
- Ensure that children and young people have an allocated qualified social worker and that there is a clear understanding of their life events, assessment of needs and care or pathway plan with clear plans in place to work with the child, young person and their parent/carer to regularly review and update them.
- Work with internal and external partners to provide integrated, high quality, equitable services.
- Take into account the views of children, young people, parents and carers in planning and running services which affect them. We will do this in a variety of ways including introducing a 'Dear Corporate Parent' letter for looked after children reviews in order to offer children a direct feedback route to the corporate parenting board.

In addition to these principles the council is developing its promise to Care Leavers.

## **Making it happen**

The children and young people in our care are some of the most vulnerable in society. The national picture shows that outcomes for children and young people who are in or have left care, tend to be worse than for their peers. By the age of 19, care leavers are roughly twice as likely, not to be in education, training or employment than the rest of the population with only 6% of them in higher education, compared to roughly 30% of young people nationally. Sadly, 20% of young homeless people and 24% of the adult prison population were previously in care.

As corporate parents and grandparents we want to make sure that these children and young people realise their full potential and that we set high ambitions for them; listen to them, help them raise their aspirations and encourage others to open up more opportunities for them. Our action plan is attached in Appendix 2.

## **4. Leadership and governance**

### **1. The Role of Elected Members**

The leadership and commitment of elected members is of critical importance in achieving good outcomes for children and young people in our care. While everyone working with children in care contributes in a shared way to corporate parenting, councillors set the vision and hold officers to account for the delivery of high quality services.

We will develop the roles and responsibilities of elected members, as well as senior officers, to ensure that appropriate priority is given by the council to the support and resources that are made available to these vulnerable children and young people.

Elected members and senior officers will ensure that, when considering new policies or strategies or decisions around the commissioning/delivery of services, they consider the impact it may have on children and young people in care or care leavers. In addition, scrutiny commissions will play a role in reviewing the performance of services directly and indirectly influencing the lives of the children and young people in our care.

We will encourage members, in their corporate parenting role, to pledge to visit children's homes and the services provided in their local areas to ask whether we are making a difference, to visit social care offices at least once every quarter, to attend regular development sessions with young people, to participate in young person-led voice and influence training every three years, and to attend shadowing opportunities as part of the corporate parenting and safeguarding programme. We will also encourage elected members who are school governors to access specific advice and support in relation to that role.

To demonstrate our commitment to children and young people in or leaving care, all elected members, staff, and foster carers will be required to sign the Promise to Children in Care and the Care Leavers' Promise.

## **2. Governance**

The Corporate Parenting Board was established in 2011 to assist the council in carrying out all their statutory duties. The board is a multi-agency forum made up from a cross party representation of elected members, senior officers from the council, representatives from looked after children, carers and partners.

In 2019, a review of the Corporate Parenting Board resulted in a renewed focus and a review of membership to allow for greater understanding of the experiences of children and young people in our care, care leavers and carers.

The board will oversee the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, with board members using their delegated responsibilities to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Action Plan (appendix 2) is delivered. Board members will regularly monitor performance to identify where success is being achieved and where further improvements are required. A performance framework will support the strategy and provide the platform for identifying further developments.

The Corporate Parenting Action Plan will be reviewed annually with the board agreeing its priorities for the following year in consultation with looked after children and care leavers.

We will know we are good Corporate Parents when ...

- Children, young people and their families tell us we've made a difference
- More children and young people are in stable long term placements in their local area
- More children and young people achieve their potential
- Children and young people experience improved health outcomes
- Children and young people feel safe in their homes and communities
- More young people leaving care are in appropriate accommodation, employment, education or training

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

- **Councillors**

All councillors are in the unique position to promote opportunities for our children looked after and young people leaving care through their political power and influence, their connections to the community, schools, health services, local businesses, employers and voluntary organisations. Good corporate parenting and grandparenting requires ownership and leadership at the most senior level. As corporate parents and grandparents, it is the responsibility of all elected members that there is a joined up, effective and holistic approach to meeting the needs of looked after children and young people leaving care through policy and planning. When policy is being set or plans are agreed it is important to consider opportunities for improving outcomes for children looked after and young people leaving care.

