

# Corporate Parenting Strategy

| 2026 - 2029



## Our Children, Our Future

Leicestershire's commitment to inspire, support and enable  
Children in Care and Care Leavers to be ambitious and successful

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# Foreword

**Sharon Cooke** - Interim Director of Children and Family Services

In Leicestershire, we believe every child and young person deserves the very best. We are proud to be ambitious for our children and young people, and we're committed to delivering high-quality services that make a real difference to your lives and futures. I feel extremely privileged to lead the services that support our children in care and care experienced young people. I promise that we will keep you at the heart of all we do and at the centre of your plans. We will listen and hear your voice making sure that we measure ourselves against Our Promise, making sure that we work together to create stability and security for you and a sense of belonging.

Across our organisation and among political leaders, there is a shared drive to improve outcomes for children. Our Lead Member is a passionate advocate for you - challenging us, supporting us, and ensuring accountability at every level to ensure that we do the very best for you.

As the Senior Leadership Team, we place safeguarding, protection, and advocacy for children at the centre of everything we do. We set clear expectations that children's wellbeing must guide our decisions and our practice. We stay connected to children, young people, and staff through regular forums, listening carefully and learning from frontline experiences to shape and strengthen our services. Our focus remain firmly on you our children.

In 2024, we launched our updated Continuous Improvement Plan 2024–2027: Achieving Excellence through Purposeful Practice. This ambitious plan provides a clear roadmap for everyone from senior managers to frontline practitioners, to deliver outstanding support for children and families.

We are aspirational, we are curious, and we deeply value relationships. These core values and behaviours are the foundation of everything we do. They guide our actions, shape our culture, and ensure that children remain at the heart of our work.

**Cllr Charles Pugsley**

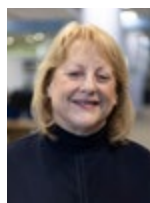
As a councillor in Leicestershire, I'm proud to stand behind our unwavering commitment to children and young people. I am immensely proud of the achievements of our young people and of the staff and carers who support them.

Children's Services are a priority across our council. From elected members to officers, there is a shared determination to make a lasting difference. As your Lead Member for Children and Families I promise to ensure that I will advocate for you and ensure that your voices are heard in every decision we make.

Our Senior Leadership Team is deeply committed to safeguarding and championing children. They lead with purpose, placing children's wellbeing at the heart of every policy and practice. They stay connected to frontline staff and young people, listening, learning, and shaping services that respond to real needs.



**Cllr Charles Pugsley**  
Lead Member for  
Children and Family Services



**Sharon Cooke**  
Interim Director for  
Children and Family Services

## Why Our Promise Is Important

Our Promise is here to make sure you feel safe, listened to, and supported while you're in care or leaving care. It reminds you and us, that you deserve respect, a stable home, and people who believe in you.

### The Promise is important because it helps you know:

- **You're not alone** - there are adults who will stand by you, even when things are tough.
- **Your voice counts** - your thoughts, feelings, and choices matter.
- **You should feel proud of who you are** - your identity and relationships are respected.
- **You have rights** - and we will help you understand them.
- **You can reach your goals** - we'll support your hopes, skills, and future plans.

This Promise is our way of showing that you matter, and we'll be here to help you now and as you grow.

# our promise

*to children in care and care leavers*



by Leicestershire County Council and Partners

|  |  |   |  |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
|  <p><b>We will support you</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide emotional support</li> <li>• Whatever you do we will be there</li> <li>• Ensure all your needs are met</li> <li>• Provide advice, information, practical and financial support</li> <li>• We will make sure that you know what your rights are</li> <li>• Will not judge you if things go wrong. We all make mistakes!</li> </ul> |  <p><b>We believe in you</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will value your strengths and talents</li> <li>• Support you to overcome any stumbling blocks you face</li> <li>• Support you to achieve your goals</li> <li>• Embrace your individuality</li> <li>• Encourage your aspirations</li> <li>• Support you to succeed in life</li> </ul> |  <p><b>We will respect your identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will respect your unique identity</li> <li>• Support you to develop your own personal beliefs and values</li> <li>• Accept, respect and celebrate your identity, culture and heritage</li> <li>• Value, respect and support important relationships</li> <li>• Encourage you to express your identity positively</li> </ul> |  <p><b>We will listen to you</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will listen and respect you</li> <li>• Strive to understand your point of view</li> <li>• Place you at the heart of all decisions</li> <li>• Support you to talk about your worries and happy times</li> <li>• Support you to seek independent advocacy</li> </ul> |  <p><b>We will support you to find a place you can call home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will do our best to find you a home near to people who are important to you</li> <li>• Ensure you feel safe and secure</li> <li>• As you grow we will support you to learn new skills to support your independence</li> <li>• We are here to support if things go wrong</li> </ul> |  <p><b>We will inform you</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal entitlements and services</li> <li>• Up to date and accurate information</li> <li>• Support you to access your care records</li> <li>• Provide information throughout your journey</li> <li>• We will support you if you need to make a complaint</li> </ul> |  <p><b>We will be a lifelong champion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support you break down barriers to other agencies</li> <li>• Work together with other services to better meet your needs</li> <li>• Encourage and support you to make positive life choices</li> <li>• Will make sure you know how to get support when you need it</li> <li>• Trust and respect you.</li> </ul> |
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Produced by Leicestershire County Council as part of the Leicestershire Children and Families Partnership

