

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

<i>Name of Committee</i>	The Cabinet
<i>Date of Committee</i>	23rd November 2006
<i>Report Title</i>	Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2009

<i>Summary</i>	<p>The report describes the collective responsibilities that Warwickshire County Council and partner agencies have towards children and young people in care of the Local Authority. It is being presented at time when the profile of children in care has been raised by the recent launch of the Green Paper <i>Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care</i>. The policy is about ensuring that children in care are secure and supported to achieve well and have full and fulfilled lives. The document sets out the key principles and responsibilities of agencies in working together for the benefit of children in care. It further outlines an ambitious Action Plan to progress services for looked after children.</p>
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<i>Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]</i>	No
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<i>Background papers</i>	Initially a workstream within Children Act Project Teamx
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<i>CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-</i>	Details to be specified
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Other Committees	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- Local Member(s) Not applicable
- Other Elected Members CYP&F O&S Spokespersons for information:
Cllr Helen McCarthy – *“I commend the Policy, Strategy and Action Plan”*
Cllr Richard Grant – *“support the Action Plan”*
Cllr Jill Dill-Russell
- Cabinet Member Cllr Izzi Seccombe – *“welcome this report coming to Cabinet”*
- Other Cabinet Members consulted
- Chief Executive
- Legal Richard Freeth – no comments to make
- Finance David Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources – no comments to make
- Other Strategic Directors
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals Elected Members on the Corporate Parenting Policy Panel

FINAL DECISION **NO**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council 12th December 2006
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

The Cabinet – 23rd November 2006

Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan
2006-2009

Report of the Strategic Director for Children,
Young People and Families

Recommendation:

That Cabinet consider the Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2009 and recommend its adoption by the County Council.

Background

1. The Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2009, which is attached at **Appendix A**, has been developed through the work of a multi-agency project group. The document reflects the collective responsibilities that Warwickshire County Council and partner organisations have towards the children and young people in care of the Local Authority.
2. Corporate Parenting responsibilities were highlighted by the Government in 2003 *If it were my child...A councillors guide to being a good corporate parent*. It is about making collective efforts to ensure that children in care are supported by all agencies in securing stable and fulfilled life experiences so that their opportunities and outcomes more equitably match those of their peers in the wider community.
3. The development of the policy was particularly influenced by the children and young people who attended the Elected Members Seminar on 18th July. A similar event for foster carers on 22nd May also focused attention on those issues that are important to young people and those who are primarily involved in their day-to-day care.
4. The Action Plan further supports the developments and progress that have taken place within Children Services and is presented for approval at a time when the focus on looked after children has been raised by the recent Green

Paper Care Matters: Transforming the lives of Children and Young People in Care.

MARION DAVIS
Strategic Director for Children,
Young People and Families

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8th November 2006

WARWICKSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

CORPORATE PARENTING POLICY, STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

2006 – 2009

“Don't treat us like kids. Treat us like our age.”

*Working for
Warwickshire*



The following two poems were presented to Warwickshire County Council elected members on 18 July 2006 by Vicki and Christine, two young people who had been in care. Their words provide a powerful starting point for the Corporate Parenting Policy. They place children and young people at the centre of a policy and strategy that aims to enhance the care that is offered to children from elected members and across individual, professional and agency divides. The poems remind us that decisions about corporate parenting are decisions about children and young people - their lives, their hopes, fears and aspirations.

IT CAN ONLY GET WORSE

Christine July 2006

What if this insecure and unstable person is one of the closest people to you,
One you share a special bond with?
One you should respect, honour and cherish your whole life?
The one who brought you into this challenging world?
The one you visit every Sunday for tea and biscuits?
The one you run to every time you have a problem and the one who picks you up
when you're down?
The one who embarrasses you in front of your mates?
Makes you laugh in the way only she can?
Gets you out of trouble and protects you against all odds?
What happens when the person you hate the most,
Wish they could die the most - and never forgive is
Your Mother?

PAIN

Vicki July 2006

I was pain and I know the pain was in me,
But no-one could see it.
The pain was bad and I knew I was going to die.
But how do you tell your loved ones you are going to die?
My pain was in my soul and I knew it was dying.
I cried for help but no one listened to me.
People think because I was a child that I didn't know what I needed.
I know what I needed – lovely and kind people.
People who are going to hug me and kiss me goodnight.
I was a child in pain and I needed help.
Please someone help me please someone help me.

I wanted my mummy and daddy and my brothers and sister,
But I was not allowed to see them or go home.
But the pain was there and it is always there.
I needed an angel or someone to help me,
But I could not find them so I prayed and prayed,
And then my angel found me under a tree.
A tree of hope and love and peace.
A tree of no pain and I was happy for a while.
My angel played with me and sung to me and hugged and kissed me,
But then the monster that had given me pain made me sad again.
I was looking for my angel but I could not find her and I was sad again.
I wanted to kill myself to get the pain away,
But the monster came and I saw what the monster looked like – it was me.
I had for years been running away from myself and I did not know why.

