

Warwickshire County Council

21 September 2017

The Corporate Parenting Policy, Children in Care Pledge and Care leavers Charter

Recommendations

- (1) That the Council approves the Corporate Parenting Policy (as set out at Appendix 1)
- (2) That the Council approves the Children in Care Pledge and Care Leavers Charter (as set out at Appendix 2).

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council first approved its Corporate Parenting Policy on 12 December 2006. Since this time it has had minor revisions to reflect national requirements. However following the recent OFSTED inspection of Children's Services the recommendation was made to 'ensure that the Corporate Parenting Panel offers sufficient scrutiny of services and challenge in partnership with young people to improve services.'
- 1.2 As a consequence the policy has received a more significant revision with the governance and monitoring arrangements reflecting the recommendation made by OFSTED. Further the revised policy document has been able to incorporate the corporate parenting principles now laid down in legislation within the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 1.3 Appended to the policy document is the Warwickshire Children in Care Pledge and Care Leavers Charter. The Pledge has been developed with children and young people looked after and is in essence a set of promises that are made to them about how we as corporate parents will listen, support, help and care for them. Our effectiveness as corporate parents will be judged by how successful we are at meeting these pledge promises with the Corporate Parenting Panel monitoring the delivery of these commitments.
- 1.4 Similar to the Pledge the Care Leavers Charter is a national document which urges local authorities to consider the principles contained in the document when they make decisions about young people's lives. The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and

understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good Corporate Parents.

2.0 Options and Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is that County Council endorses the revised Corporate Parenting Policy, the Pledge and Care Leavers Charter. This will demonstrate a county wide commitment to children, young people and care leavers whose circumstances will be championed, reviewed and scrutinised by the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 2.2 There are no financial implications arising from the revision of this policy and in terms of the equality impact assessment it is concerned with narrowing the gap and securing better outcomes for children and young people in care irrespective of their age, gender, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

3.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

The policy will be effective from 21 September 2017 and a plan put into place to widen its distribution amongst partner agencies and organisations.

Background papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Brenda Vincent	brendavincent@warwickshire.gov.uk tel 01926 413867
Head of Service	Beate Wagner	beatewagner@warwckshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	John Dixon	johndixon@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Jeff Morgan	Jeffmorgan@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

The Corporate Parenting Panel

Councillors Jeff Morgan, Yousef Dahmash, Caroline Phillips, Jerry Roundhouse and Chris Williams.

Corporate parenting policy

2017 - 2020

Version: 2.0

Date Issue: September 2017

Review date: March 2020

Author: Brenda Vincent

Team: Children and Families

Protective Marking: Public

Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. The Policy.....	5
3. Key Principles.....	6
4. The Pledge and Participation Strategy	7
5. Joint working and shared responsibilities	8
5.1 Warwickshire County Council elected members	8
5.2 Social workers and social care workers, Children and Family Services and the Asylum and Leaving Care Services	9
5.3 Placement services	10
5.4 Parenting support and adult services	10
5.5. Education - The Virtual School.....	10
5.6. Health – designated service for looked after children and young people	11
5.7 External placement providers – residential, semi-independent and supported living, foster care and adoption provision	12
5.8 Wider council services, district councils and housing providers	12
5.9 Voluntary sector providers	13
5.10 Police	13
6. Governance, awareness, monitoring and reporting arrangements.....	13
6.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel.....	13
6.2 Children in Care Council	14
6.3 Monitoring and reporting	14
7. Appendices.....	15
Appendix 1 - The Warwickshire Pledge.....	15
Appendix 2 – Care Leavers Charter	15
Appendix 3 – Abstract from Local Government Improvement and Development - 10 questions to ask if you’re scrutinising services for looked after children.....	15
Appendix 4 – Corporate Parenting Panel - Key Performance Indicators	Error!

Bookmark not defined.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Warwickshire Corporate Parenting Policy was first approved on 12 December 2006. It has been reviewed in response to national requirements including [Care Matters: Time for Change](#) (June 2007) and recently the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).
- 1.2 A corporate parent is any person or professional who is 'interested in and involved with a looked after child or your person or care leaver, who acts as their carer, support or advocate'. They are ambitious for them but in the right way, working to ensure children and young people fulfil their potential and that they have access to education and other help. They look out for the child or young person, provide security and protect them from harm.'
- 1.3 Further "improving the role of the corporate parent" is key to improving the outcomes for children in care. It is with the corporate parent that responsibility and accountability for the wellbeing and future prospects of children in care ultimately rest. A good corporate parent must offer everything that a good parent would, including stability. It must address both the difficulties which children in care experience and the challenges of parenting within a complex system of different services.' (Adapted from 'Can the State be a good parent? (2006) and Care Matters 2007).