- **All Council Services**

All council officers have a shared corporate parenting responsibility and can make an important collective contribution to corporate parenting and grandparenting in how it can deliver better opportunities for children looked after and young people leaving care up to the age of 25 years. Our 10 Top Tips for all council officers written by our children and young people about what it means to be good corporate parents and grandparents are listed below.

- **Virtual School**

The Virtual School plays a key strategic role to make sure that the corporate parenting responsibilities of Hull City Council, with regard to the education of children who are looked after are met. The service promotes achievement, raises attainment and ensures equality of opportunity to enhance the life chances of all our children who are looked after.

- **Schools, Colleges and other Education Providers**

Our partners have a range of responsibilities including ensuring that every looked after child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and is supported to achieve their potential. Supporting looked after children and young people leaving care in school, college and university. School governors have statutory responsibilities which include monitoring the progress made by looked after children. Schools must engage with the Virtual School and respect of their cooperating parenting role.

- **Health Service Providers**

Health providers have important responsibilities for improving the health, both physical and psychological, of all looked after children. Health assessments must be undertaken and specialist nurses for looked after children must ensure that Personal Health Plans (Health Passports) are developed with the child or young person and that they are fully implemented.

- **Police and Youth Offending Service**

Reducing offending is the joint responsibility of the Police, Children's Services and the Youth Offending Team and to maximise the role of corporate parenting and achieve the best life chances for this vulnerable group of young people. The Hull children looked after and reducing criminalisation protocol and procedures ensures effective inter-agency planning and the active involvement of all relevant agencies/services. Where concerns were raised in relation to behaviours which could result in entry in to the criminal justice system the following procedures would be followed:

- Restorative Principles;
- Learning and Development;
- Practice
- Individual Service Responsibilities.

- **Housing Providers**

All housing providers have an essential role to play in providing young people leaving care who are ready to live more independently with good quality accommodation. The council and other landlords work together to ensure that young people are supported to find appropriate properties which meets the needs of young people and is affordable to them.

- **Community Organisations**

There is a wide range of community organisations who provide important services and support for looked after children and young people leaving care, including advice and guidance, mentoring, supported housing and drug and alcohol services. These services are vital for preventing young people leaving care needing the intervention of statutory services.

## Corporate Parent and Grandparent Top Tips

### Corporate Parent/Grandparent Tips

1. "Please make sure I get all the information I need to help me make decisions"  
Make sure young people leaving care understand their options by giving them the information they need to make decisions.
2. "Meet me where I want to meet. It's important I am comfortable and sometimes it needs to be neutral ground"  
Understand that a young person leaving care might not feel comfortable in a formal meeting room, or even in their home. Ask where they are happy to meet; it might be at a coffee shop or in the park.
3. "Avoid the 'jargon' when you talk or write to me and about me"  
A young person leaving care has the right to understand what is going on with things that affect them, so make sure you use language they can understand and relate to.
4. "Remember if I cannot trust you with the small things in my life I will find it hard to trust you with the big things"  
Be open and honest at all times, trust can be hard won but easily broken by a missed appointment or giving the wrong information.
5. "Help us have opportunities to get involved in the 'family business' for example work experience and apprenticeships"  
If a young person leaving care would like the opportunity to gain work experience with Hull City Council, then help by making make them aware of opportunities and how to get involved.
6. "Please respect and recognise 'my life journey' and have an understanding of my viewpoints because of my experience"  
Young people leaving care may have had a very different life experience to you, so respect their point of view and respect they may feel or react as they do.
7. "Simply get to know me and take time to listen and show an interest in my interests"  
Taking time to get to know and understand our young people leaving care can have positive effects on not only them, but the world around them.
8. "Ask me my opinion, my ideas and always work with me and not against!"  
Our young people leaving care deserve to be heard about decisions that affect them. Their opinions matter and always need to be considered with care and respect.
9. "This is your job, but it's my life!"  
As a corporate parent and grandparent remember just one decision you make or conversation you have could affect a young person leaving care for the rest of their life. Always be mindful of our commitment to have the same hopes and aspirations as every good parent and grandparent to enable our young people to experience fulfilling lives.
10. "Please remember, I am just a child developing my own identity not another statistic"  
Be patient and listen to our young people leaving care before offering guidance and advice. Don't define them by what is written about them. Understand that our young people are growing, learning and developing their own identities every day.