I looked at myself and saw – yes people hurt me – but by not talking.
I was killing myself for the pain in me was there from all those years ago,
And when I looked at myself again I saw that I was once happy.
But then I was with my family at home,
I looked at myself again and saw I could be happy if I let the past go.
For then if you let go of the past the pain sometimes goes away.
But at the same time you can look back on past pain,
To help you on the way to your future –
For there is happiness in the world.

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CORPORATE PARENTING THE POLICY, STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ACTION PLAN 2006 - 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate Parenting describes the collective responsibilities that Warwickshire County Council and partner organisations have towards children and young people in care of the Local Authority. These include children accommodated by voluntary agreement with their parent/s, children on statutory orders, children in shared care arrangements, those remanded into care by the court and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. The policy is about ensuring that these children and young people are secure and supported to achieve well, that they are encouraged to have full and fulfilled lives that raise their self esteem and confidence. It is ultimately about preparing them for adulthood and future independence.

To achieve these aspirations children and young people in care require fair and equal access to education, health, leisure, employment and housing. These services have to be able to respond to the particular needs and requirements of children in care.

As Corporate Parents elected members and agencies need to ask two questions;

If this were my child or young person, would it be good enough for them?

If I were that child or young person, would it have been good enough for me?

(DfES "If it were my child.....A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent." 2003)

This document seeks to answer these two questions by clearly setting out the commitments that organisations in Warwickshire have towards children in care. It describes principles, legal requirements, and responsibilities. The Action Plan provides a focus as it lists areas where service improvements are needed in Warwickshire so that children in care can reach their potential. It also identifies how partner agencies should meet their respective responsibilities.

The document is designed for elected members, managers, practitioners, carers and children and young people. The document has been agreed and is supported by all the partner agencies represented on the Warwickshire Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES AND VALUES UNDERLYING CORPORATE PARENTING

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child became international law in 1990. It provides an internationally agreed framework of minimum standards necessary for the well being of the child and young person. The Warwickshire Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership have adopted the convention.

Warwickshire County Council and partner agencies also agree the following principles and values that underpin its approach to Corporate Parenting. To:

- Provide care, a home and access to health and education and other public services to all children and young people to according to their needs.
- Provide a care through both nurture and setting appropriate boundaries, appropriate to the child or young person's age and development. Carers and others working with children and young people will be tolerant, dependable and available.
- Protect and educate children and young people about risks and will encourage constructive and appropriate friendship
- Celebrate and share their children and young people their achievements, and provide support and encouragement where they need extra help.
- Recognise and respect their growth to independence, being tolerant and supportive if they make mistakes.
- Provide support, advice and practical help when required.
- Advocate on their behalf and promote their interests and well being in all circumstances
- Have aspirations and ambitions for children and young people by encouraging and supporting their efforts to reach their potential through education, training or employment.
- Provide financial support, and celebrating special occasions that respect the child or young person's religion and cultural heritage.
- Encourage, enable and review contact with family members as appropriate.
- Help children and young people to feel part of the local community through contact and involvement with neighbours and local groups.
- Be proactive in anticipating and intervening in any aspects of the lives of children or young people where difficulties are likely to arise.

3. SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

This section sets out particular responsibilities elected members, staff groups and carers have to children in care.

(i) Warwickshire County Council Elected Members

Elected members have to ensure that public services used or needed by children in care are of a high quality, integrated and take account of their needs.

Elected members will ensure that they are fully informed of the issues facing children in care. This is achieved by understanding the characteristics of children in care and by knowing how well services are performing in meeting their assessed needs. This requires an awareness and understanding of the

- Care and placement arrangements
- Child protection and safety policies and procedures,
- Education performance and achievements
- Responsiveness of health services,
- Preparation for leaving care arrangements and housing needs
- Arrangements to prevent children in care from getting into trouble.

Elected members will be supported in meeting their responsibilities by Local Authority staff. They will provide leadership that will encourage and support partnership and joined up working. This will ensure that funding, commissioning and priority setting deliver the best combination of services for looked after children and young people.

Elected members will scrutinise and monitor services provided and will oversee the implementation the Action Plan.

(ii) Foster Carers

Foster carers will be approved and supported in the following

- Providing a safe and comfortable home for children in their care
- Giving children in their care time and attention.
- Ensuring that discipline is reasonable and appropriate and in line with provisions of the Foster Care Agreement
- Being available or ensuring appropriate child care arrangements are in place for the child at key times of the day - before and after school and during school holidays.
- Working positively with the birth parents and other family members.

- Working as part of a team with others who share responsibility for the child or young person's care, welfare and development
- Respecting the child or young person's confidentiality and by keeping information safe
- Furthering their own development and understanding of the needs of children in care through supervision and training and development opportunities.
- Providing care that support and promotes the child or young person's culture, race, religion, language, disability and sexual orientation.