2. The Policy

- 2.1 As corporate parents it is Warwickshire County Council's policy commitment:
 - to provide an excellent standard of care for children and young people who are looked after;
 - to ensure that they are secure and supported to achieve well;
 - encouraged to have full and fulfilled lives that raise their self-esteem and confidence;
 - and for them to be ultimately prepared well for future independence and have the best life chances in adulthood.
- 2.2 This policy aims to ensure that all children and young people who are looked after:
 - live in an environment that can meet their needs for as long as required, maximising every opportunity for permanency;
 - improve their educational attainment and health levels so that the gap is narrowed between them and their peers;
 - and for them to be well prepared and supported for living independently as and when it is the right time for them.

3. Key Principles

3.1 The [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) outlines the corporate parenting principles to be followed by the local authority in carrying out functions in relation to looked after children and young people. These are:

- To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people;
- To encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- To take account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- To help them 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 them to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education work;
- To prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

3.2 Warwickshire County Council has additional aims designed to help elected members, local authority staff, carers and local partners understand their responsibilities in contributing to the best possible outcomes for children and young people looked after. These are that children and young people:

- receive an excellent standard of care in a positive and safe environment where their needs are met and placement stability is supported;
- only remain looked after for as long as is absolutely necessary in securing permanency for them;
- are guaranteed safety from existing or potentially future harm and feel secure;
- have access to a range of local support services to meet their needs and which promotes physical, mental and emotional health and resilience;
- have opportunities to achieve high standards and realise their full potential regardless of their circumstances or location and to access learning, employment, recreation, family, social and community life;
- are returned to their family or extended family members and only where this is not achievable, permanency to be secured through adoption, special guardianship or long term foster care.
- have decisions about and for them in a timely way based on a full and comprehensive assessment their needs taking fully into consideration their views and wishes whilst ensuring that they are protected from harm.

- are involved in decision making about their lives and have opportunities to help to shape the provision of services that support their needs;
- are properly supported to be independent by having access to a range of accommodation and support which enables them to live independently when they are ready to leave to care.

3.3 Corporate parenting therefore describes the collective responsibilities that Warwickshire County Council and partner organisations have towards children and young people in the care of the local authority.

3.4 As their corporate parents we should hold them in our minds in any decisions we make about services and we will achieve the best outcomes for them by working effectively with children and young people, other agencies and services.

3.5 As corporate parents we should always consider the following key 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 councilor's guide to being a good corporate parent." 2003)

4. The Pledge and Participation Strategy

4.1 The Pledge is a set of promises made to children and young people looked after and care leavers. Developed with young people our Pledge to them is to:

- Make sure workers who work with you are there for you while you are in care;
- Make sure you have a voice and take part;
- Make sure you stay in touch with people important to you;
- Make sure we provide a stable and safe place to live;
- Make sure we support you to join in and have different experiences;
- Make sure we work with you to aim high and achieve your goals and targets in education;
- Make sure we support you to stay physically and emotionally healthy;
- Make sure we support you to prepare for the future and adult life;
- Act as you your champion;
- Keep your best interest at heart;

- 4.2 The Participation Strategy ensures that children and young people looked after are consulted and involved in the decision making processes around services that relate directly to them. It provides opportunities to listen to what children and young people have to say and gives a voice and weight to their views and experiences and ensures that these are used to improve services.
- 4.3 The local authority supports the arrangements for the elected [Children in Care Council](#) which provides the forum for children looked after and care leavers to express their views and influence the services and support received. Through the Council and other means such as surveys and meetings particular themes and areas of importance for young people in care and care leavers are highlighted and brought to the attention of corporate parents within the local authority so that services can be reviewed and improved.