## Our vision and aspirations

Our vision is for:

**"Every child and young person in our care to achieve the best possible outcomes with the opportunities to enjoy life, be safe from harm and to have the support they need to help them be successful adults."**

We want all children and young people in our care to:

- grow up in a loving and safe home
- have a healthy and fun childhood
- do their best at school

- succeed in whatever they put their mind to
- be able to access excellent help and support when they need it
- have their ideas and views heard and taken seriously in helping to decide and plan what they need
- be active citizens and enjoy living in a city which welcomes and treats all people fairly and equally and does not tolerate any form of discrimination

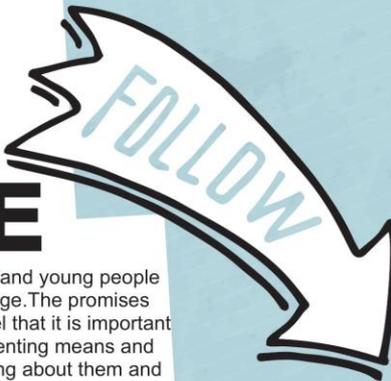
We will use the Corporate Parent Action Plan (Appendix 2) to help us understand how well we are doing in fulfilling our vision and aspirations for the children and young people in our care.

## Appendix 1 – Care Leavers' Promises 2019

- The Care Leavers' Promises have been co-produced with young people who access support via 'Room 42' and consulted on with young people.
- Young People visited a number of local authorities to understand how young people from other areas have developed a document that captures what Corporate Parenting is and what this means to young people.
- The Promises have been developed with our Care Leavers Champion, Regenerations Champion and a representative group of young people. It has also been presented in draft to young people from all over the country via the Young People's Benchmarking Forum. Young people gave this their resounding approval and similar documents have been adopted elsewhere. The promises have been written from the perspective of a parent to their child and in the spirit of Good Corporate Parenting taking into account that as a responsible authority we should be striving to provide services and support that 'would be good enough for our own children'.
- They reflect the commitment to our young people as their champions to continually strive to achieve great things and endeavour to make positive progress into their adult lives.
- They make a strong statement in terms of Hull's ongoing commitment to have high aspirations for the young people we bring into our care.

# Hull City Council CARE LEAVER PROMISE

CREATED BY



The Care Leavers promises relate to children and young people who are care leavers between 16-25 years of age. The promises have been developed by young people who feel that it is important that everyone knows about what corporate parenting means and the things people need to consider when thinking about them and what support they are providing.

## Young People said.....

"This is a set of promises to Care Leavers (your young people). It is a commitment from you as our Corporate Parent to ensure that we reach our full potential and enjoy the same opportunities in life that any good parent would provide. When you are thinking of us we want you to ask the question, **WOULD THIS BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR MY CHILD?**"



### A place to call home

- We will work with you to make sure you feel safe and comfortable in your home environment
- We will help you to look at your housing options so you can choose the most suitable accommodation for you.



### Help you have your voice heard

- We will listen to your opinions and involve you in decision making regarding your life
- We will give you the opportunity to tell us what you think is going well and what you think needs improving regarding services and support the local authority provides.



### Help you remember your history

- We will support you in keeping in touch with your family and friends
- We will make sure you are aware of the reasons you are in care/were in care.



### Invest in your future



- Make more work experience and apprenticeships available for young people in care and those leaving care at Hull City Council and through their connections.
- Before you are ready to move on we will make sure you are prepared and have the skills to live independently (e.g. being able to manage money, know how to be responsible for your own health.)