## Our Pledges To Children and Young People:

**Sharon Cooke:**

“I will ensure that your voice is heard and that the workforce that support you are in turn supported in an environment that allows them and their practice to flourish”

**James Thurston – Head of Service Children in Care, Fostering, Adoption and Virtual School:**

“You are at the heart of everything we do. We will listen carefully to your experiences and act on what you tell us. We will create the conditions for you to feel safe, seen, and a strong sense of belonging, and we will value what belonging means for each of you, as an individual.”

**Nicola Madgett – Team Leader for Corporate Parenting:**

“I will make sure you are supported to have your voice heard, respected, and acted on. Ensuring that your wishes, feelings, and experiences shape the decisions that affect your life. I will create safe, respectful spaces for you to speak openly. When you share your views, I will ensure you get clear feedback about how your input influenced the outcome. I will champion your access to opportunities, education, health support, relationships, and all the things you need to thrive.”

**Rebecca Peters – Safeguarding and Improvement Manager:**

“We pledge that you will be happy with the people who are present at your meeting, that your views and wishes are taken into account when planning the meetings and those people who do not attend provide updates. We will always do our best to make sure that your voice is heard, and we talk about the things that are important to you.”

**Kay Fletcher – Interim Assistant Director Targeted Early Help and Children’s Social Care:**

“We will put your voice at the centre of our work, build relationships with you and your family network and collaborate with partner agencies so that we build strong partnerships”

**Angie Lymer-Cox – Service Manager for Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children:**

“My drive is always to develop workers and managers to ensure they deliver outstanding support to you and your families. My aim is to ensure you have the best chances in life, and if you are not ready to take those chances yet for any reason, they are there for you in the future when you are in the right place. I have never given up on young people I am aspirational for you all, and this will continue to be my Pledge going forward.”

**Helen Middleton – Service Manager for Children with Disability Service:**

“We promise to help you feel safe, cared for, and understood as you grow and get ready for adult life. We will listen to what is important to you, where you want to live, what you enjoy, what you find hard, and what your hopes are for the future.”

**Heather Hughes – Assistant Service Manager for Fostering and Adoption:**

“Our promise to you is that we will endeavour to find you a foster home with foster carers who are able to care for you with nurture and kindness, and able to meet all of your needs alongside the other professionals that work with you.”

**Donna Chapman – Virtual School Head:**

“The Virtual school pledges to work together with you and your school/college to access the best opportunities and support for your education.”

**Carly Turner – Head of Youth Justice:**

“We are here to support you and help you do well. We will get to know you, listen to what matters to you, and work alongside you in a positive and respectful way. Through youth work and early support, we will help you build confidence, learn new skills and make choices that open up opportunities for your future.”

**Dr Shaun McGill – Public Health Consultant:**

“We promise to work to protect and improve your health and wellbeing, now and as you grow into adulthood. Using our knowledge about health, prevention, and inequalities we will work with the NHS to make sure that services understand and meet your health and wellbeing needs. We will listen to what matters to you, and work with the people who plan and deliver health services to make sure you have the support you need to lead healthy lives.”

**Julia Smith – Chief Executive of Blaby District Council:**

“As the district councils of Leicestershire, we commit to championing, supporting, and empowering children and young people who are care experienced, through the services we deliver. We pledge to recognise children and young people with care experience as a protected and valued group within our communities, ensuring their needs, experiences, and voices are placed at the heart of our decision making.”

## Core Values and Behaviours – the foundation for practice

### Core Values

**Aspirational**

Achieving the best outcomes for children and families

**Being Curious**

Digging for detail using purposeful practice

**Collaboration**

Building relationships built on the Signs of Safety approach

### Behaviours

**Professional Kindness**

Understanding trauma for children, parents and colleagues

**Active Listening**

Listening to build robust solutions

**Outcome Focused**

Creating measurable improvements for children and families

**Being Accountable**

Everyone is responsible for high quality practice

# Introduction

We want all children and young people in Leicestershire to have safe, stable and positive lives. Our hope is that you can grow up in your family, stay connected to your community, and get support whenever you need it.

If you can't live with your family, our priority is to make sure you live somewhere safe, stable and secure. We want to find you a long-term home as quickly as possible. We also want you to have chances to aim high, believe in yourself and have a happy childhood that sets you up well for your future.

In Leicestershire, we are fully committed to Children in Care and Care Leavers. We take our Corporate Parenting responsibilities seriously and aim to act with real care, passion and ambition. Everything we do is guided by Our Promise, which sets out what you can expect from us.

