

# **Bury Corporate Parenting Strategy 2013-16: 2015 update**

## **1. Our Vision**

"To do our best as parents for children and young people in our care"

## **2. Introduction**

There is a whole range of reasons why children and young people cannot be cared for by their birth families. In these instances the local authority takes responsibility for these children and young people. 'Corporate Parenting' is about how the local authority and its partners, such as the health service, housing and schools, act as responsible parents to children and young people in their care. This responsibility continues as young people make the transition into independence and adulthood.

Corporate Parenting is not the sole responsibility of Children's Social Care or the Corporate Parenting Board. It is the responsibility of the whole Council, including councillors, council officers, teachers, GP's, health workers and other partners to recognise that they are corporate parents and identify what they can do to promote the life chances of all children and young people in our care.

When providing and monitoring services for children and young people in care, we should challenge ourselves by asking "would this be good enough for my child?". We need to make sure that all children and young people in our care feel safe and secure, have stability in their lives and that we help them to achieve their full potential by supporting them in their ambitions and aspirations.

This update to Bury Corporate Parenting Strategy 2013-16 sets out our promise to children and young people in care, how this will be delivered and the governance arrangements to ensure that the Council and partner agencies act as good corporate parents.

## **3. Our Strategy**

In Bury our Corporate Parenting Strategy is about how we will be the best parents we can be for children and young people in our care and how we will ensure that services and agencies work together to meet their needs. The Strategy encompasses all aspects of their wellbeing and development, including

their education, health and welfare, aspirations and achievements, and supporting them into adulthood.

Listening to children and young people is fundamental to a successful corporate parenting strategy, ensuring that they have a voice in decisions that affect them and about services they receive. Bury children and young people in care have told us what is important to them and this is set out in our 'Promise' to children and young people in care.

Meeting the 'Promise' is at the heart of our Corporate Parenting Strategy.

#### **4. Bury's Promise to Children and Young People in Care**

Bury's Promise to Children and Young People in Care was updated by children and young people in 2014 and adopted unanimously by full Council:-

We will tell you why you are in care and help you to understand these reasons.

We will ensure that you have a safe place to live with people who care about you up until you are 21 if that is what you wish.

We will listen to you and involve you in all decisions that affect you.

We will ensure you are able to have contact with your family and friends where possible.

We will support you in your education for as long as you want to continue learning.

We will support you to take part in hobbies and clubs outside of school.

We will care for you as we would our own children.

We will make you aware of your rights as Children and Young People in Care.

We will treat you as individuals and not assume that all Children and Young People in Care have the same needs and wishes.

We will support you with any health concerns.

We will ensure that all members of Bury Council understand their roles as Corporate Parents.

We will enable you to live with your siblings where possible and explain the reasons why if this is not possible.

We promise to keep changes in Social Worker to a minimum. If changes are necessary we will do our best to ensure your old social worker introduces you to your new social worker in advance of the change.

Similarly, our promise to young people leaving care is set out in a Care Charter which was developed by Bury Care Leavers Forum in 2015 (see Appendix 1).

Meeting the Promise and the Charter sets the foundation for our updated Corporate Parenting Strategy. We will know we have been successful if our children and young people:-

- Are safe, secure and protected and *feel* safe, secure and protected
- Are as physically and emotionally healthy and active as possible
- Have high aspirations and achieve the best that they can
- Are able to live with their own families or friends whenever it is safe for them to do so
- When they cannot live with their own families, they live close to home and school where it is in their best interests, and they are fully consulted throughout the process
- Move into independence and have a choice of suitable accommodation/ placements when they are ready to leave foster or residential care
- Have a voice at a strategic, service and operation level in decision making and service development
- Believe that we have met our promise

In addition to this we will champion the needs of children and young people in care across the Council and Partnerships.

## **5 Delivering the Strategy**

### **5.1 Corporate Parenting Delivery Plan**

To ensure progress against the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Corporate Parenting Board has produced a Delivery Plan (Appendix 2). The Delivery Plan sets out the Board's objectives for the current year and how these will be achieved. The Board monitors the Delivery Plan on a regular basis and reviews it annually.

A key area of work undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Board in 2013/14 was to establish the framework and governance arrangements to develop and deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy. This included establishing 4 Corporate Parenting sub groups:

- Placements
- Health & Wellbeing
- Education, Employment & Lifelong Learning
- Participation

The sub groups bring together agencies with responsibility for the well-being of children and young people in care and care leavers. They work to terms of reference and annual objectives which have been agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board (Appendix 3).

## **5.2 Monitoring the Strategy**

The Board meets six times a years and monitors progress against the Strategy and outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers in a number of ways.

- The Corporate Parenting Board meetings include a themed discussion about an aspect of the lives of children and young people in care and care leavers. This is led by the relevant sub group and enables the Board to question and challenge services on behalf of the children and young people in their care. All sub group leaders attend at least once a year to provide a detailed report. In addition, the Board receives sub group minutes and additional ad hoc reports and/or briefings as required.
- The Corporate Parenting Board receives regular reports by which it can monitor outcomes for children and young people in care and the performance of services. This includes statutory reports, ie, fostering quarterly reports; adoption six-monthly reports and annual fostering reports. Other reports received by the Board are from the Children's Rights Service; Independent Reviewing Services and the Annual Report of the Assistant Director Safeguarding & Social Care.
- The Corporate Parenting Board also acts as the governing body of the Virtual School for children and young people in care and receives termly reports from the Head of the Virtual School.
- Children and young people have a key role in ensuring the Corporate Parenting Strategy is delivered and that the Council and its partners are good corporate parents. The main forums through which Corporate Parenting Board communicates and consults with children and young people are the Children in Care Council (CICC) and Care Leavers Forum; and representatives actively participate in Corporate Parenting Board meetings.

## **6. Governance of the Strategy**

Bury Council devolves the authority for governance of the Corporate Parenting Strategy to the Corporate Parenting Board (Appendix 3), and oversees this through Cabinet.

The Council appoints 10 voting members to the Corporate Parenting Board, ie the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and 9 other elected members on the basis of a political balance. The Chair is appointed by the incumbent party as part of its annual appointing arrangements (the Cabinet Member for Children & Families is not eligible to be the Chair).

The Board also includes non-voting members and officers in attendance as detailed in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 3). Terms of Reference are agreed at full Council.

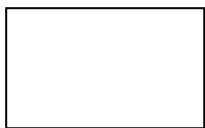
The Corporate Parenting Strategy is a public document which is approved at Cabinet and overseen by Corporate Parenting Board, with an annual progress report to Cabinet.

The function of the Corporate Parenting Board includes the authority to monitor and scrutinise performance of services for children and young people in care and care leavers on behalf of the Council. This Board requires Council services and partner agencies to attend Corporate Parenting Board meetings to account for performance and may also make visits to services to observe working at first-hand.

The Children in Care Council hold the Corporate Parenting Board to account for the Promise. Representatives attend Corporate Parenting Board meetings and have a standing item on the agenda and their views about all items on the agenda are encouraged. The Cabinet Member for Children & Families, Chair and other members of the Board meet with children and young people in care at their invitation at CICC meetings and other informal activities.

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1:** Care Leavers Charter



### **Appendix 2:** Corporate Parenting Delivery Plan



CPB Delivery Plan  
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### **Appendix 3:** Corporate Parenting Board sub group terms of reference:

#### Placements



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Steering Group.doc

#### Health & Wellbeing



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#### Education, Employment & Lifelong Learning



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Reference 2015.docx

#### Participation



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### Appendix 3: Corporate Parenting Board terms of reference



CPB Terms of  
Reference.docx