



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
2 JUNE 2026

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with detail and context to the updated Corporate Parenting Strategy, to be in place until 2029 and to seek the views of the Committee, as part of the approval process.
2. The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out how the County Council will meet its statutory duties and responsibilities for children in care and care leavers.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is the framework for the role of local authorities and their relevant partners (as defined in Section 10 of the Children Act 2004) in the application of the corporate parenting principles as set out in Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Local authorities must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers, which includes relevant children and former relevant children. It should be read and applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
4. The updated Corporate Parenting Strategy builds on the previous strategy with relevant updates for changes over the past few years, rather than proposing any significant or substantial changes to the content.
5. The updated Strategy clearly sets out the County Council's continued commitment to meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities to children in care and care leavers.
6. This is underpinned by the core statutory framework set out in The Children Act, and additionally seven specific Corporate Parenting responsibility principles set out in The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
7. The new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act (2026) further builds on the corporate parenting responsibilities of the 2017 act and expands these, placing responsibilities on central government departments and national bodies, stating that those bodies must be alert to how their decisions, policies and services may affect the wellbeing of

care experienced young people. This act also includes a focus on local authorities collaborating with each other and working together, so far as reasonably practicable, including information sharing, providing advice or assistance and coordinating activities and avoiding duplication.

8. There are no specific impacts on other policies or frameworks. This Strategy is in line with the wider Children's and Family Departmental Plan.

Background

9. The previous Strategy was due for renewal at the end of 2025. Key stakeholders have been involved and consulted in the process of updating the Strategy including children in care via the Youth Voice Council, care leavers via the After Care Council, and partner organisations via the Corporate Parenting Board.

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026–2029 Summary

10. The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026–2029 sets out Leicestershire County Council's commitment to act as an ambitious, caring and effective corporate parent for Children in Care and Care Leavers, guided by the co-produced "Our Promise". "Our Promise" sets out Leicestershire County Council and partners' commitments to children in care and care leavers, describing what they should expect from their "corporate parents". It emphasises being listened to and respected, placing children at the heart of decisions, and supporting their identity, culture and important relationships. The Promise commits to providing safe, stable homes, emotional and practical support, and clear information about rights, entitlements and services. It also highlights support to help children overcome difficulties, achieve their goals, prepare for independence, and access advocacy and complaints processes when needed, reflecting a lifelong, relational approach rather than time-limited care. "Our Promise" is written specifically to children and young people and is shared with them when they come into care.
11. Key aims are to ensure children are safe, stable and feel they belong; raise aspirations, achievement and self-belief; support young people to achieve positive health, education and employment outcomes; prepare Care Leavers for independent adulthood up to age 25.
12. Core principles are that the Strategy is strongly aligned and follows the Children and Social Work Act 2017 corporate parenting principles; children's voice and choice are central ("You said, we did"); there is a commitment to recognising children's individual identity needs and fostering a sense of belonging, including recognising care experience as a protected characteristic locally, and there is a focus on stability, permanence and long-term relationships.
13. The Strategy covers a clear definition of who Children in Care and Care Leavers are, with a local profile of need; roles of councillors, officers, partners and the virtual School in fulfilling corporate parenting responsibilities; a strong participation offer through Youth Voice Council, After Care Council, and Support Young People After Care group and other forums; expectations of all Local councillors, staff and practitioners to ask: "Would this be good enough for my own child?".
14. For measuring success, the Strategy defines success across five outcomes:

- Improved physical health;
 - Improved mental health and emotional wellbeing;
 - Placement stability and safe homes;
 - Educational attainment and aspiration;
 - Strong outcomes for Care Leavers (housing, Education, Employment and Training (EET), independence).
15. Governance and accountability includes oversight through the Corporate Parenting Board, co-chaired by the Lead Member and young people. Regular scrutiny and clear accountability across council services and partners. There is ongoing performance monitoring against agreed outcomes including an annual report on progress of the strategies implementation.
 16. The Corporate Parenting Board is a key vehicle to hold internal services, alongside external partner agencies to account for their corporate parenting responsibilities. This board runs quarterly and is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services alongside a co-Chair from the Youth Voice Council. This Board is attended by agencies including police, health, housing and adult social care. The Board works to deliver the ambitions of the Strategy and hold partners to account.
 17. Overall, the Strategy positions corporate parenting as everyone's responsibility, with a clear focus on listening to children, tackling inequality, and ensuring every care-experienced young person in Leicestershire is supported to thrive now and into adulthood.

Impact assessments

18. Health Implications – the strategy continues to recognise the importance of the health and wellbeing needs of children in care and care leavers.
19. Partnership Working and Associated Issues – the updated strategy has been reviewed by key partners via the corporate parenting board and positive feedback received. Any suggestions for change were considered and amendments made.
20. Risk Assessment – there are no specific risks to identify in the updating of this strategy.

Consultation

21. The updated Strategy has been shaped and developed by the views and voice of young people, their experiences of care, and what they considered to be important. It has been reviewed by the Youth Voice Council, which is group of young people who are currently in care. It has also been reviewed by the After Care Council, which is a group of care experienced adults. All feedback and views were considered and relevant changes and updates. The Strategy was also presented at the Corporate Parenting Board in March 2026 for partner agencies to review and give comments, this including representatives from health, police, district council and education.

Resource Implications

22. There are no specific resource implications identified as part of the updated strategy.

Timetable for Decisions

23. The outcome of the engagement and the final revised draft Strategy has been presented to the Corporate Parenting Board. As the changes made to the Strategy are only minor, in accordance with the Council's Constitution these will be approved by the Director of Children and Family Services.

Conclusions

24. This report highlights the considerations given to the updating of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Now complete, this provides us with a clear strategy to support the County Council, and specifically children's services, in meeting corporate parenting responsibilities as set out in government and statutory framework.
25. The Committee is asked to comment on the revised draft Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Background papers

Children and Families Departmental Plan 2026-2029:

<https://trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/lracs-leicestershire/fc97cbc5-4a7f-498b-b074-92323c480277/cfs-departmental-plan-2025-2029.pdf>

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 24 January 2023:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MID=7190#AI74051>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

26. None required.

Equality Implications

27. It is considered that the updated strategy continues to uphold local authority responsibilities in terms of the nine protected characteristics and there is no negative impact (age, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation). The strategy recognised that children in care and care leavers have varied identities and those should be supported and recognised within our corporate parenting responsibilities. It is also relevant to note that Leicestershire County Council has agreed that being Care Experience will be treated as a protected characteristic, this is noted within the strategy.
28. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Human Rights Implications

29. It is considered that there is no negative impact on Human Rights; this strategy is supportive of the recognition of the needs of children in care and care leavers, and how they are supported by the County Council as Corporate Parents.
30. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

31. None.

Appendices

Appendix A - Corporate Parenting Strategy

Appendix B - Corporate Parenting Strategy – Children’s version

Appendix C - Our Promise

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