5. Joint working and shared responsibilities

5.1 Warwickshire County Council elected members

- 5.1.1 Elected members recognise that as corporate parents they have a key role in ensuring that the interests of children and young people looked after and care leavers are considered at every opportunity. Leadership and overall responsibility for this policy rests with the Lead Member for children and families and the elected member Corporate Parenting Panel. The Lead Member and portfolio holder should champion the voice of children looked after, spend time with them, listening to their views and ensuring that arrangements for supporting children looked after work effectively across the council.
- 5.1.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel should focus on the experiences of children and young people looked after and care leavers by offering sufficient scrutiny and challenge. Through this process it aims to improve services and also seeks to secure wider elected member and cross organisational support and commitment for delivering improved services and better outcomes for children and young people looked after and care leavers. These are considered within the wider context of the transformation programme 2017-2020 to reduce the need for children to become or remain looked after and to widen the placement choices available to them in meeting the local authority's [Children Looked After Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy](#).
- 5.1.3 As a minimum, all elected members should be able to demonstrate knowledge of:

- The numbers, age ranges, gender ratios, placement arrangements and legal statuses children and young people in care;
- The number children and young people looked after from their districts and numbers in local schools
- How to contact the [Children in Care Council](#);
- Membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel and how to access the minutes of these meetings.

5.1.4 They are required to sign the Pledge and the [Care Leavers Charter](#) and avail themselves of the key questions which elected members should ask themselves. (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4)

5.2 Social workers and social care workers, Children and Family Services and the Asylum and Leaving Care Services

5.2.1 The Senior Leadership Team in the Children and Families Business Unit has strategic and operational responsibility for the delivery of children looked after (corporate parenting) and leaving care services. Critical to working with children and young people is the requirement to take responsibility for ensuring that children and young people looked after have their best interests promoted at all times.

5.2.2 They must:

- Ensure that the needs of children and young people are properly assessed including health, education, family relationships, activities and interests and areas for specialist support;
- Listen to what children and young people are saying, record these accurately and take them into account when making decisions about children's and young people's lives;
- Visit regularly and see the child/young person alone and follow up any concern or worries on their behalf;
- Make sure they have a safe place to live which is right for them;
- Involve children and young people in plans for now and for their future and to support them during periods of transition;
- Make sure contact arrangements work well;
- Help parents and extended family to make the changes needed so that children and young people can return home to live if this is right for them;
- Find permanent families as quickly as possible through adoption, special guardianship or fostering;
- Make sure children and young people have the support and are encouraged to do well and to have aspirations for them;

- Provide young people with information about their rights, the advocacy services and complaints and representation process.

5.3 Placement services

- 5.3.1 Fostering and adoption services will provide quality and safe care within a family setting for children and young people who are unable to live within their own families.
- 5.3.2 These services must be able to meet the wide range of assessed needs of children and their families and provide these close to the child's local community, wherever possible, and appropriate. They should conform to regulations and national minimum standards and statutory guidance.
- 5.3.3 The placement arrangements should be respectful of, and promote the child's heritage, culture, identity and sexuality. They should also give due regard to any needs arising from the child's or young person's disabilities or specific circumstances and vulnerabilities.
- 5.3.4 The information, preparation, assessment and support of foster carers and adoptive parents should enable them to understand and meet the needs of children and young people placed throughout the duration of their childhood and beyond as necessary.
- 5.3.5 The aim is to allow wherever possible, placement choice based upon careful matching which will reduce the risk of placement disruption and unnecessary placement moves for looked after children and young people thereby ensuring placement stability and a sense of security.

5.4 Parenting support and adult services

- 5.4.1 These services have a role in making sure children who return home do not become vulnerable in future and ensure support and services are provided to care leavers assessed as having ongoing needs.

5.5. Education - The Virtual School

- 5.5.1 This is a service for children and young people who are looked after. Through partnership working it supports and challenges schools and other educational providers to ensure that educational and vocational aspirations are instilled in our children and young people so that they can be the best they can be. Acting as their champion they facilitate the best educational opportunities possible and celebrate their achievements.

5.5.2 At a minimum the Virtual School will ensure that every looked after child/young person has a Personal Education Plan, and that their educational progress is monitored.

5.5.3 The [Virtual School](#) supports the [Warwickshire Corporate Parents Association](#), a charity also known as the Tiffin Club can provide assistance with mentoring, extra tuition, work experience, access to apprenticeships and any extra support required to ensure children and young people looked after and care leavers can pursue their ambitions.

5.6. Health – designated service for looked after children and young people

5.6.1 GPs and health service providers and commissioners within Warwickshire are aware of the particular health vulnerabilities of children and young people who are looked after children and care leavers. Their health outcomes should be promoted in partnership with the designated and primary health services.

