



# City of Westminster Cabinet Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> October 2019</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting strategy</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>City for All:</b>	<b>The Corporate Parenting Strategy will support the City for All priority of a caring and fairer city by supporting the most vulnerable within our community</b>
<b>Key Decision: Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>No financial implications are associated with decision</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Nicky Crouch Director of Family Services Tel: 7641 5324 Email: <a href="mailto:ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk">ncrouch@westminster.gov.uk</a></b>

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The corporate parenting strategy sets out the partnerships between the local authority departments, services and associated agencies who are collectively responsible for meeting the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers.
- 1.2 The expectation in this strategy is that we care about our looked after children, not just care for them.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council that the Corporate Parenting Strategy be adopted.
- 2.1 The corporate parenting plan is reviewed and refreshed annually to drive our corporate responsibility to ensure looked after children and care leavers get the very best experiences in life.

### **3. Reasons for Decision**

- 3.1 This corporate parenting strategy outlines our commitment to meeting the needs of Westminster's looked after children. It is our responsibility to ensure they receive excellent parenting which promotes good health and educational attainment; and to offer a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills and talents.
- 3.2 The corporate parenting strategy has been developed with young people in care and care leavers, who have helped us understand what is important to them. The underlying principles informing our approach are:
- Full participation, involvement and contribution of looked after children, young people and care leavers up to the age of 25
  - Ownership and leadership at a senior level, including elected members. Councillors and officers must have a clear understanding and awareness of the issues for looked after children and care leavers so that they can ensure that their responsibilities as corporate parents are reflected in all aspects of the work of the council.
  - All services have mechanisms in place to continually monitor and review the contribution they make to looked after children and care leavers.
  - The strategy is promoted across the council at all levels
  - Measurable commitment through the improvement in life chances of looked after children and care leavers. These outcomes are reported to and quality assured by the Corporate Parenting Board and Children in Care Council.

### **4. Background, including Policy Context**

- 4.1 In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. There are seven needs that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions to looked after children:
- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
  - To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
  - To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
  - To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
  - To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.

- For those young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, education or work; and
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Delivering the corporate parenting strategy should support family services to deliver support to looked after children and care leavers within the allocated budget and assist with the medium term financial plan.
- 5.2 The virtual school will continue to promote good education, training and employment opportunities for these children; managing within the dedicated schools grant amount.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 Local Authorities must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers. It should be understood applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
- 6.2 Statutory guidance: applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers was issued in February 2018 to help local authorities consider the kinds of services that may be offered when having regard to the corporate parenting principles.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact:**

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## **APPENDICES:**

**Appendix 1: The Corporate Parenting Strategy – April 2019**

**Appendix 2: The Corporate Parenting Plan**