We know every young person is different, with their own needs, goals and identity. Your care plan and the support you receive should always reflect you. We value diversity and make sure our services are inclusive and respectful of who you are.

We are also committed to listening to your voice in all decisions. We follow a “You Said, We Did” approach so you can see how your feedback leads to real changes. Participation is a big part of how we work, and you can get involved through groups like:

- The Youth Voice Council (was Children in Care Council)
- Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC)
- The Corporate Parenting Board
- And many other events and forums led by children and young people

This Corporate Parenting Strategy explains how we will continue to provide high-quality support for Children in Care and Care Leavers. It sets out where we are now, where we want to be, and how we plan to keep improving. Our aim is to support you to reach your goals, follow your ambitions, and succeed now and in the future.

# 1. Leicestershire as a Corporate Parent

## OUR VISION

Leicestershire is a place where children can build strong foundations; be safe and belong, enjoy and achieve.

Corporate Parenting is a shared responsibility, first established in the Children Act 1989. The Act places a duty not only on Local Authorities but also on partner agencies, including health, education, and housing services, to support children's services in fulfilling their responsibilities. This collective effort ensures that you receive the help, support, and services you need.

As of January 2026, Leicestershire County Council is the corporate parent to approximately 777 children and young people. This role carries a collective responsibility to act as any good parent would, ensuring that children in care grow up happy, achieve well, and lead successful lives.

A responsible parent cares deeply about their child's safety, health, education, friendships, leisure interests, and future. They understand their child's development, talents, and challenges, and they provide support, listen attentively, and respond to their needs and concerns.

Leicestershire has a strong Corporate Parenting ethos that goes beyond safety. It focuses on promoting recovery, resilience, and well-being. Central to this is the importance of stability, which is reflected in our Permanence Policy. This policy outlines our commitment to securing emotional attachment, physical stability, and long-term support for the children in our care.

We recognise that improving outcomes for you requires close, coordinated working relationships with our partners. Leicestershire is committed to working collaboratively with wider services and with children and young people. We ensure that our looked-after children and Care Leavers have a strong voice in shaping services. We listen, take action based on their feedback, and make sure they know how their input has influenced service delivery.

Education plays a vital role in transforming life chances. Our aim is for all Children in Care to have prompt access to stable, appropriate education placements and enriching educational experiences.

The Leicestershire Virtual School actively promotes the education of Children in Care. It works with schools, alternative settings, and wider services both within and beyond Leicestershire to ensure timely access to quality education tailored to each child's needs, while minimising disruption to their learning.

The importance of our Corporate Parenting responsibilities in driving these ambitions is illustrated in the following diagram:

## Raising Aspirations



## 2. Who are ‘Children in Care and Care Leavers?’

**A child (under 18 years) is legally ‘looked after’ by a Local Authority if he or she:**

“Is provided with accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 from the Local Authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours; is subject to a care order; or is subject to a placement order. This also includes disabled children who are provided with accommodation under Section 20. Looked after Children in Care can be placed with foster carers, in residential homes, with parents or other relatives (under certain circumstances)”

**Definition of a care leaver:**

“A care leaver is broadly defined as a person aged between 16 and 25, who has been looked after by a Local Authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 is either currently in care or has left care and has been looked after for a period of time after their 16th birthday”

### 3.

# Leicestershire's Children in Care and Care Leavers

**777**  
Children  
Looked After

**702**  
Care Leavers

Children in Care  
**72%**  
White, White British  
**7.4%** Mixed  
**5.2%**  
Asian, British Asian  
**2%**  
Black, Black British  
**13.4%** Other

Care Leavers  
**49.3%**  
White, White British  
**27%** Other  
**10%**  
Asian, British Asian  
**5%** Mixed  
**8.5%**  
Black, Black British

**41.2%**  
of children are  
living with foster  
carers  
of which **18%**  
of children are in a  
foster placement  
with a connected  
person / kinship  
carer

**16.1%**  
of children are  
living in residential  
children's homes

**3%**  
of children  
are placed for  
adoption

**14%**  
of Children  
in Care are  
unaccompanied  
asylum seeking  
children

**100%**  
of Care Leavers  
are in touch with  
their PA and  
**95%**  
are in suitable  
accommodation

**7%**  
of children looked  
after have a  
missing incident

**54%**  
of 18+ Care  
Leavers are  
in education,  
employment or  
training

**35**  
Care Leavers at  
university

all data as of 14/12/2025

## 4.

# What do our children say?

As outlined at the start of this strategy, the voices of our Children in Care and Care Leavers are central to everything we do. This commitment is further reinforced through our Voice Strategy and Influence Strategy 2026-2029.

As Corporate Parents, Leicestershire is dedicated to ensuring that you have the right to express your views on matters affecting you. Where needed, they are supported by a Children's Rights Officer to help you do so. We believe that meaningful participation empowers you to achieve better outcomes.

We are fully committed to promoting meaningful participation, encouraging you to share your needs, experiences, and views so that these can shape practice and service delivery. Our approach is driven by passion, commitment, ambition, and care.