5.6.2 These services set out to:

- Promote and improve the health and well-being of children and young people looked after so that their health is not disadvantaged when compared with that of their peers;
- Ensure that children and young people looked after understand how to stay healthy, the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to achieve this in a way which motivates them;
- Promote the safety of children and young people by enabling them to make informed, positive choices which promote their safety, making them aware of when relationship and lifestyle choices are potentially harmful.

5.6.3 The service encourages the participation of children and young people in the health assessment process in line with the [Integrated Health Care Pathway](#). It monitors statutory health assessments and advises registrations with GPs, dentists and opticians. It ensures that the [Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire](#) which is an indicator of emotional health and wellbeing is routinely offered and completed where possible. Through links with health partners and related services, the health needs of children and young people looked after are promoted ensuring the timely referral to specialist services. Furthermore, the service will contribute to the training of social care staff, foster carers and health professionals on health related issues, best practice and procedural arrangements and requirements.

5.7 External placement providers – residential, semi-independent and supported living, foster care and adoption provision

5.7.1 Where children and young people looked after are not placed within their local communities we will ensure that our corporate parenting responsibilities are as effective by ensuring that their placements are underpinned by [Individual Placement Agreements](#). We will ensure that as minimum statutory visits are completed and that support is in place to ensure that children and young people retain meaningful contact with family and their local home communities.

5.7.2 Through internal protocols and close working with the Strategic Commissioning Business Unit we will ensure the provision of high quality placements primarily through commissioning frameworks extending placement choice for Warwickshire children and young people. Through the commissioning process prospective placement providers are expected to demonstrate how they will meet our corporate parenting aspirations and will be provided with a copy of this policy document. Further any concerns raised by children and young people placed at a distance will be addressed as a priority.

5.8 Wider council services, district councils and housing providers

5.8.1 Wider council services as good corporate parents will work to ensure that opportunities are maximised to improve life chances for children and young people looked after. This includes apprenticeships and work experience opportunities within the council and within contracting arrangements. Also to act as their champion in considering and implementing policies and in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of others towards children and young people looked after.

5.8.2 Working across the district council boundaries there are a range of responsibilities that impact upon children and young people looked after. The licensing and environmental powers ensure that vulnerable children and young people are protected from exploitation. Housing departments through the [Home Choice Allocation Policy](#) affords care leavers housing priority to ensure so that they have somewhere safe and suitable to live. Further district councils aim to promote corporate parenting by supporting foster care recruitment and other measures that secure positive outcomes for children and young people looked after who reside in their localities.

5.9 Voluntary sector providers

5.9.1 These are advised of their corporate parenting responsibilities and represent agencies who deliver specific services to support outcomes for children and young people across Warwickshire.

5.10 Police

5.10.1 The police have a critical role in using their powers to ensure that children and young people looked after are protected from harm and exploitation. They afford priority to children looked after who are missing from care and proactively follow up missing reports. They contribute to key meetings concerning their safety and welfare and can avoid the criminalisation of children and young people looked after where appropriate.

6. Governance, awareness, monitoring and reporting arrangements

6.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel

6.1.1 There is an elected member chair and vice chair appointed to the Panel. Its members include county and district council officers and lead professionals from education and health services. The Panel receives as a minimum quarterly performance reports of progress with respect to each service area (Appendix 4). They will have topic based exploration of key issues and will listen to the views of children and young people looked after, care leavers and their carers and commit to involving them in the review and development of services. The Panel will monitor the delivery of the Pledge commitments and from this provide advice on the strategic and corporate parenting priorities.

6.1.2 Elected members will also attend the Children in Care Council meetings on a rotation basis and young people are invited to attend the meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel

6.1.3 Minutes from key operational meetings such as the Corporate Parenting Development Group and those significant to the transformation of children and families services as they impact upon children and young people looked after and care leavers will also be shared with the Panel.