(Taken from "Time to Care")

(iii) Social Workers and Leaving Care Workers

In relation to children in care the social workers and leaving care worker have responsibilities in the following area:

Assessment:

The social worker will be responsible for ensuring that the child and young person's needs are properly assessed and that these are properly represented in the Care Plan.

Planning:

The social worker has the key role in setting and establishing plans for children in care. First consideration will be given to returning the child or young person to their parent's care where this is safe to do so, or other family members. Where this is not achievable efforts will be made to secure the child's placement within an alternative family setting such as adoption or foster care. Where a child or young person remains in care plans will also address leaving care arrangements.

In care planning the social worker will **listen** to the views and wishes of the child or young person and those of their family members. The views of others engaged in providing services to children in care will also be sought.

The social worker will ensure that through the care planning process children and young people

- are healthy and their health needs are appropriately assessed and met
- are securely accommodated within family situations or in other appropriate caring environments
- have access to and are supported in a full range of educational services, whether this is in schools, colleges or other specialist alternative provision
- have access to leisure and sporting facilities which enable their interests, skills confidence and self esteem to develop.

The social worker will also

- Represent the child or young person in negotiating with other agencies and professionals where they are required to meet their obligations in corporate parenting.
- Actively demonstrate to the child or young person that they are cared for and valued through having regular contact with the child or young person.
- Arrange ongoing support and care for child or young people when they either return home to their families or leave care as young adults.

(iv) Teachers and Education Staff

**“Children in public care are our children.
We hold their future in our hands, and education is the key to that future”.**

All staff working in education, whether based in schools or local authority services have responsibilities towards looked after children. These responsibilities are clearly defined within **‘The Education of Young People in Public Care (DoH/DfES, 2000)** and **Statutory Guidance on the Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Education of Looked After Children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004’ (DfES 2005).**

Responsibilities cover the following range of activities

- Admissions to schools
- School transport
- Special Educational Needs and Inclusion
- School Improvement
- School Exclusions
- Education Social Work
- Educational Psychology
- Educational Support to Schools

The key principle is that the particular needs of looked after children are recognised and prioritised within the work of the service or sector, and that an appropriate service or individual support is offered whenever necessary.

The statutory duty does not directly apply to schools and their staff. However, there is an expectation, clearly stated within the duty, that schools and their staff will ‘take a proactive approach to co-operating with and supporting local authorities in discharging this duty’ (DfES 2005).

Within Warwickshire the TELAC Service (The Education of Looked After Children), act as the interface between social work, education and school staff, working to ensure that looked after children received the help and support they need to achieve their full potential.

TELAC teachers monitor the progress of looked after children in Warwickshire schools and act as a first point of contact for queries and ensure that all Warwickshire schools have an allocated Designated Teacher for Looked After Children.

(v) Health Sector Managers and Clinicians

The Department of Health in **‘Promoting the Health of Looked After Children’ (2002)** sets out the particular responsibilities health workers have towards looked after children.

Chief Executives of Primary Care Trusts (PCT’s) are charged with ensuring that health sector children’s services are planned, commissioned and delivered in collaboration with other partner agencies, taking account of the particular health needs of looked after children, and that priority is given to looked after children.

Designated doctors and nursing staff are appointed to provide strategic leadership and advice across Warwickshire on health care structures and processes for looked after children. These include ensuring that

- quality health assessments are undertaken that inform health plans
- appropriate treatments or therapies are delivered to looked after children

This is achieved through the agreed integrated Health Care Pathway that is used and monitored across Warwickshire.

Health sector clinicians with responsibilities for healthy living and public health promotions will ensure that looked after children and young people receive information and advice about healthy lifestyles.

4. OUR POLICY: WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

This section broadly outlines the approaches being taken to ensure that children in care can reach their full potential. These aspirations have been centred on the five Every Child Matters outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being.

Responsibilities as corporate parenting require everyone working with or on behalf of for children in care, to ensure that the five outcomes for children and young people are addressed either directly and indirectly.

BEING HEALTHY

Being healthy includes initiatives to support the physical, mental and emotional and sexual health of looked after children and young people. It also includes helping looked after children and young people to pursue healthy lifestyles and avoid taking illegal drugs.

(a) Being Physically Healthy

All children in care are registered with a general practitioner and dentist for routine health care and to address acute medical or dental problems. The Integrated Health Care Pathway ensures that comprehensive health assessments are completed for looked after children

(b) Being Mentally and Emotionally Healthy

“You need to say how you are feeling.”

The experience of mental health problems is more likely amongst looked after children and young people due to their previous experiences of neglect or trauma. Effective preventive mental health care reduces the likelihood of looked after children experiencing many of the problems associated with poor mental health, such as non-school attendance, educational failure, juvenile crime and placement disruption.

Good practice in community based services ensures that services to children are provided within their usual networks at school or college, community groups or through family and friends.