We value and respect the voices of our looked after children and Care Leavers. Together, we have developed 'Our Promise', which informs this strategy. Through this, our children have shared what they believe makes a good Corporate Parent, and we are listening.



Listen to our views and opinions and let us make decisions about our lives. Explains decisions to us and recognises the impact of their decisions.

Keep us protected and safe

Recognise our potential, believe in us, and celebrate our achievements

Understand when we are struggling and having a bad day and know when to give us space

Be friendly and build good relationships and gets to know you

Help us to still see and be friends with our family.

Have experience of working with young people and know what to do

Support us without judgement

Understand the issues we face

Be consistent, will stand by us as our advocate

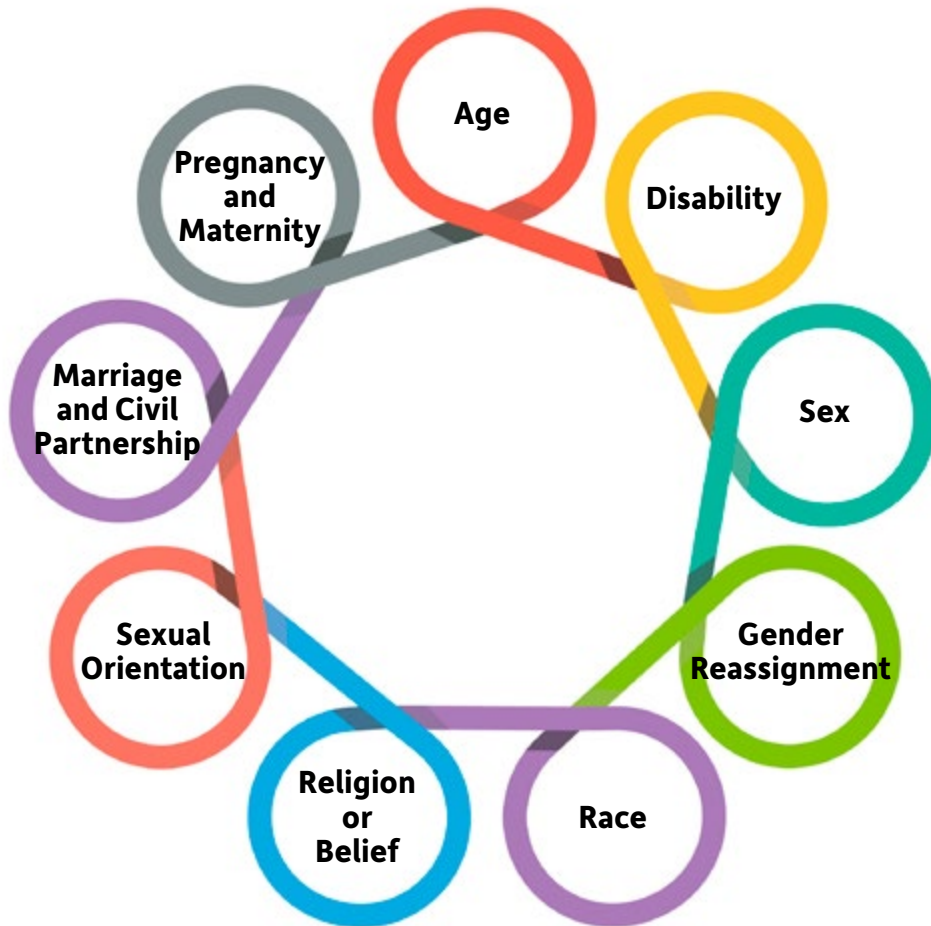
Provide opportunities like support with education, finances and getting into work.

Build our confidence and self-esteem. Support us to get skills for the future, achieve and be the best person you can be.

Make things better

Shows us respect

# 5. Equality, Diversity and Belonging



You are entitled to equal access to services, free from discrimination based on age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, or maternity.

Leicestershire County Council wants everyone to be treated fairly. We do not accept any kind of discrimination. We work hard to make sure no one is treated differently or unfairly because of who they are or the group they belong to.

We want everyone to have equal chances, to feel respected, and to get the support that's right for them. The council has now decided that being a care leaver should be treated as a protected characteristic. This means we recognise that young people who have been in care may need extra help. For example, if you are a care leaver and applying for social housing, you will now be placed in the highest priority group. This gives you a much better chance of getting a home, which is a really positive step for supporting vulnerable young people.

The Children Act 1989 says that a child's culture, religion and language must always be considered when supporting them. The Equality Act (which started in 2010) says that public organisations must:

- Make sure there is no discrimination, bullying or unfair treatment
- Give everyone equal opportunities
- Help different groups get along and understand each other

We want everyone who works with you to understand these responsibilities and to make sure our services are inclusive. Our Equality and Diversity Guidance explains how our core values: being aspirational, curious and working together should shape everything we do to support children and families.