6.2 Children in Care Council

- 6.2.1 The [Children in Care Council](#) meets with the Head of Service, Senior Officers, the Lead Member for Children and Families Services and elected members from the Corporate Parenting Panel. The purpose of these meetings is for the young people to represent the view and experiences of the children looked after population directly to those responsible for corporate parenting. This provides an opportunity for young people to influence the services and support that they receive.
- 6.2.2 Young people looked after are also routinely included in the recruitment of key officers responsible for services to children looked after

6.3 Monitoring and reporting

- 6.3.1 Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings will be distributed to members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a report on the outcomes for children and young people looked after and care leavers will be received by the Cabinet on an annual basis. The Children and Young Peoples' Overview and Scrutiny Committee may identify areas for further reports and scrutiny.
- 6.3.2 The circumstances and outcomes for children and young people looked after and care leavers are also monitored on a monthly basis by the Children and Families Performance Board that will also monitor the action plan which is aligned to this strategy.
- 6.3.3 The full Council is also presented with additional reports which consider the impact of legislative and financial changes on the lives of children and young people looked after and care leavers.
- 6.3.4 The Corporate Parenting Policy is underpinned by an e-learning awareness training module, developed in conjunction with young people, which aims to ensure that the concept and principles of corporate parenting are well understood and adopted in day to day practice. **Corporate Parenting: Everyone's Responsibility** which is available on Wilma and through this [link](#). Further the principles of this policy are included and reinforced across a range of training programmes available to staff and partner organisations.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - [The Warwickshire Pledge](#)

Appendix 2 – [Care Leavers Charter](#)

Appendix 3 – [Abstract from Local Government Improvement and Development - 10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children](#)

The Warwickshire Pledge

Our promise to Children & Young People Looked After

Make sure workers who work with you are there for you while you are in care....

We will,

- make sure that you know who your *social worker* is
- give you contact details for your social worker and who to contact if your social worker is not around
- let you know how often you will see your social worker
- not change your social worker unless it is absolutely necessary
- make sure you have an up to date *"care plan"* which explains how we will support you
- make sure you have an *independent reviewing officer* to help you check that the care plan is carried out properly
- make sure that you know about and have access to an *independent visitor* if you need one
- make sure you know about *advocacy services* and how they can help you to explain your views to other adults
- make sure all workers are positive, organised, truthful and less formal

Make sure you have a voice and take part.....

We will,

- treat you with respect
- always keep you informed and updated
- help you understand the reasons you are looked after
- explain what is going on in a way that you understand
- listen to your views, opinions and suggestions and tell you how they make a difference
- give you choices
- involve you in the decisions made about your life
- meet your religious and cultural needs
- make sure we take into account any additional needs or disabilities
- ask you through questionnaires and surveys about your experiences in care
- create opportunities for you to take part in the *Children in Care Council*
- create opportunities for you to help recruit staff
- create opportunities for you to help train staff and foster carers

Make sure you stay in touch with people important to you....

We will,

- support you to stay in touch with people who are important to you, when this is not possible, give you a clear reason why
- help to keep things safe that are valuable to you
- help you to understand what **life story** work is and your life story

Make sure we provide a stable and safe place to live....

We will,

- work with you to find a place to live
- make sure you get to meet your carer before you move there, except in an emergency
- tell you all about the foster carer and where they live
- tell the foster carer the things they need to know to look after you
- make sure that the foster carer is trained and supported to care for you
- listen to you about what makes a good foster carer
- give you a say on what you think about where you live as part of the **Foster Carer Annual Review**
- support you to stay in one place and not move you unless it is absolutely necessary
- check with you regularly that you feel safe and are happy with where you live
- keep you safe from bullying by giving you confidence and ideas on how to deal with bullying if it happens
- take action if you tell us that you are being bullied
- help you learn how to keep yourself safe
- support you to return to your family when the time is right
- explain who you can talk to if you are not happy with where you live
- get you a **passport** if you are entitled to one so that you have the opportunity to go on holidays

Make sure we support you to join in and have different experiences....

We will,

- help you to take part in activities, like sports and clubs
- give you opportunities to have fun and to try new things
- support your hobbies and interests
- let you know about the **Baradell Award and Tiffin Club** where you can apply for money to pay for activities that you are interested in.....things you dream about wanting to do
- give you opportunities to do volunteer work
- encourage you to go on the **National Citizenship Programme** and similar programmes

Make sure we work with you to aim high and achieve your goals and targets in education.....

We will,

- *make sure that pre-school children can go to **early years education**, where this is good for you*
- *make sure you attend school or college where you are happy*
- *support you to attend and do well at school*
- *help you to make the best possible educational choices for you*
- *expect your foster carer and your social worker to take an active interest in your education*
- *work with you to create your **Personal Education Plan** which is there to help you do well at school*
- *arrange for extra tuition if you need it*
- *help you learn English if it is not your first language*
- *make sure you have somewhere to study and do homework and have access to a computer*
- *make sure that you are part of decisions about what your **pupil premium** is spent on*
- *encourage you to take part in activities out of school hours*
- *make sure you know your **Designated Teacher**, this is the person in school that can help you with any problems*
- *support you if you choose to remain in education right through to University*
- *celebrate your achievements and successes*

Make sure we support you to stay physically and emotionally healthy.....