### Help you achieve your goals

- We will support you in having a good quality education.
- We will make sure you can participate in any school activities and provide suitable equipment to thrive in school, college and university.
- We will make sure you can try new leisure activities and have the chance to follow a new hobby.

### Keep you healthy

- We will make sure the people caring for you can keep you safe and healthy and will support you to be able to look after yourself.
- We will make sure you are cared for like we would for our own children
- We will make sure you have access to health services and contact information

We as corporate parents are signing these promises to show a strong commitment to 'our young people'. We promise to consider the promises in everything that we do. We will use them to ensure that we are doing our best for you and will also use them to challenge ourselves when could do better. The following people within Hull City Council represent our Corporate Parents and agree to keep the promises above.

Hull City Council  
**CARE LEAVER PROMISE**

CREATED BY



Young People said

"This is a set of promises to Care Leavers (your young people). It is a commitment from you as our Corporate Parent to ensure that we reach our full potential and enjoy the same opportunities in life that any good parent would provide. When you are thinking of us we want you to ask the question, **WOULD THIS BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR MY CHILD?**"

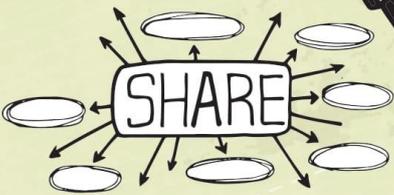


Invest in your  
**FUTURE**



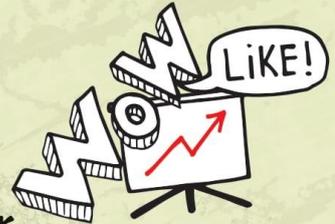
Help you have your  
**VOICE**  
 heard

**KEEP YOU HEALTHY**



Help you remember your  
**history**

Help you achieve your  
**GOALS**



The Care Leavers promises relate to children and young people who are care leavers between 16-25 years of age. The promises have been developed by young people who feel that it is important that everyone knows about what corporate parenting means and the things people need to consider when thinking about them and what support they are providing.



## Appendix 2 – Corporate Parenting Action Plan

Objective	Action	Who	Measurement
1. Ensure that children, young people and their carers are central to and actively participate in decision making around their care plans and for any changes to the support they receive	Widely promote advocacy and children's rights to all looked after children, young people and care leavers through a range of media.	Targeted Youth Service Team – Advocacy, Children's Safeguarding, Local Offer	Looked after children, young people, and care leavers are aware of their rights advocacy.
	Develop new ways of communicating and consulting with looked after children and care leavers.	Targeted Youth Service Team – Advocacy, Voice and Influence Team, Local Offer	
	Develop a more systematic approach to gaining and making use of the views of care leavers, carers and their families.	Head of Service– Integrated Looked after Children Services. Team Manager Voice and Influence, Local Offer	The views of care leavers, carers, and their families are regularly obtained and clearly linked to informing policy and practice.
	Ensure the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board includes representatives from the Foster Carer Group, Health, Adoption Panel and schools.	Director of Children, Young People and Family Services	Terms of Reference and minutes of Corporate Parenting Board show representative membership.

<p><b>2. Provide safe, comfortable, loving homes which meet the needs of looked after children</b></p>	<p>Take forward the Sufficiency Plan to ensure suitable placements are available for looked after children and young people providing and commissioning a flexible range of high quality placements. This will include provision to support single placements for children, particularly those who require additional support to move from residential care into a family setting.</p>	<p>Head of Service– Resources, Head of Service Housing</p>	<p>Suitable placements are available for looked after children and young people.</p>
	<p>Develop a robust process for recruiting and retaining foster carers, continuing to invest in engagement and marketing.</p>	<p>Fostering Team Manager</p>	<p>XX new foster carers are recruited. XX% of existing foster carers are retained.</p>
	<p>Ensure that statutory independent visiting arrangements meet the requirements of the Children’s Homes and Regulations 2001 (miscellaneous amendment 2014) and support the development of services provided in a residential setting.</p>	<p>Head of Service– Integrated Looked after Children Services</p>	<p>Legal requirements for statutory independent visiting arrangements are met.</p>