Being fair and treating people equally is not only the law; it's the right thing to do. Everyone who works for the council, whether in social care, education, health, transport or any other service, has a responsibility to meet the needs of all people across the county.

Equality also means removing barriers that might stop some people, especially those with protected characteristics, from having the same chances as others. As your Corporate Parents, we want to make sure every child in our care gets the right support, guidance and opportunities to aim high and reach their goals.

Feeling like you belong is especially important for children in care. You may have experienced changes, loss, or times where things felt uncertain. Belonging is not just about where you live, it's about feeling seen, heard and accepted for who you are. It means having adults around you who support your identity, protect your rights, and make you feel safe and included.

As your Corporate Parents, it is our job to make sure you have relationships and opportunities that help you feel stable, valued and confident. We want every child in our care to feel part of a community that believes in them, supports their dreams and stands with them as they grow into adulthood.

Belonging doesn't just happen, we work hard to make it real for every young person.

## 6.

# Corporate Parenting Principles – Children and Social Work Act 2017

Leicestershire's commitment as Corporate Parents is to inspire, support, and enable Children in Care and Care Leavers to be ambitious and successful. We do this by being committed to providing our children and young people with stability, security, nurturing and empowering care.

The 7 principles within the act describe the behaviours and attitudes expected of councils when they are acting as any good parent would do by supporting, encouraging, and guiding their children to lead healthy, rounded and fulfilled lives.

### **Our role and commitment as Corporate Parents under the 7 principles:**

- We will act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of our children and young people.
- We will encourage our children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- We will take into account the views, wishes and feelings of our children and young people.
- We will help our children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the Local Authority and its relevant partners.
- We will promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for our children and young people.
- For our children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, and education or work.
- We will prepare our children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## 7. Who is involved and responsible?

A strong Corporate Parenting ethos means that everyone from the Chief Executive to front line staff, as well as elected council members, are concerned about our Children in Care and Care Leavers as if they were their own. In Leicestershire, Corporate Parenting is promoted as the responsibility of all. The actions, ambitions and belief in our children of the Director of Children and Family Services and the Lead Member set the tone for us all to be effective corporate parents.

**Our children our future - Leicestershire's commitment to inspire, support and enable Children in Care and Care Leavers to be ambitious and successful.**



# 8.

## Councillors as Corporate Parents

Back in 1998, the government reminded councillors (the people elected to make decisions for the county) that they are responsible for making sure children in care are looked after properly. They were told they must lead this work and check that the support being offered is actually working.

Since then, guides published in 2003 and 2013 have explained that all councillors should be ready to speak up for children in care and care leavers. They should make sure young people in care are treated fairly and given the same chances as anyone else.

Councillors have a special role because they have influence in the community. They know people in schools, health services, local businesses and other organisations. By using these connections, they can help create better opportunities for children in care, like work experience, training, education and support. They are also supported by council officers (staff) to meet with children in care and care leavers so they can listen to their views and understand what young people need.

In Leicestershire, we explain what we expect from councillors as Corporate Parents through seven key principles. Corporate Parenting means treating children in care as if they were part of your own family. Councillors must:

- Understand who the children in care are and what they need
- Think about how every council decision might affect children in care
- Ask themselves, “Would this be good enough for my own child?”
- Focus on improving outcomes for children in care
- Stand up for young people in their area and champion their needs
- Support the councillors who act as Member Champions
- Know about the work of the Corporate Parenting Board

Councillors play a really important role in making sure young people in care and care leavers get the support they need. This includes:

- Speaking up for children in care
- Making sure the corporate parenting principles are followed
- Checking that services are doing a good job
- Creating chances for young people to achieve and succeed
- Offering emotional and practical support
- Being a positive voice for young people in the community
- Asking important questions to make sure things improve



The most important question councillors should always ask is:

**“Would this be good enough for my own child?”**

This helps make sure services are fair, inclusive and built around what each young person needs.

## **8.1 Officers within Children and Family Services**

Officers in Children and Family Services have additional responsibilities to support and provide services for looked after children and young people, and Care Leavers. They will ensure that their care planning and transition planning is effective, meaningful and influenced by their voice and choice.

The Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care has direct responsibility for Corporate Parenting, as do the wide range of roles that work directly with our children, such as: Independent Reviewing Officers, Social Workers, Participation Workers, Children’s Rights Officers, Youth Offending Workers, Personal Advisors and the Virtual School.

## 8.2 Virtual School

In Leicestershire our Virtual School is committed to creating and supporting high aspirations for our Children in Care and those leaving care. The dedication and support offered is in place to help our children achieve their best. Our children attend a range of schools both geographically and in terms of specialism, however the virtual school is central to ensuring that all of our children receive a high standard of education to enable them to successfully achieve good outcomes and successful futures. Leicestershire Virtual School are successful by working in partnership with schools and social workers towards shared visions and goals. The Virtual School support this through monitoring, supporting and challenging where necessary through the review of the Personal Education Plans (PEP) and monitoring the use of the Pupil Premium Plus. The voice of our children is fundamental to effective planning and the Virtual School is committed to ensuring that the voice of our children is not only sought but valued and incorporated into any planning.