We will,

- *provide you with clear information about your health*
- *encourage you to make healthy and positive choices for yourself*
- *provide you with information and advice on healthy eating, exercise, drugs, alcohol and sexual health*
- *encourage you to have regular health and dental check ups*
- *make sure that your carer takes you to see the doctor or other health appointments when you need them*
- *make sure that you always have someone that you can talk to about your physical and emotional health and well being*
- *provide contact details for the **Named Nurse** for children looked after*

Make sure we support you to prepare for the future and adult life.....

We will,

- *make sure you receive pocket money*
- *open a **savings account or ISA** for you if you have been in care for over a year*
- *provide you with a worker to help prepare you for adult life and keep a check on your progress*
- *help you to find somewhere to live and set up a home with the right level of support*
- *make sure you know how much money you are entitled to*
- *make sure you have a **bank account** for when you live independently*
- *plan with you about when to leave care, this is called **Pathway Planning***
- *help you plan to **live independently** by supporting you to practice managing your money, cooking, cleaning, food shopping, paying bills, etc*
- *help you to think about **education, employment or training** that is right for you*
- *give those going to **higher education** a yearly grant plus other support*
- *create opportunities for **work experience** within the Council*
- *create opportunities for **apprenticeships** within the Council*
- *for your 16th birthday arrange for you to get your **National Insurance** number*
- *provide you a **health passport** so that you have your health history on your 18th birthday*

Keep your best interest at heart.....

We will,

- *only promise things we can do*
- *respect your personal beliefs and values*
- *respect your privacy*
- *remember your birthday and important days*
- *make sure you have the same opportunities as everyone else*
- *stay in touch with you and keep the door open for you so you can call us if you need us*
- *tell you how to make a complaint if you are not happy or satisfied with what we do*
- *support you to try again if things don't work out or go wrong*
- *not give up on you*

Act as your champion.....

We will,

- *be the best **Corporate Parents** we can be*
- *keep a check on and test to see if the promises in the Pledge are being kept*
- *take action where we are not doing good enough*
- *use the **Corporate Parenting Panel** to improve circumstances for children looked after*
- *support **Elected Members** to lead the way and make life better for children who are looked after in Warwickshire*

Glossary – some words we used that may need explaining

Social Worker	<i>a person who works for social services or for a private business providing help and support for people who need it</i>
Care Plan	<i>This is the plan for you while you are in care. It will include things about your education, health, where you live, your interests and other things</i>
Independent Reviewing Officer	<i>A worker who will meet you twice a year to make sure your care plan is right for you</i>
Advocacy Services or Advocate	<i>A person who can help you understand what you can and can't do. They can also help you make sure that your views are explained to other adults</i>
Independent Visitor	<i>This is a volunteer who is not connected to the council, who can support children in care like a mentor (a friend to hang out with)</i>
Children in Care Council	<i>A group of elected young people who meet monthly and talk with workers to explain how things could be made better for children and young people in care</i>
Life Story Work	<i>Life story work is about the story of a child's life history to allow the child to understand their past</i>
Foster Carer Annual Review	<i>Held once a year this is a method for checking a foster carer's progress. The review also helps to decide whether a foster carer is still suitable for the job as carer</i>
Passport	<i>This document shows who you are and allows you to travel to other countries</i>
Baradell Fund	<i>The Barradell Award is a pot of money to encourage looked after young people to take part in social activities and to celebrate their achievements</i>
Tiffin Fund	<i>The Tiffin Club provides extra money for education and career/business support for young people looked after</i>
Early Years Education	<i>Early years education is an education through play for very young children before they are old enough to go to school</i>
Personal Education Plan	<i>This is a meeting that takes place at school to discuss a plan to help a child or young person in care to get the best education possible. The government has made this law</i>
Pupil Premium	<i>The pupil premium is extra money for schools to improve the standard of education for young people who need it</i>
Designated Teacher	<i>This is a teacher in school that has responsibility for helping children in care do well with their school life and studies</i>
Named Nurse	<i>This is a nurse whose job it is to check and improve the health of children looked after</i>