Socially excluded children and young people including those with particular mental health needs (including black and ethnic minority children) unaccompanied asylum seekers, refugee children and children and young people with disabilities require priority in the provision of local mental health services.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - Looked After Children Services aims to provide timely and dedicated support to looked after children and their carers. Adult mental health services provide support to the leaving care service in helping looked after young people with mental health problems achieve independence as they enter adulthood.

Health, social care and educational professionals and foster carers receive training in the early identification of mental health problems and on how to promote the emotional well being and resilience of children in care. Advice and specialist help is available on how to deal with behavioural difficulties.

(c) Being Sexually Healthy

The Sex and Relationships Education Policy for looked after children in Warwickshire was approved in 2003. It outlines how foster carers and social work staff should work with young people on issues relating to personal relationships and sexual health.

Warwickshire County Council and the Warwickshire Primary Care Trusts commissioned 'Respect Yourself' a sexual health guide for young people in Coventry and Warwickshire. This includes information on 'Saying No', talking to partners about safer sex and keeping safe. It also and provides a guide to local contraception and sexually transmitted infection services.

(d) Healthy Lifestyles

The National Healthy Care Standard provides social care, health agencies and partner agencies with the basis for promoting health and healthy environments for children and young people. The Local Children's Strategic Partnerships Board provides the vehicle for ensuring that local plans integrate the opportunities for children and young people to develop knowledge and skills to maintain health, with adequate access to health care and prevention of poor health. Children and young people require access services, to have the knowledge and skills to communicate their health needs to others and to be able to take responsibility for their own health.

Healthier lifestyles for children in care is promoted by

- Having access to good nutrition with a balanced diet
- Having five pieces of fruit and vegetable a day
- Having access to leisure facilities

We want to promote health and wellbeing in consultation with looked after children using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as the framework. The remit of this consultation would be broad and will need support and action as appropriate from various agencies within the Local Authority, NHS and the voluntary community sector.

(e) Choosing not to take illegal drugs

Looked after children and care leavers are more likely to engage in drug use, and at a younger age than other children and young people. Young people say they want to increase their knowledge and understanding about drugs and develop their skills to access support and cope when the situation arises.

It is planned that the children and young people's Drugs Services will deliver across health and social care agencies. Support is given to staff and carers who have a key role in providing information and support to young people on drug related issues.

STAYING SAFE

“I don’t understand why I had to move... No-one told me.”

Corporate parenting requires safe arrangements to be put in place for children in care. This includes

- Undertaking statutory monitoring including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on all staff and carers who have contact with looked after children.
- Employing qualified and registered social work staff to work directly with looked after children
- Staff members having a named supervisor and a formal supervision arrangement in place providing professional and managerial guidance and monitoring.
- Staff members completing an Annual Performance Review about their professional development and training needs to be able to meet and ensure continued quality care to children.
- The vigorous and extensive preparation and competency based assessment of prospective foster carers in line with the requirements of the Fostering Regulations 2002 and National Minimum Fostering Standards
- The annual review of foster carers suitability and ongoing training and development opportunities to ensure that foster carers appropriately meet the needs of children in placements.

Residential care or residential school establishments must meet the regulatory requirements and standards and be registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), before a child is placed. Registration will ensure that all aspects of life in the residential establishment, including the safety of the physical environment and standards of care are met and that staff have been subject to a range of references, including the CRB checks. Residential schools have to be approved by the Department for Education and Skills, or have their particular placement approved by them.

Subject to assessment and the views having been sought from all professionals involved with the child, or who may have knowledge of the child and/or family, children who are subject to Care Orders to the Local Authority, may be placed in the care of parents or with other persons with parental responsibility with the approval of the Senior Manager in Children in Need Services.

Children in care have their circumstances reviewed at least every six months by an Independent Reviewing Officer (I.R.O.). The review examines the plans developed for the child and seeks the views of the child in addition to those people involved in providing for his or her care and education. The Independent Reviewing Officer is tasked with ensuring that the child is receiving all the appropriate services which maintain and develop their health, development and safety.

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING

The educational achievement of looked after children remains unacceptably low, and a duty is now placed on Local Authorities to promote educational achievement for looked after children.

“Although some do well, looked after children as a group have poor experiences of education and very low educational attainment. Their educational outcomes, in terms of the proportion who reach the average levels of attainment expected of seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen year olds, remain significantly lower than for all children. A relatively small number of looked after children progress to higher education.”

DfES Guidance on Section 52 of the Children Act 2004. 2005

The aspiration is for children in care have positive, stable and lasting experiences of school so that each child and young person is able to reach their educational potential.

Within Warwickshire this is promoted by the TELAC service that

- Ensures that all looked after children have an effective, high quality Personal Education Plans (PEP),
- Actively supports schools and raises their awareness about the needs of looked after children with governing bodies and providing support for designated teachers,
- Provides information and training on roles and responsibilities associated with corporate parenting for educational practitioners and people on governing bodies, and
- Supports the educational achievements of young people leaving care into training, work experience and further and higher education.

