

# Corporate Parenting

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What does it mean to be a Corporate Parent in Merton?  
March 2023

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# What is Corporate Parenting?

- Our legislative responsibility under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 means that for any child or young person who comes into our care, we need to act as their corporate parent. This means that as a local authority we should:
  - Act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
  - Encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them.
  - Make sure they have access to services
  - Make sure they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work
  - Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

# Who has corporate parenting responsibilities?

- Everyone who is elected to serve on, or is employed by, a council **shares a collective responsibility** towards children in care and young people with care experience.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out three levels of responsibility.
  - Universal
  - Targeted
  - Specialist
- Children Act 2004 includes a duty to promote cooperation between agencies and corporate parenting a *‘task [that] must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies’*.

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# Corporate Parenting at Merton – Our Strategy

Merton's [Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-22](#) sets out our pledges to children and young people in and leaving care in Merton. This sits under our [Children and Young People's Plan \(2019-23\)](#), which sets out our ambitions for all CYP in Merton.

## Our pledge

- Your voice will be heard, what you say matters.
- You will have somewhere safe to call home.
- We will help you with your worries and fears.
- We will do the best we can to support you, so you can do your best at school, have hobbies, interests and time for fun.
- We will make sure you have people in your life who are important to you and someone you can trust.
- We support you to learn how to take care of yourself and we will be there for you, if you need us, right up until you are an adult aged 25.

# Corporate Parenting at Merton – Making it Happen

Merton's Corporate Parenting Board is Chaired by the Chief Executive of Merton Council and comprises of:

- ✓ Children in care and young people with care experience
- ✓ Participation Officers
- ✓ Senior officers from across the Council
- ✓ Partners representing education, health, housing, social care
- ✓ Elected members, including the Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families

The Corporate Parenting Board oversees the delivery of the action plan that sits under our Corporate Parenting Strategy.

# Corporate Parenting In Practice

## **Pledge 1: Your voice will be heard, what you say matters**

- ✓ Ensuring children in care council is represented at Corporate Parenting Board
- ✓ Commissioning Coram BAAF to undertake a consultation with Merton's children in care and care experienced young people.
- ✓ Young people with care experience on interview panels
- ✓ Development of a local offer for young people leaving care in Merton

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## **Pledge 2: You will have somewhere safe to call home**

- ✓ Reviewing children and young people in care who go missing or who are vulnerable to risk of exploitation
- ✓ Ensuring young people in education have stability by providing housing around term times
- ✓ Providing Setting Up Home Allowance in new tenancies

# Corporate Parenting In Practice

## **Pledge 3: We will help you with your worries and fears**

- ✓ Health passports for care experienced young people explaining their health history
- ✓ Early identification of young people transitioning to Adult Services
- ✓ Offering CAMHS consultation to care experienced young people, their social workers and personal advisors
- ✓ Named worker in Catch22 team to support our care experienced young people with drug screening and substance misuse intervention.

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## **Pledge 4: We will do the best we can for you, so you can do your best at school, have hobbies and interests and time for fun**

- ✓ Virtual School offering extensive educational support beyond statutory school age
- ✓ Named teacher to work with neighbouring colleges and universities so they understand the needs of our care experienced young people
- ✓ Specialist support for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people



# Corporate Parenting In Practice

## **Pledge 5: We will make sure you have people in your life who are important to you and someone you can trust**

- Support CYP to spend time with family members where it is safe to do so
- Plan for long term relationships
- Providing trusted adults in school
- Commission the Jigsaw4U befriending service to match adults to vulnerable children in care

## **Pledge 6: We support you to learn how to take care of yourself and we will be there for you, if you need us, right up until you are an adult aged 25.**

- ✓ Extending Personal Advisor services up to the age of 25
- ✓ Offered independent workshops/income maximisation advice and support
- ✓ Helping foster carers to understand the needs of adolescents
- ✓ Supporting 'Staying Put' arrangements
- ✓ Exempted Merton's care experienced residents from Council Tax until the age of 25.

# Corporate Parenting - Your Role

- What do you see as your role as a Corporate Parent to Merton's children in care and young people with care experience?
- In your capacity as Corporate Parent – what will you do to improve outcomes for Merton's children in care and young people with care experience?