Additionally, the Virtual School lead a broad spectrum of engagement activities and learning opportunities including but not exhaustive of the following:



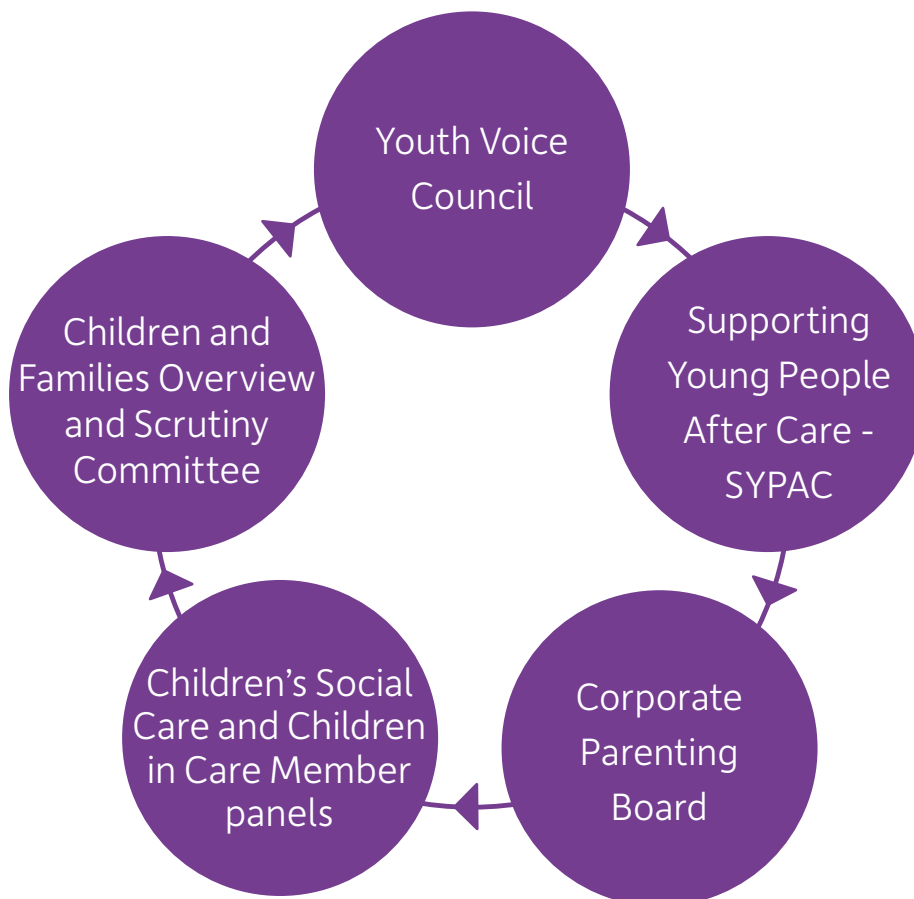
### 8.3 What else do we do to show that we care?

We are dedicated and committed to ensuring that our Children in Care and Care Leavers feel very much thought of and cared for by Leicestershire. This is achieved by not only ensuring that the 7 Corporate Parenting principles are fully embedded. But also providing a broader offer of engagement and contact that we consider essential to being good Corporate Parents.



## 9. Governance Arrangements for Corporate Parenting

Strong Corporate Parenting means strong leadership, challenge and accountability at every level. The governance arrangements that underpin our Corporate Parenting approach focus on the importance of the voice of our children and how they experience the support they receive, feel listened to and taken seriously. Our governance arrangements enable challenge and reflection on how effectively we are applying the Corporate Parenting principles and ensuring the high level of care that we strive to provide.



## 9.1 Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting Board's purpose is to ensure that the whole Council and partner agencies have a joint commitment to Corporate Parenting. The Corporate Parenting Board is held four times a year and includes a membership of children and young people, the Director and Assistant Director of Children and Family Services, elected members, professionals from a range of partner agencies including Social Care, Health, Education and Police. The board is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families and a member of the Youth Voice Council. There is strong representation from our Youth Voice Council and Supporting Young People After Care (SYPAC) groups, which enables our children to have the platform to challenge, influence and celebrate.

The aim of this is to achieve continuing improvements in the lives and outcomes for looked after children and young people and those who are Care Leavers. The Board ensures that the Council members and partner agencies fulfil their statutory duty as Corporate Parents and are held to account for identified actions from the board, in order to achieve continuing improvements in outcomes for children and young people. We want the agenda and focus to be led by the young people ensuring that clear lines of communication between young people and the board can be illustrated with clear and young person friendly feedback. In addition to the prioritisation and acting in the best interests of all our children and young people keeping them at the centre of decision making. Please see Appendix A for more detail.

## 9.2 Where you can share your voice and it be heard

In our work, your voice isn't an add on, it's central to everything we do. Your views shape every plan we create, ensuring that decisions are made with you, not for you. We place your voice at the heart of our assessments, recognising that the best outcomes come from truly listening, understanding, and acting on what matters most to you.