New duties on Local Authorities are expected to ensure that every child has the best start in life, these will also apply to looked after children living with their birth families. It is the Government's intention to provide all families with children up to the age of fourteen an affordable, flexible, high quality childcare place that meets their circumstances.

High quality early years education provides the best start for all children and enhances the possibility of higher levels of achievement throughout a child's life. In addition to this, high quality childcare can provide a sound basis for establishing friendships, exploring new opportunities and engaging in enjoyable activities. For

looked after children this provides many benefits and can enable foster carers to ensure that the child in their care has early year's opportunities whilst allowing them to retain their own work commitments.

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

Children and young people in care need to be actively engaged in their communities by forming positive relationships and friendships. In decision making processes such as their looked after reviews, conferences and other participation initiatives they are empowered to make a positive contribution and assist in service developments.

Ambitious targets have been set to increase the attendance and/or contribution of children in care in the review process. Co-chairing between a young person and their independent review officer has been developed arising from the SIGMA initiative (Service Improvement Generated through Management Action) The independent advice and advocacy service supports children and young people in attending reviews and child protection conferences by ensuring individual wishes and feelings are represented.

Participation events such as the one entitled 'You Matter!' gave looked after children the opportunity to express their views about the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes. SIGMA also provides an opportunity for young people to meet with senior managers either to their individual circumstances or general issues about being in care in Warwickshire.

Young people have participated in staff selection processes within the Children, Young People's and Families Directorate. They have also been involved in the commissioning of services for children and further developments will be built on these experiences.

Care experienced young people have been delivering the Total Respect training across the authority for staff, managers and elected and co-facilitate training on children's participation for foster carers. This is now part of the overall Fostering Training programme in Warwickshire. The Leaving Care Forum has a countywide profile and provides a direct route for carer leavers to contribute to practice and policy.

In 2005 the 'Recognising Achievement Award' event proved to be a very successful event and well received by young people. This annual event is an opportunity to celebrate the individual successes of our looked after children and young people.

Warwickshire County Council and partner agencies have adopted a joint Participation Strategy called "Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn." This strategy highlights the need for active involvement of users of services in the planning, commissioning, monitoring and reviewing of services. It includes the implementation of the participation auditing exercise "Hear by Right", it further supports Youth Councils, Area Youth Forums and school councils within schools. It creates the context for the active participation of looked after children in the design of all the services that affect their lives.

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELL BEING

More opportunities need to be made available across Warwickshire for looked after children to prepare for economic independence. There is a strong connection between home stability and the ability to get and sustain employment and training opportunities. Care leavers who experience homelessness following leaving care find it harder to obtain and retain work, training and employment and to remain in contact with Connexions and other professional support.

There are a number of opportunities and incentives available for looked after children in preparing for long term employment. These include

- The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- A protocol with local further education colleges within Warwickshire and Coventry, supported and scrutinised by the regional Learning and Skills Council, is supporting care leavers in applying and attending courses.
- Warwickshire County Council funds the “People into Employment” project based in Nuneaton providing specific employment advice for the unemployed.
- There are specialist Connexions advisers to assist young people with learning disabilities to attend local provision or to access residential further education where local colleges are not able to meet need.
- National funding from Care to Learn is available locally for young parents to return to Education with childcare provided.

The recent introduction of the Child Trust Fund is a national drive by government to encourage all children to begin saving. We have robust reporting arrangements to the Inland Revenue to ensure that all newly looked after children are in receipt of a Child Trust Fund, who ensure that one is set up for the child.

More needs to be done to assist care leavers with the range of challenges presented in moving towards independence. The county council, partner agencies, including district and borough councils, the health sector and independent sector providers could become “family firms” providing work experience and employment opportunities for looked after children across the county. The Environment and Economy Directorate are well placed to coordinate such schemes to ensure a greater take up of opportunities for care leavers, and to advise on unmet need for employment and training.

In 2005/06, 5 young people left care and entered university and it is anticipated that this number will increase. Strategies are to be developed to support looked after children entering key stage 4 so that GCSE results amongst the looked after population can improve providing them with a sound basis for further education, training and employment.

5. OUR STRATEGY: HOW WE WILL TAKE THE POLICY FORWARD

(i) Governance and Reporting Arrangements

This policy document represents a joint agency commitment to children and young people in care across Warwickshire. The governance of this policy and associated services rests, in the first instance, with Warwickshire County Council through the Children, Young Peoples and Families Directorate, the Cabinet and full Council.

The partnership arrangements for corporate parenting are governed through the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership Executive Board, and informed by the Partnership Forum.

