

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

1. To ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parent to Children & Young People in Care (CYPiC) and Care Leavers, and fulfils its duties corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.
2. To consider matters referred to the Board within its terms of reference and to drive forward improvements for CYPiC and Care Leavers

2. Responsibilities of the Panel

1. To take an overview of the Council's and partner agencies responsibilities towards all CYPiC and Care Leavers and examine ways in which the Council as a whole and partner agencies can improve their life chances.
2. To ensure there are good joint working arrangements between Council departments and partner agencies, including working arrangements with the Children's Trust Board, Bury Safeguarding Children's Board and the Health & Wellbeing Board
4. To monitor and scrutinise the performance of services for CYPiC and Care Leavers, supporting good practice and challenging and holding to account for poor practice
5. To provide a forum for CYPiC and Care Leavers to participate and influence policy and to have an opportunity to talk about issues relating to their own direct experiences of services they have received. To ensure that positive experiences are maintained and lessons are learnt and changes made in the areas that require improvements.
6. To maintain a strategic overview of all developments, plans, policies and strategies for CYPiC and Care Leavers and to make appropriate recommendations for action.
7. To monitor and scrutinise the plans/needs of children in secure accommodation.
8. To ensure Members are regularly updated on issues affecting CYPiC and Care Leavers.
9. To meet with looked after children and their carers on a regular basis to consult and celebrate achievements.
10. To act as the governing body of the Virtual School for CYPiC.

3. Principles for effective Corporate Parenting

Ofsted has identified that where looked after services are good, Corporate Parenting Boards:

- Demonstrate strong cross-party commitment to looked after children, by championing their rights, having high aspirations for their achievement, monitoring children's progress and challenging outcomes
- Clearly understand its role and the responsibilities of the local authority towards looked after children, and plan for and prioritise their needs, resulting in a greater focus for improving outcomes
- Actively engage with young people, for example through children in care councils that are well-established and have effective and regular links with senior management and elected members

4. Principles for effective Scrutiny

The Panel will also include a scrutiny role to enable Members to fulfil their corporate parenting responsibilities. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has outlined four principles of effective scrutiny;

- To provide a "critical friend" challenge to policy and decision makers
- To enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard
- To carry out scrutiny in an independent minded way
- To drive improvement

As a member of the Corporate Parenting Board it will be important to ask and receive satisfactory answers to the following sorts of questions:

- Are looked after children safeguarded?
- Have they got good homes in a secure, caring environment?
- Are they thriving and developed socially and emotionally as they should be?

5. Membership

The Corporate Parenting Panel will comprise;

Voting Members

- The Cabinet Member for Children and Families
- Nine other elected Members (appointed on the basis of political balance)

Non-voting Members

- Service user representative
- Representatives from Bury Children's Rights
- Representatives from the Children in Care Council
- Virtual Head Teacher
- Designated teacher for looked after children (Primary and Secondary)

- A representative from Bury College
- A voluntary sector representative
- A foster carer
- Representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group

Also in Attendance

- Executive Director of Children's Services
- Assistant Director – Social Care and Safeguarding
- Strategic Lead – Placement Services
- Senior officers (as advisors to the Panel – to attend as appropriate to the work of the Panel).

The panel may also decide to co-opt additional members to advise in respect of other areas which fall within the remit of the Panel (health, housing, adult care, leisure etc).

Any elected member or officer from Bury MBC or a partner agency can ask to attend the Panel to observe its activity.

Expectation of Members

Board members are also expected outside of Board meetings to:

- Champion corporate parenting in other forums
- Participate in development workshops
- Meet with children and young people at formal and informal CICC network events.