Leicestershire's Youth Voice Council (formally Children in Care Council) is a group of young people in care aged between 7-18 who represent children and young people in care in Leicestershire. The group acts as the voice of their peers and meet monthly to discuss and consider the issues faced by Children in Care; things that are important to them; look at ways of making a difference for Children in Care and how they can influence this locally in Leicestershire as well as nationally through such forums as the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Our Care Leavers are vital in shaping the services going forward and improve our offer to all our children.

SYPAC is the forum for our Care Leavers 18 -25 years old and offers a monthly meeting to socialise, discuss and influence decisions regarding Children in Care and Care Leavers and to highlight their views and opinions. There is also attendance from virtual school, children's rights and welfare rights to support and enhance independence skills of our Care Leavers.

Other key participation groups include our Children in Care Choir – Beacon Voices and Out in Care our support group for LGBT+ young people.

Both our Youth Voice council and SYPAC are regularly involved in decision making at various levels and bring robust challenge to hold decision makers to account both internally, regionally and nationally. Both groups have had an effective impact on the support that our children receive and decisions within Leicestershire. Some examples of these are outlined below:

| Youth Voice Council and SYPAC activities  | Impact  |
|---|---|
| Consulted and influenced the development of 'Our Promise'.  | Ensuring the vision of Leicestershire is led by the needs of our children.  |
| Development of a children and young person's version of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, in the form of a video.   | To ensure children and young people understand the principles of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and members are held accountable for their role.                        |
| Development of a Coming into Care Pack.   | To provide our children and young people with a useful information leaflet of all the key things they need to know when they come into care.                              |
| Updating the Terms of Reference and Structure for the Corporate Parenting Board.  | To ensure the children and young people who attend the board have an inclusive role in the aims and objectives, as well as the themes for meetings and delivery of these. |
| Involvement with fostering training.  | Improvement in understanding of Prospective Foster Carers of the impact of being in care. Their role in supporting this and an improved experience for our children.      |
| Creation of a Contact Expectations document to support expectations for both children and their families about the time that they will spend with each other. | Our children are able to be clear about the expectations at the beginning and there is consistency with workers in exploring different options for family time.           |
| Young person's interview panel for all relevant posts within Children and Family Services.  | Most recently direct influence on the appointment of our Director, Assistant Director and Field work Head of Service.   |
| Care Leaver Representative on Member Panel Meetings for housing and member champion meetings  | True representation of voice within member meetings, advocating for the views of our Care Leavers.  |
| Development and facilitation of our Out in Care Group by Care Leavers   | A LGBT+ support group for children and young people, where they can socialise and have themed discussions and access support services.                                    |
| Consultation in Life story Work expectations and guidance   | To ensure Life Story Work practice is underpinned by the views and experiences of our Children in Care and Care Leavers.  |

# 10.

## What success will look like

As corporate parents we need to know what success will look like to ensure that we are challenging ourselves to continually strive for the best for our children and achieve our ambitions regarding the care they receive. The table below sets out how we will measure our success in the delivery of outcomes for our looked after children and Care Leavers.

| Outcome 1<br>Improved<br>Physical Health  | Outcome 2<br>Improved<br>Mental Health  | Outcome 3<br>Placement stability<br>and safe homes  | Outcome 4<br>Attainment  | Outcome 5<br>Care Leavers  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Children will:</b></p> <p>Have improved timeliness of Health Assessments</p> <p>Be registered with a GP</p> <p>Be registered with a dentist</p> <p>Be up to date with all their immunisations</p> <p>Have improved timeliness of Health Assessments</p> | <p><b>Children will:</b></p> <p>Be supported through evidence-based interventions to maximise their emotional and mental well being</p> <p>Have improved Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire results.</p> <p>Be referred to specialise mental health services and receive treatment in a timely manner where appropriate</p> <p>Benefit from joined up multi agency working to drive relationship-based approaches</p> | <p><b>We will:</b></p> <p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within 20 miles of their home address</p> <p>Where appropriate seek to place children and young people within long term, in house provision</p> <p>Ensure children have improved placement stability</p> <p>Our discharge planning will secure improved outcomes for Care Leavers</p> <p>Make timely decisions regarding permanence and the use of SGO's and Child Arrangement Order to be used where appropriate</p> <p>To support children in care to reunify back into the care of birth parents or wider family where this is safe and in child's best interests.</p> | <p><b>Children will:</b></p> <p>Be supported to achieve their full potential</p> <p>Have a Personal education plan which will be aspirational and ambitious</p> <p>Have their progress at school monitored and every child will receive tailored support from a specialist advisor</p> | <p><b>We will:</b></p> <p>Support Care Leavers to find safe, stable and suitable places to live, making sure they are as well prepared as they can be</p> <p>Will give opportunities to keep in touch with them until they are 25 and have high aspirations for them</p> <p>Support Care Leavers to remain with their longterm foster families after they have left the care of Leicestershire if that is in the best interests of the young person</p> <p>Support Care Leavers to become independent adults by helping to secure high quality education, training or employment opportunities</p> |
| <b>Best possible outcome for our children</b>   |   |   |  |  |

# Appendix A

## Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference

The Corporate Parenting Board will be held four times a year and will include a membership of children and young people, the Director and Assistant Director of Children and Family Services, elected members, professionals from a range of partner agencies including Social Care, Health, Education and Police. The board will be co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families and a member of the Youth Voice Council representative.