(ii) Elected Members Standing Group

It is proposed that there is a standing group of elected members with responsibilities to help take the policy forward by

- Providing strategic direction for the continuing development of corporate parenting,
- Providing advice on the developing relationship between elected members and children in care
- Progress monitoring the Corporate Parenting Action Plan
- Engaging with looked after children, carers and staff groups with corporate parenting responsibilities, and
- Supporting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in examining the outcomes for looked after children.

The Corporate Parenting Elected Members Standing Group will be supported by a **Corporate Parenting Joint Agency Management Group** charged with project managing and overseeing the progress of the Action Plan, and helping develop corporate parenting arrangement further.

HOW WE WILL MONITOR PROGRESS

The Corporate Parenting Elected Members Standing Group will receive periodic reports of what progress is being made from the Corporate Parenting Joint Agency Managers Group. Children in care will be invited to comment on the impact that the changes arising from the Action Plan has had on their lives.

HOW WE WILL REVIEW AND UPDATE OUR POLICY

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the impact of the Action Plan on improving the performance outcomes for looked after children in 2008, when the overall policy, strategy and Action Plan will require updating.

OUR CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN: PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT: OUTCOMES

OUTCOME	ACTION	TO BE ACHIEVED BY:	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY/CIES	TIMESCALE
<p>Being Healthy</p>	<p>The Integrated Care Pathway approach is introduced across the county for all looked after children.</p>	<p>The appointment of dedicated assessment services for children in care in the Leamington, Warwick and Stratford districts of the county</p>	<p>Warwickshire PCT</p>	<p>October 2007</p>
		<p>All children in care have their health needs adequately assessed and services are provided to meet assessed needs.</p>	<p>Warwickshire PCT</p>	<p>April 2007</p>
	<p>That there are positive outcomes resulting from dedicated CAMHS service for looked after children being introduced.</p>	<p>Using identified health needs of children, develop appropriate support, guidance and training to carers and staff on health issues highlighted</p>	<p>Warwickshire PCT</p>	<p>October 2007</p>
		<p>In line with the Service Specification for the CAMHS-LAC Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children in care receive timely CAMHS services according to the assessment of their need for intervention. ➤ Carers and others have prompt access to CAMHS advice 	<p>Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership Trust/CYP&F</p>	<p>April 2007</p>
	<p>Arrangements are put in place to ensure that looked after children have access to initiatives supporting health and emotional well being.</p>	<p>To ensure a consistent approach a review of direct work services to children will determine whether support is provided in the most appropriate way that supports</p>	<p>CYP&F</p>	<p>July 2007</p>

		<p>children in dealing with trauma and in developing resilience.</p> <p>Training is delivered to staff and carers about the impact of early emotional trauma and how resilience may be nurtured for children in long term care</p> <p>With the contribution of young people a development plan will be devised and implemented that will promote healthy lifestyle choices and wellbeing for children in care in line with the UN Convention Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>CYP&F</p> <p>Warwickshire PCT/CYP&F</p>	<p>July 2007</p> <p>January 2008</p>
Staying Safe	Continuing priority is given to reducing placement instability and providing care arrangements to meet the principles of this policy.	<p>Implementing a Permanency Planning Protocol and the use of a Toolkit that will focus attention on planning for the child's longer term placement needs , that will ensure that placements proceed on the basis of preparation and the involvement of the child/young person.</p> <p>A review of the arrangements for recruiting, supporting and training permanency/long term foster carers will determine whether different arrangements are required that will promote stability outcomes</p> <p>A review and the development of strategies that will prevent the disruption</p>	<p>CYP&F</p> <p>CYP&F</p> <p>CYP&F</p>	<p>April 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>July 2007</p>

		<p>of foster placements by ensuring that the support needs of the child and carers throughout the duration of the placement are addressed.</p> <p>Where children are placed out of county the principles and outcome statements in the policy will be strengthened and reflected in the commissioning and contracting arrangements.</p>	CYP&F	April 2008
Enjoying and Achieving	Ensure that looked after children are reaching their full educational potential, both in key stage and examination performance and using all opportunities provided in schools.	The TELAC service ensures effective ways of working that will optimise the amount of educational support to looked after children thereby reducing exclusion.	CYP&F (TELAC)	September 2007
		Looked after children at key stage 2 and 3 will be entered for end of key stage assessments unless exceptional circumstances apply.	CYP&F (TELAC)	April 2007
		That a strategy will be put in place that will closely track and ensure appropriate support and intervention is coordinated on behalf of the child ensuring effective communication between the child or young persons carer, social worker, school and TELAC service at critical educational 'key' stages particularly in the lead up to key stage 4 (GCSE)	CYP&F (TELAC)	January 2007