<b>3. Make sure that all looked after children and care leavers receive a good education from early years to further education</b>	<p>Ensure that all children and young people have an ePEP that clearly outlines their needs and any additional support requirements where necessary.</p>	<p>Schools/ Social Worker/ Virtual School Head</p>	<p>All children and young people have an up-to-date and sufficient ePEP.</p>
	<p>Develop the monitoring of the use of the Pupil Premium Plus working with schools, and carers to develop innovative and creative ways to support children and young people to achieve their potential.</p>	<p>Virtual School Head</p>	<p>Innovative and creative ways to support children and young people to achieve their potential are developed and utilised.</p>
	<p>Explore new ways of encouraging and supporting young people to go on to further and higher education e.g. bursaries and sponsorship.</p>	<p>Head of Service– Integrated Looked after Children Services. Virtual School, Local Offer, Voluntary Sector</p>	<p>XX% more young people go on to further and higher education.</p>
<b>4. Address the health needs of looked after children with easy access to mainstream services and specialist</b>	<p>Initiate research into the comparison between health outcomes for looked after children and their peers including physical and mental/emotional health.</p>	<p>Hull Clinical Commissioning Group/Public Health/Children, Young People and Family Services</p>	<p>Health outcomes for looked after children and their peers researched and mapped.</p>

services where necessary	Continue to develop access and support around therapeutic and psychological services including the implementation of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Action Plan.	City Health Care Partnership/ Hull Clinical Commissioning Group/ Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services	XX children and young people access and receive support around therapeutic and psychological services.
	Aspire to offer support to previous looked after children within given criteria, e.g. SGO.	Humber Foundation Trust	In recognition of specific emotional and mental health needs of care leavers we would expect priority access to ensure all care leavers have access to appropriate mental health services up to age of 25.
	Oversee a health 'passport' for all care leavers, which provide details of health records and information to ensure continuity of health care and to allow access to the health care they need.	City Health Care Partnership/ Leaving Care Team	All care leavers receive a health 'passport'.
	Immunisation and dentals and ensuring standards for medical monitoring complies with national best practice.	All Health Services/Hull Clinical Commissioning Group/City Health Care Partnership/Hull University Hospital Teaching Trust	Increase in % of children in care immunisations. Hull at 79.6% compared to 86.6% for UK and 90.4% for Yorkshire and Humber region (PHE, 2019).

5. Provide opportunities for children and young people to have positive experiences and access to cultural, sports and leisure opportunities	Continue to provide access to a range of leisure, cultural and sporting opportunities for children and young people	Early Years and Commissioning Manager/ Integrated Youth Services Manager	XX% of children and young people regularly access a range of leisure, cultural and sporting opportunities.
	Ensure that children in our care and care leavers are actively involved in the plans and opportunities around the Local Offer.	Local Offer Lead	Children in care and care leavers are actively involved in the plans and opportunities around the Local Offer.
6. Help young people successfully move into adulthood at a time that is right for them	Establish the Care Leavers' Promises.	Corporate Parenting Board	Care Leavers' Promise is in place and signed by elected members, staff, and foster carers.
	Continue to provide and develop a comprehensive support package for care leavers working with partners to enable access to a broader range of employability support.	Leaving Care Team Manager Director of Regeneration	XX% more care leavers in employment.
	Review the current accommodation provision for care leavers identifying any gaps in need in order to improve the accommodation offer for young people.	TYS Manager, Head of Housing, Head of Service– Integrated Looked after Children Services. Adult Commissioning Manager	XX% more care leavers in good quality accommodation.

	Ensure Staying Put requirements are reflected in current processes which enable young people to stay with their foster carers post-18.	Head of Service– Integrated Looked after Children Services	
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