### What we want to achieve:

- To ensure that the Council members and partner agencies fulfil their statutory duty as Corporate Parents and are held to account for identified actions from the board, in order to achieve continuing improvements in outcomes for children and young people.
- To prioritise and act in the best interests of all our children and young people keeping them at the centre of decision making.

### How we will do this:

- Ensure that the Corporate Parenting role is understood and fulfilled by all elected members and senior officers working across all directorates in the Council and by our partners.
- Listening to the voice of Children in Care and Care Leavers by meeting and talking with them and acting upon their expressed views, ensuring they are able to participate in decisions about their care and the shaping of future services.
- Monitoring and overseeing plans, strategies, or policies for looked after children, young people, and Care Leavers to ensure performance is maintained.
- Members of the Board meeting being accountable for and championing the Leicestershire Children in Care Pledge and Promise.
- Members of the Board meeting being accountable for identified actions, completing these in a timely way and providing feedback to the children and young people via the Children in Care Council, SYPAC or the Board meeting.
- Members of the Board taking issues raised forward with Senior Officers, partner agencies and those whom all have a responsibility to the role of Corporate Parenting.
- To promote and advocate for the views of all our children and young people to ensure their views are represented within the Board.
- Board members to work collectively with the children and young people members to develop a range of strategies seeking to engage our harder to reach and underrepresented group of children and young people in care.
- Monitoring and reviewing key performance data which is specific to the discussions taking place, to review the impact for our children and young people in achieving their outcomes.



## Membership:

- Lead Member for Children and Families (co-chair)
- Representative from Youth Voice Council (co-chair) to be agreed at the Youth Voice Council.
- Children in Care nominated by the Children in Care Council
- Director of Children and Family Services
- Cross party Elected members nominated by the Party Groups
- Children and Family Services Lead Officers: Assistant Director Children Social Care and Targeted Early Help, Head of Service Children in Care, Fostering, Adoption and the Virtual School, Head of Service Safeguarding, Improvement and Quality Assurance, Service Manager Fostering and Adoption, Service Manager Children in Care, Service Manager Safeguarding and Performance Service, Service Manager Youth Offending Service, Service Manager for Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Virtual School Head
- Representative from Public Health
- Divisional Director of Families Children and Young People (FYPC) LPT.
- Designated Nurse for Looked after Children from CCG and LPT representative
- Assistant Chief Constable or Police Superintendent with lead for Safeguarding
- District Council representative e.g.: Housing
- Adults & Communities Lead Officer
- LSCB Chair
- Employment and Training Lead
- Voluntary sector and charity sector representatives who are identified as playing a role within the Board meeting.

If the nominated representative is unable to attend the Board meeting, it is an expectation that they send apologies, including an updated report which can be shared, or ensure a colleague attends on their behalf.

If it is identified that members are routinely not attending the meeting, the Service Manager for Safeguarding and Performance will follow this up, to remind members of their roles and responsibilities as well as commitment to the Board as a Corporate Parent.

## Plan for Board meeting structure:

The primary venue will be County Hall committee rooms, however, if virtual meetings are required these will be facilitated via Microsoft Teams.



## Standing agenda items:

- Introductions and Apologies
- Accuracy of last minutes
- Review of previous actions
- Assistant Director update
- Youth Voice Council update
- SYPAC update
- Health data summary
- Education data summary

## Respect and Expectations Statement

- We will arrive at meetings on time and not leave early unless previously agreed.
- Other than for an emergency, all mobile devices will be switched off. They will only be looked at and any phone calls made during breaks.
- Laptops will only be used in meetings for reference by the person giving a presentation and NOT to reply to emails etc.
- All staff will ensure they use young people friendly language.
- Our meetings will be led by the Chair & Co-Chair. All questions, comments and discussion will be directed by them. They will ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak and make a positive contribution.
- Discussion and collective decision making can sometimes prove challenging. We will ensure all points of view are valued, listened too, and debated respectfully.
- Challenge and debate will always be directed at the point and not the person.
- Each agenda item will have an agreed time allocation and meetings will strictly run to time.
- All young people and staff will attend meetings with an open mind and ensure they are committed to making a full and positive contribution.
- Our meetings must be prioritised but if we can't attend, we will always send apologies and try to send someone in our place.

**If the meeting is held virtually or as a hybrid meeting, it is expected all members will have their cameras on and will keep their microphone on mute, unless they are speaking, using the hand icon when you wish to speak.**