	<p>The children in care have access to social and leisure opportunities to help them grow and mature.</p>	<p>Ensuring that a current Personal Educational Plan (PEP) is available at each looked after review and is reviewed accordingly.</p>	<p>CYP&F (TELAC)</p>	<p>January 2007</p>
		<p>Increasing the number of children in care who enter further education or employment through strengthened Pathway Planning and multi-agency arrangements</p>	<p>CYP&F (TELAC)</p>	<p>September 2007</p>
		<p>To develop systems and track post 16 education and training for young people to ensure that they access facilities that support their ongoing educational development</p>	<p>CYP&F</p>	<p>April 2007</p>
		<p>The care planning process will ensure that the child/young person has access to opportunities that support their development, interests and confidence</p>	<p>CYP&F</p>	<p>April 2007</p>
		<p>To review the arrangements for providing continuing support and life skills training for young people during the transition to independent living and leaving care</p>	<p>CYP&F</p>	<p>September 2007</p>
		<p>Key managers within the county council will put in place an action plan that will deliver social and leisure opportunities for children in care</p>	<p>CYP&F</p>	<p>September 2007</p>

Positive Contribution	There is evidence that looked after children play an active part in their reviews.	The involvement of young people in their reviews either directly at the review meeting or independently outside of the formal review increases to 90%	CYP&F	September 2007
		The circumstances of non involvement in the review process are known and recorded/reported	CYP&F	September 2007
		The Consultation Booklet for looked after children about the review process is revised and distributed	CYP&F	September 2007
	Looked After children will be involved in helping design services and practices to meet their needs, and will be in regular discussions with elected members to ensure that their responsibilities are being met.	To continue initiatives that seek to ascertain the views of young people about their care experience	CYP&F	April 2007
		To train and support young people in working with the CYP&F Directorate in service development	CYP&F	September 2007
		To develop opportunities for elected members to meet young people in care	CYP&F/ Elected members	April 2007
		To explore the opportunities for developing a befriending/mentoring scheme for young people in care and leaving care.	CYP&F	September 2007

Achieving Economic Well Being	There is a coordinated programme of training, work experience and employment opportunities for looked after children provided through the county council.	All young people leaving full time education receive information about training and employment opportunities available across the county council and partner agencies	WCC	January 2008
	That looked after children are provided with care and supported housing arrangements that reduce exposure to harmful influences.	Through working with local partners and organisations to plan for and implement a housing strategy that will meet the future placement needs of children leaving care	CYP&F	January 2008
		To review, develop and improve the managerial coordination of the supported lodgings placement scheme	CYP&F	September 2007

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Contributors to Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

(i) Corporate Parenting Project Group

Members

Chris Hallett	Head of Service for Children in Need (Policy Sponsor)
David Allan	Assistant Head of Service (Project Manager)
Martin Cliff	Assistant Head of Service (Lead -Looked After Children)
Cath Halsall	Head of The Education for Looked After Children Team
Rebecca Hale	Planning Officer, Children's Planning Team
John Murphy	Independent Advice and Advocacy Service (Barnados)
Dr Doug Simkiss	Consultant Paediatrician North Warwickshire PCT
Lyn Unsworth	Team Leader Leaving Care Service (Warwick District)
Norma Smeaton	Assistant Head of Service for Early Years
Dharmista Harkisan-Hall	Professional Assistant

Elected members involved through the Corporate Parenting Policy Panel

Cllr Izzi Seccombe
Cllr Peter Fowler
Cllr Anita Macauley
Cllr Richard Grant
Cllr Katherine King
Cllr Jill Dill-Russell

Groups Involved in informing the production of the Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

Two SIGMA Groups of children and young people
Leaving Care Forum
Children and young people who attended the Elected Members Seminar on 18th July 2006
Foster Carers attending the Corporate Parenting event held on 22nd May 2006
Elected members who attended the Seminar on 18th July 2006
Social Workers, Fostering Social Workers and support staff in North Warwickshire
Social Workers, Fostering Social Workers and support staff in Nuneaton and Bedworth
Social Workers, Fostering Social Workers and support staff in Rugby
Social Workers, Fostering Social Workers and support staff in Warwick
Social Workers, Fostering Social Workers and support staff in Stratford
Independent Reviewing Officers
Heads of Secondary Schools across Warwickshire
Heads of Primary Schools across Warwickshire
Staff at the Barnados Foster Carer Service
Paediatricians Conference 13th April 2006

Appendix 2

Summary of performance at 31st March 2006

Performance Indicators for Outcome 1 – Being Healthy

PAF C19 - Health of Children Looked After

The proportion of children looked after for a year or more who have had their teeth checked by a dentist during the last year, and who have had an annual health assessment during the last year (an average of these two proportions).

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	72.1	79.1	82.0	84.0	82.5	85.0
Comparator Authorities	71.9	73.6	76.7	79.0		
England	71.1	74.2	77.3	79.0		
Threshold for Top Banding	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0

Performance Indicators for Outcome 2 – Staying Safe

APA CH39 - Number of Looked After Children

The number of children looked after at 31 March, per 10,000 child population.

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	36.6	35.8	39.4	41.3	41.2	37.0
Comparator Authorities	35.1	36.0	35.6			

PAF A1 - Short Term Stability for Looked After Children

Of children looked after at 31 March, the proportion who had three or more placements during the preceding year.