Savings Account	<i>Savings accounts are great for storing money you want to keep in a bank for a long time, without using it. It can earn you interest (a little extra money)</i>
ISA	<i>This works in much the same way as a savings account, except you do not pay tax on the interest you earn.</i>
Bank Account	<i>Bank accounts give you easy access to your money. You receive a debit card and this means you can take money out of cash machines and pay for things in shops</i>
Pathway Planning	<i>Every looked after young person must have a pathway plan, usually starting around your 16th birthday. It's the law. Your pathway plan says how the council will help you prepare to live independently</i>
Live Independently	<i>This is about helping teenagers to learn new skills so that they can make the changes needed to live life as a responsible adult</i>
Education, Employment & Training	<i>This means you should be studying, working or learning, sometimes called EET</i>
Higher Education	<i>This generally means studying at a college or university</i>
Work Experience	<i>This is like being a volunteer in a work place to help you to get a feel for professional working environments</i>
Apprenticeship	<i>This is a job with training. Being an apprentice means that you get a qualification and skills whilst you are working and earning a wage</i>
National Insurance	<i>You need a national insurance number before you can start working. You pay National Insurance contributions to get certain benefits, including the State Pension</i>
Health Passport	<i>This is a booklet that will have information about your health in it</i>
Corporate Parents	<i>This means that the council, elected members, workers, and organisations must provide the best possible care they can for children and young people who are looked after by the council</i>
Corporate Parenting Panel	<i>This group of 6 elected members meets to help improve services and create better results for children and young people looked after and young people leaving care</i>
Elected Members	<i>This is a person who has been chosen by the public to become a member of a local government council, like Warwickshire</i>

The Warwickshire Pledge

Our promise to Children & Young People Looked After

I understand that being in care and leaving care isn't always easy and that it can bring extra challenges and pressures for you.

If we are going to get it right for you we need to make a real difference to help you do your best and have success in your life.

My pledge to you includes a number of things we will do that will help make sure that your time in care is a positive experience.

These are based around ten themes:

We will,

1. Make sure workers who work with you are there for you while you are in care
2. Make sure you have a voice and take part
3. Make sure you stay in touch with people important to you
4. Make sure we provide a stable and safe place to live
5. Make sure we support you to join in and have different experiences
6. Make sure we work with you to aim high and achieve your goals and targets in education
7. Make sure we support you to stay physically and emotionally healthy
8. Make sure we support you to prepare for the future and adult life
9. Keep your best interest at heart
10. Act as your champion

Print Name:

Sign Name:

Date:



Department for Education

Care leavers' charter

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter sets out promises care leavers want the central and local government to make. Promises and principles help in decision making and do not replace laws; they give guidance to show how laws are designed to be interpreted.

The key principles in this Charter will remain constant through any changes in Legislation, Regulation and Guidance. Care leavers urge local authorities to use these principles when they make decisions about young people's lives. The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what the government and local authorities should do to be good Corporate Parents.

We Promise:

To respect and honour your identity

- We will support you to discover and to be who you are and honour your unique identity. We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will celebrate your identity as an individual, as a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community. We will value and support important relationships, and help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events. We will support you to express your identity positively to others.

To believe in you

- We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations. We will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of these yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you.

To listen to you

- We will take time to listen to you, respect, and strive to understand your point of view. We will place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you, negotiate with you, and show how we have taken these into account. If we don't agree with you we will fully explain why. We will provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and promote and encourage access to independent advocacy whenever you need it.

To inform you

- We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and the service you can expect to receive from us at different stages in the journey. We will keep information up to date and accurate. We will ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular touch with leaving care services. We will make clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information, and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

To support you

- We will provide any support set out in current Regulations and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We will make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down. We will not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you. We will make it our responsibility to understand your needs. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will help you learn from your mistakes; we will not judge you and we will be here for you no matter how many times you come back for support.

To find you a home

- We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living only when you are ready. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not judge you for your mistakes or refuse to advise you because you did not listen to us before. We will work proactively with other agencies to help you sustain your home.

To be a lifelong champion

- We will do our best to help you break down barriers encountered when dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges and universities, employment providers and health services to help you establish yourself as an independent individual. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger. We will point you in a positive direction and journey alongside you at your pace. We will trust and respect you. We will not forget about you. We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.