6. Operational Arrangements

- **Chair** – The Chair will be appointed by the incumbent party as part of its annual appointing arrangements. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families will not be eligible for appointment to the Chair.
- **Deputy Chair** – To be agreed by a majority of Core Members.
- **Absence of the Chair or Deputy Chair** - A replacement Chair will be elected for the duration of the meeting from the Core Membership by a majority of those eligible to vote.
- **Quorum** - At least two councillors.
- **Support** – The Assistant Director of Social Care and Safeguarding will act as the lead officer with assistance from other officers within Children Services. Lead officer responsibility will include ensuring that agendas are appropriate to the work programme of Corporate Parenting Board.
- **Workload** – Work Programme to be determined annually by the Board. The Board must also have regard to any issue referred to it by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Council and its leadership, or Executive Director Children and Families.

- **Frequency of Meetings** – 6 times per year, in accordance with a timetable determined at the first meeting of the Municipal Year. Ad hoc meetings may be called by a decision of the Board, or by the Chair after consultation with the officers
- **Clerk to the Committee** - Meetings will be clerked by a representative of Democratic Services
- **Reporting** – 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.
- **Access to Information** – It is important to ensure that all Councillors are kept aware of the work of the Panel and a copy of the minutes will be circulated to all Bury Councillors. In general, papers being considered by Corporate Parenting Board are not confidential, unless this is clearly stated.
- **Notice of Meetings** – Agendas and papers for the meetings will normally be circulated by Democratic Services five clear working days before the meeting.

7. Accountability

- The CPP is accountable for reporting on an annual basis to Full Council.
- Political accountability is also through leadership of discussions with Cabinet and other Members for the effectiveness, availability and value for money of all Councils children’s services by the Cabinet Member.
- The Cabinet Member will ensure that services delivered within the local area are planned, designed, delivered and quality assured with the involvement of children, young people and their families.
- The Cabinet Member will ensure that the Council maintain a clear focus on effective safeguarding arrangements and promotes, health, safety and welfare across the Borough.

WORKING PRINCIPLES

CPP Working Groups:

4 working groups will lead work against the Corporate Parenting Strategy and will report into the Corporate Parenting Panel::

- **Care Placements** – to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate placements/accommodation for CYPiC and Care Leavers; to ensure value for money and to contribute to the development of a Placements Commissioning Strategy; and to recruit more foster carers living in Bury and surrounding area
- **Health & Education** – to improve health and education outcomes for CYPiC and Carer Leavers; establish a Corporate Parenting Parent/Teacher Association
- **Care Leavers – Further Education, Employment & Training** – to improve EET outcomes for Care Leavers; to provide a range of work experience, employment opportunities and apprenticeships for care leavers across the Council and in partner agencies
- **Children’s Rights & Participation** – to ensure young people have a voice and there are clear mechanisms in place for children and young people to feedback to CPP and vice versa; and to increase communication between CYPiC and Care Leavers with their Corporate Parents

Meetings

Agendas will be set by an agenda-setting group, which includes:

- Chair of CPP
- Assistant Director Social Care & Safeguarding
- Strategic Lead Placement Services
- Support Officer Children’s Services (CT Development Officer)
- Support Officer Democratic Services

The group will work to a Meetings Forward Planner which:

- Identifies themes for meetings
- Sets out timetable for reports, to include:
 - Annual Report to Council
 - 1/4ly fostering reports
 - 6-monthly adoption reports
 - Annual IRO reports
 - Children’s Rights/Complaints 1/4ly reports
 - Termly education reports
 - CiCC annual action plan/report
 - 1/4ly Performance Reports
- Includes option for CiCC to provide written/verbal report to every meeting

Delivery Plan

CPP will work to a Corporate Parenting Strategy Delivery Plan which:

- Sets out priority actions for CPP
- Picks up actions from CiCC Action Plan, where this is necessary to make progress
- Is monitored at CPP meeting

Virtual School Governing body

- CPP will appoint Chair of Virtual School Governors
- Agree and work to Terms of Reference

Involvement of wider Council

Corporate Parenting is the statutory responsibility of the whole council. This will be supported by the provision of:

- Annual Report
- CPP Terms of Reference and Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Regular Fostering & Adoption Reports to Council
- Involvement in Annual Achievements Award Ceremony
- Newsletter 2 x per year
- Training opportunities
- Opportunity to be involved in sub groups
- Opportunity to be a Council named contact for cypic