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	15.6	15.0	13.8	13.1	13.0	13.0
Comparator Authorities	12.6	13.1	14.1	14.0		
England	12.4	11.9	12.7	13.0		
Upper Threshold for Top Banding	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0

PAF D35 - Long Term Stability for Looked After Children

Of children looked after at 31 March who have been looked after for at least 4 years, the proportion that has been in the same foster placement for at least 2 years.

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	47.0	48.5	41.9	46.2	53.5	60.0
Comparator Authorities	50.2	50.7	50.7	50.0		
England	50.7	50.3	47.8	49.0		
Upper Threshold for Top Banding	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
Lower Threshold for Top Banding	70.0	70.0	70.0	70.0	70.0	70.0

PAF C23 - Children Adopted from Care

The number of children adopted from care during the year, divided by the number of children looked after at 31 March who have been looked after for 6 months or more.

	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	6.9	6.3	5.6	8.0
Comparator Authorities	8.5	7.9		
England	7.7	7.5		
Upper Threshold for Top Banding	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Lower Threshold for Top Banding	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0

PAF B7 - Looked After Children in Foster Placements or Placed for Adoption

Of children looked after at 31 March, the proportion that is in foster placements or placed for adoption. Children placed with parents are excluded from this indicator.

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	88.4	84.7	88.0	89.2	91.4	88.0
Comparator Authorities	82.4	82.9	83.0	82.4		
England	80.8	81.7	80.9	80.7		
Upper Threshold for Top Banding	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0
Lower Threshold for Top Banding	85.0	85.0	85.0	85.0	85.0	85.0

PAF 68 - Timeliness of Looked After Reviews

Of children looked after at 31 March who had been looked after for at least 4 weeks, the proportion who had all their looked after reviews held within statutory timescales, i.e. 28 days from accommodation for the first review, 91 days after that for the second and 183 days after that for any subsequent review.

	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	51.6%	85.0%
Comparator Authorities		
England		

NB. This indicator was introduced in 2006 so as yet there is no comparative information.

Performance Indicators for Outcome 3 – Enjoying and Achieving

PAF A2 - GCSEs for Young People Leaving Care 16+

Of young people leaving care aged 16 and above, the proportion who held one or more GCSEs or a GNVQ on leaving care.

	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	54.8	61.5	68.9	75.0
Comparator Authorities	51.9	51.0		
England	49.6	51.0		
Lower Threshold for Top Banding	70.0	70.0	70.0	70.0

PAF C24 - Children Looked After Absent from School

Of children looked after for a year or more, the proportion who missed 25 days or more of school during the previous academic year.

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	15.5	10.4	13.5	7.2	12.3	9.5
Comparator Authorities	13.0	12.3	12.3	11.3		
England	11.7	11.9	12.1	12.2		
Upper Threshold for Top Banding	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

PAF C69 - Distance Children Newly Looked After are Placed from Home

Of children newly accommodated in the year ending 31 March and still accommodated at 31 March, the proportion that at 31 March are placed more than 20 miles from their home address from which first placed. Unaccompanied asylum seekers, children missing from care, children placed for adoption and children placed with parents are excluded.

	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	11.8	10
Comparator Authorities		
England		

NB. This indicator was introduced in 2006 so as yet there is no comparative information.

Performance Indicators for Outcome 4 – Making a Positive Contribution

PAF C18 - Final Warnings and Convictions for Looked After Children

The proportion of children looked after over the age of 10 who offended during the year, divided by the proportion of their peers in the general population who offended during the year.

	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	3.7	2.5	3.1	2.2	2.8	2.5
Comparator Authorities	3.7	2.9	3.2	3.5		
England	3.0	2.8	2.9	3.0		
Upper Threshold for Top Banding	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Lower Threshold for Top Banding	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

PAF C63 - Participation in Looked After Reviews

Of children looked after for at least 4 weeks and who are over the age of 4, the proportion who communicated their views in some way to their latest looked after review. This could be via personal participation, written or electronic communication or independent representation.

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	77.1	81.0	90.0
Comparator Authorities	84.0		
England	83.0		
Lower Threshold for Top Banding	95.0	95.0	95.0

Performance Indicators for Outcome 5 – Achieving Economic Well-Being

PAF A4 - Employment, Education and Training for Care Leavers at Age 19

Of young people who were in care when they were 16 and subsequently left care, the proportion who at the age of 19 were in education, training or employment.

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 Plan
Warwickshire	0.74	0.76	0.78
Comparator Authorities	0.69		
England	0.72		
Lower Threshold for Top Banding	0.6	0.6	0.6

Appendix 3

Background References

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Children Act Project Team, "A Vision and Strategic Direction for Children's Services in Warwickshire." July 2005

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Warwickshire has a Sex and Relationships Education Policy 2003