

CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT

Promoting the Role of County Councillor Champions for Care Leavers

Background: A number of Corporate Parenting Briefings presented to date have focussed explicitly upon the role of The Corporate Parent and have highlighted examples of activities and strategies to actively take the role seriously in supporting our children in care and care leavers. Indeed, the Briefing of February 2019 focussed specifically upon the Corporate Parenting Pledge, underpinned by the seven Corporate Parenting Principles which, by way of a reminder, are as follows:

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

A strong ethos of corporate parenting means that sense of vision and responsibility towards the children we look after within Gloucestershire, both when they are in and leaving care, evidenced by an embedded culture whereby everything possible is done to ensure the Council can be the best 'parent' possible for our children and young people.

This Briefing focusses specifically on our care leavers and aims to actively drive forward tangible strategies to be an effective champion of care leavers, driving their interests, as would be the case for a good parent, and holding Members, council officers and partners to account.

Following the visit to Gloucestershire by the DfE National Implementation Advisor (Children & Social Work Act 2017) Mark Riddell (MBE), a number of recommendations regarding how we could improve our offer to care leavers and strengthen our corporate parenting arrangements for care leavers were presented. Mark cited examples in other local authorities whereby Elected Members have taken on a champion role for care leavers regarding specific subject areas integral to The Local Care Leaver's Offer. This has enabled Members to keep in touch with the current offer and also to look at how they may be able to support development of that area both internally within the local authority but also with key partners. Mark's observations were that our local offer was good from the local authority perspective but that there was very little contribution from key partners, including the District Councils.

What is required?

As a result of the feedback we would like to identify 7 County Councillors who would be prepared to act as a champion for one area of our local offer.

The areas of the local offer we would like to link champions to are as follows:

- **Accommodation:** Care Leavers will be supported to access appropriate and suitable accommodation.
- **Employment:** Care Leavers will be supported to access appropriate employment.
- **Education & Training:** Care Leavers will be supported to access appropriate education & training.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Care Leavers will be supported to access appropriate health and wellbeing services.
- **Finances:** Care Leavers will be supported to access appropriate support to understand how to manage their finances.
- **Relationships:** Care Leavers will be supported to access appropriate support to help them maintain and develop positive relationships with family and social networks.
- **Participation in society:** Care Leavers will be supported to access appropriate support to link into activities and opportunities in their local area, this could involve joining groups, volunteering or becoming members of societies.

We are therefore seeking expressions of interest from County Councillors who have specific experience and/or skillsets in any of the above areas and who could actively support our care leavers accordingly. Champions will be supported to understand their area of interest and where relevant have access to data and information the service records to monitor progress. Updates and progress will be reported to the Corporate Parenting Group (CPG) and subsequently to this Council.

Cllr Richard Boyles
Cabinet Member – Children’s Safeguarding & Early Years

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