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# Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-24

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	12 December 2024
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Heather Codling
<b>Report Author:</b>	Karl Davis
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	EX4598

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This is the annual report of the West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel, detailing the Panel's activities during the 2023–24 period and outlining developments planned for the coming year.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide corporate parents with an overview of the panel's work, the council's commitments to children in care and care leavers, and to ensure corporate parenting duties are fulfilled.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Recommendation is that this annual report is noted, and that this supports further awareness raising around corporate parenting duties.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no financial implications arising from this report.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no HR arising from this report.
<b>Legal:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

<b>Risk Management:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no risk implications arising from this report.			
<b>Property:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no property implications arising from this report.			
<b>Policy:</b>	This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024 therefore there are no Policy implications arising from this report.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<p><b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</p>	X			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on inequality.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with children in care and care leavers, who often face inequalities and reviewing the service, and the work annual enables us to continue to address and challenge any inequalities.</p>

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<p><b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are no proposed decisions being requested therefore no impact on those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>However, this report highlights the work with care leavers. As a Council Care Leaver/Care Experienced is seen as a protected characteristic and this annual report review annual activity in ensuring young people with protected characteristics is fully supported.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no environmental impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>Health Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Health impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>ICT Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no ICT impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>Digital Services Impact:</b></p>				<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no Digital impact associated with this annual report.</p>

<p><b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b></p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This annual report reflects Council Priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Services we are proud of</li> <li>2) Fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all</li> </ol> <p>The annual report sets out the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and its duties to children in care and care leavers, building a service we are proud off and ensuring children in care and care leavers and support to thrive and have the right opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Core Business:</b></p>	<p>X</p>			<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, which outlines core business of the Corporate Parenting Panel.</p>
<p><b>Data Impact:</b></p>		<p>X</p>		<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, therefore no data impact associated with this annual report.</p>
<p><b>Consultation and Engagement:</b></p>	<p>This is an annual report reflecting activity during 2023-2024, this will include information, feedback from partners, children, young people, families, and carers.</p> <p>This report has been presented to Corporate Parenting Panel</p>			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 Corporate parenting involves promoting the same outcomes any good parent would want for their child.
- 4.2 This responsibility, mandated for local authorities and their partners, is set out in legislation, government publications, and statutory guidance.
- 4.3 During the 2023-24 financial year, the Corporate Parenting Panel met quarterly. The panel is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families Service and a care-experienced young person.

- 4.4 The Panel received and scrutinized several reports over this period concerning children in care or care leavers. This included annual reports from:
- Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Service - Independent Reviewing Officer
  - Health of Children in Care - ICB Annual Report
  - Fostering Annual Report
  - Adopt Thames Valley Annual Report
  - Virtual School Annual Report
  - Local Authority Designated Officer Annual Report
  - Foster Carer Independent Reviewing Officer Report
  - Youth Justice Plan
- 4.5 Each Panel meeting included a review of comprehensive data, providing oversight of the lived experience of children in local authority care. This data covered social care, education, and health information, fostering robust discussion and scrutiny by panel members.
- 4.6 Although there is more to accomplish, the Panel has effectively ensured that the voices of children and young people are heard, with West Berkshire foster carers as active panel members. A care-experienced young person serves as co-chair, adding critical insights and maintaining a focus on outcomes for children and young people.
- 4.7 In several instances, young people contributed to the reports and presentations shared with the Board, especially on items concerning leaving care. The children's council, 'R'Vue,' attended two Panel meetings, providing insight into their activities and sharing their experiences.
- 4.8 This is West Berkshire's first Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report.

## **5 Supporting Information**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1 This Annual Report of the West Berkshire Corporate Parenting Panel for 2023-2024 is designed to share information on the Panel's work more strategically and to raise awareness.
- 5.2 As a Local Authority, corporate parenting is a shared responsibility, and positive corporate parenting is already underway. However, there is always room for improvement to ensure our children receive the best support.

## Background

### What is corporate parenting?

5.3 Local authorities and their partners must ensure that care-experienced children and young people are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility, called 'corporate parenting,' applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families. Corporate parenting is the duty of social workers, health services, housing departments, police, schools, and other service agencies supporting children in care, including young people leaving care.

### Legal background

5.4 The collective responsibility for local authorities was first established in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

5.5 The role of councils as effective corporate parents has been highlighted in several government publications and legislative updates, including:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Other relevant regulations and guidance

5.6 Other legislation and statutory guidance that determine our duties, include:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Other relevant regulations and guidance

### Principles of corporate parenting

5.7 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 outlines seven principles for corporate parenting, requiring local authorities to:

1. Act in the best interests of the children and young people, promoting their physical and mental health and well-being.
2. Encourage them to express their views, wishes, and feelings.
3. Take into account their views, wishes, and feelings.
4. Help them access and benefit from services provided by the local authority and partners.

- 5. Promote high aspirations and seek the best outcomes.
- 6. Ensure their safety and stability in home, relationships, and education.
- 7. Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.
- 5.8 The Act also mandates local authorities to publish a 'Local Offer to Care Leavers,' extending adviser support up to age 25 and enhancing education guidance.
- 5.9 In West Berkshire, we strive for the best outcomes for all our children, young people, and families, ensuring corporate parenting is understood and practiced across the Council to enable effective services.

## 6 Proposals

- 6.1 It is recommended that this Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report is noted for information and for members of Exec to reflect on their role as a corporate parent.
- 6.2 As this is an annual report there are no implications identified.

## 7 Other options considered.

- 7.1 No other option considered, Annual Reports provider overview of service delivery.

## 8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This inaugural Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report demonstrates how corporate parenting duties have been met over the past year. It outlines the Panel's activities and governance related to children and young people.
- 8.2 The report reflects positive achievements, and the services working with children and young people show dedication and commitment to making a difference.
- 8.3 The report also identifies priority areas for 2024-2025.

## 9 Appendices

- 9.1 Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2023-2024

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### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval.
  - Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council.
  - Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position.
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Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees,  
Task Groups within preceding six months.

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

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