

Our Promise to Looked After Children and Care Leavers

During 2018 we talked to our looked after children and care leavers about their expectations of us as corporate parents. Through these conversations we developed a promise to our young people. In implementing our corporate parenting strategy, we need to be mindful of this promise and do our utmost to act by it:

Our Corporate Parenting Priorities and Actions:

Taking account of the seven corporate parenting principles and the promise we have made to young people; we have identified several priorities for our corporate parenting strategy. With this strategy, we will support children and young people with:

Safeguarding

Helping children and young people be safe, feel safe and have stability in their lives is an essential role for all parents. We need to do everything we can to keep children safe, help them to recover from trauma they may have experienced and protect them from further harm.



Engaging with Young People – The User Voice

Members of the Children in Care Council groups can meet at their monthly sessions to discuss issues problems they want to stop, start or change in the care system. These are then made into Action Cards which get sent to the Corporate Parenting Board meetings. These action cards are taken seriously by professionals and we will do all we can to resolve the issue or problem raised. We work with children and young people in these groups to improve the care we give to all looked after children and care leavers.



There are many groups that are available to children and young people in Surrey. These include but are not limited to; groups for looked after children and care leavers, children with disabilities and young people accessing mental health services.

Assessment and Planning

We need to support children to live in a safe and comfortable environment wherever that is e.g. staying at home, moving to foster care or a being placed in a residential home. When we look after a child, we need to do so with a clear purpose - to provide stability and long-term care.



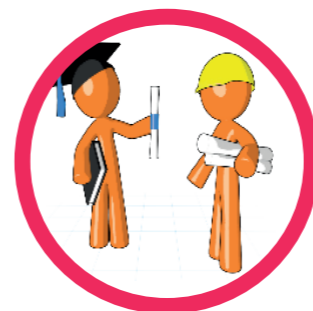
Placements

Placements are homes for our looked after children which play a key part in their care and upbringing. As young people move towards independence, we also have a wide variety of supported, semi-independent placements and permanent housing options for our young people.



Education, Employment and Training

We must focus our efforts to ensure that looked after children receive the best possible education. We want all our young people to enjoy and achieve in their education setting and be able to access further and higher education if they wish.



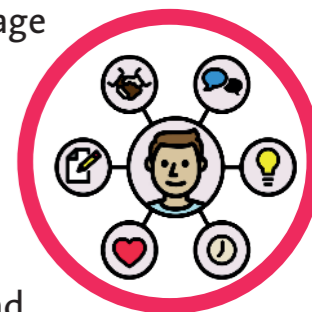
Health and Wellbeing

We must be attentive and vigilant towards the health needs of looked after children and people as they may need to access more specialist treatment. It is particularly important that looked after children can access and benefit from high quality child and adolescent mental health services.



Leisure, Culture and Life Skills

As cooperate parents we need to encourage and enable our children to participate in, and benefit from a wide range of leisure, sport and cultural opportunities such as attending youth clubs; learning how to play a musical instrument; playing for a sports team or pursuing other hobbies and interests.



Leaving Care

Leaving care, like leaving home, is a critical transition for our young people and supporting them through this transition into adulthood is a major responsibility for us as corporate parents.



Success Measures

Councils are accountable to central government for the outcomes for looked after children and young people and are required to submit data in annual reports. The LGA's publication 'Corporate Parenting- Resource pack' (2018) advises that reports should be published regularly on key indicators in relation to looked after children and young people including:

- Placement stability
- Children in care placed out of area or at a distance
- Health Data
- Educational attainment



This version of the Corporate Parenting Strategy has been created by young people for young people. To read the full Corporate Parenting Strategy please go to surreycc.gov.uk/corporateparenting

Corporate Parenting Principles

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven principles that we need to follow:

1. To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
5. Seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
6. For those children and young people to be safe and stable in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Our Vision and Values

Surrey's corporate parenting vision is:

To be the best corporate parents we can be, working together to provide children and young people in our care with happy and healthy childhoods, helping them reach and exceed their potential and aspirations, and supporting them into successful adulthood.

The values we bring to help us realise our vision are:

- We must be the strongest advocates for our looked after children and care leavers.
- We should have a positive regard for all looked after children and care leavers and make sure that all are nurtured, feel loved and supported.
- Looked after children and care leavers are 'our' children and young people and we must have strong ambitions and aim high for all.
- All our young people are individuals and unique and we must parent each child as such.
- We must build trusting relationships with our children and young people so that they feel able to give us their views and feel able to talk to us about their wishes and feelings.
- We must listen to our children and young people and take account of their views on all matters which affect them.
- We must be resilient and persistent parents with a consistent approach to doing the best for our children and young people with a willingness to 'go the extra mile'.
- We want to continuously improve as corporate parents and keep improving outcomes for our young people.

SURREY'S CHILDREN

Our care. Your future



Corporate Parenting Strategy

Introduction

In Surrey we know our Corporate Parenting Responsibilities are one of the most important duties of the Council. We hope this document will help both children and young people understand how we will make sure everyone understands their responsibilities and what part they need to take to deliver them.

Our vision for Surrey is to have a clear commitment to promote the wellbeing of children and to ensure that 'no child is left behind'. We want this for all children and young people in Surrey, but we have a special commitment to you as children and young people who are or were previously 'looked after' by Surrey County Council.

As your 'Corporate Parents' we understand you are all unique individuals, and we want to make sure we think carefully about that when we are making decisions which affect you.

We have a legal and moral duty towards you, like we have towards our own children. We need to be good parents who aim to be the best we can, we must help you thrive, be healthy, flourish; reach and exceed your potential at school, college, university and work. We also want to support our to care leavers become resilient and independent adults.

For the council to be a good corporate parent, or better, we need to have the highest ambitions for you as looked after children and young people and have a 'whole council' approach to your care and upbringing. This includes making sure all our staff, carers and elected members share this vision and commitment.



Mary Lewis

Cabinet Member for Children,
Young People and Families



Dave Hill

Executive Director of Children, Families,
Lifelong Learning and Culture