

# Corporate Parenting

Peer Support Programme  
Module two – development session

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# Corporate Parenting Peer Diagnostic

- This diagnostic is part of a wider package of support to develop the effectiveness of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- The package includes:
  - peer interviews with key officers and councillors to understand the approach to corporate parenting
  - a Corporate Parenting Board observation
  - development of key areas and aspects for improvement
  - a bespoke development programme for the corporate parenting board.
- Peer Team
  - Councillor Anntoinette Bramble, Hackney Council
  - Su Turner, CEO, Shaping Governance
  - Supported by Helen Donelan-Bell, LGA

# Our Observations

## Strengths

- There is a commitment across the council to corporate parenting, and an increased understanding of what this means by those not working in children's services;
- There is a strong culture of focusing on the child, and the Corporate Parenting Board is keen to examine ways to effectively engage with children in care and care leavers;
- Recent interventions have seen improvements to services for children in care and care leavers;
- The Corporate Parenting Board meets six times per year and members are committed to attending and asking questions;
- Some key partner organisations are now attending the Corporate Parenting Board meetings routinely.

# Our Observations

## Areas for development

- **Whilst there is commitment to children in care and care leavers – there was no clear single vision or aspiration.**
- The Corporate Parenting Board **meets in public**; which is quite unusual. This can stifle board discussions and deeper conversations.
- Improvements to services for children in care and care leavers had been made, but it felt that these had been undertaken in silos. The Corporate Parenting Board could **act as the bridge to improve and connect services**;
- **The Corporate Parenting Board appears to operate as a scrutiny committee**, and whilst key members champion the needs of children in care, **this leadership dynamic could be enhanced.**
- **Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board is unclear, as to are partners roles**
- Meetings are dominated by lengthy reports and from presentations from officers.
- **Better ways to hear the voices of children in care and care leavers**

# Programme structure

## Module 1

### Overview of Corporate Parenting

Roles, Responsibilities and framework for effective corporate parenting

## Module 2

### Taking it to the next level

- 1) Leadership, Partnership and Aspirations
- 2) Scrutiny
- 3) Engagement – children and partners

# Corporate Parenting

Recap from module one

# What is a Corporate Parent?

“a shared responsibility with all officers and members of the local authority to act as effective and caring corporate parents for looked-after children, with key roles in improving their educational attainment, providing stable and high quality placements and proper planning for when they leave care”

DfE 2013, Director and Lead Member for Children’s Services – Roles and Responsibilities

# Corporate Parenting Principles

The Children and Social Work Act 2017...explains this further with 7 Corporate Parenting Principles

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

# Who is a Corporate Parent within the council?

- **Specialist:** Lead Members and Directors of Children's Services
- **Targeted:** Corporate Parenting Boards and Scrutiny Committees have additional responsibilities
- **Universal:** Every councillor and officer of the local authority



# Targeted roles...



## Cabinet and Executive Councillors

Executive councillors key decision makers for council and community



## Corporate Parenting Board

Champion the corporate parenting role across the authority and partners



## Scrutiny Councillors and Committees

Champion the corporate parenting role across the authority and partners



## Management Team and Senior Officers

Sets the tone of how directorates view the importance of Corporate Parenting



## Partners

Children Act 2004, Councils have a duty to promote 'cooperation' between 'relevant partners', such as Police, the NHS and Education Providers

## Corporate Parenting

Taking it to the next level!

# Ofsted Expectations

- Leaders to take corporate parenting very seriously and be highly ambitious for children in care and care leavers.
  - Senior leaders to have a clear and transformative vision of services to sustainably improve the lives of vulnerable children.
  - Senior leaders to implement a clear and ambitious vision for all children in care & Care leavers.
  - Children to be cared for, and cared about.
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# Good Corporate Parents

Ofsted found that where services were considered good or better, the Corporate Parenting Board:

- *Demonstrated a strong cross-party commitment to children in care, by championing their rights, having high aspirations for their achievement, monitoring children's progress and challenging outcomes;*
  - *Clearly understood its role and the responsibilities of the council and partners towards children in care, and planned for and prioritised their needs, resulting in a greater focus on improving outcomes;*
  - *Actively engaged with their young people, for example, through the children in care council, and have effective and regular links with senior management and councillors*
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# Case Study One – Telford and Wrekin

“Corporate parenting is exceptionally strong. Children are cared for, and they are cared about...”

- Moved from RI to Outstanding in 2020 – confirmed in 2022
- Clear strategy and articulation of vision
- Strategy built as their promise to children – with the audience being the children based on a you said we will approach
- Each priority (7): you said, we will, how will we know we have made a difference
- CP Strategic Group involving partners
- CP Children’s Panel – co-ordinated by the children in care council and care leavers forum – run as a CPB meeting – with adults being called in

<https://democracy.telford.gov.uk/documents/s14336/Appendix%20A%20for%20Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy%202022-2025.pdf>

# Case Study two – Leeds

“There are two vocal, inclusive and influential groups for children in care and care leavers. Young people in these groups have a strong sense of responsibility about what they do, with a clear agenda and workplan. Young people told inspectors that they feel valued, listened to and respected by senior leaders.”

- Continued to be Outstanding in 2022
- Clear vision and how they will achieve their ambition
- Asking would it be good enough for my child
- Series of promises to children that they monitor
- CPB is the strategic partnership to drive arrangements – elected members, key service leaders, and partners
- Children supported to be board members for three evening meetings
- Annual takeover day
- Operational delivery through CP operational Group
- Training provided to all – council staff, councillors and across the partnership

# Common factors for excellence

Clear partnership vision that all are signed up to

Delivery Strategy built on promises to children – which is monitored

Strategic CPB – members, senior level officers and partners

Operation delivery – officers from across partnership

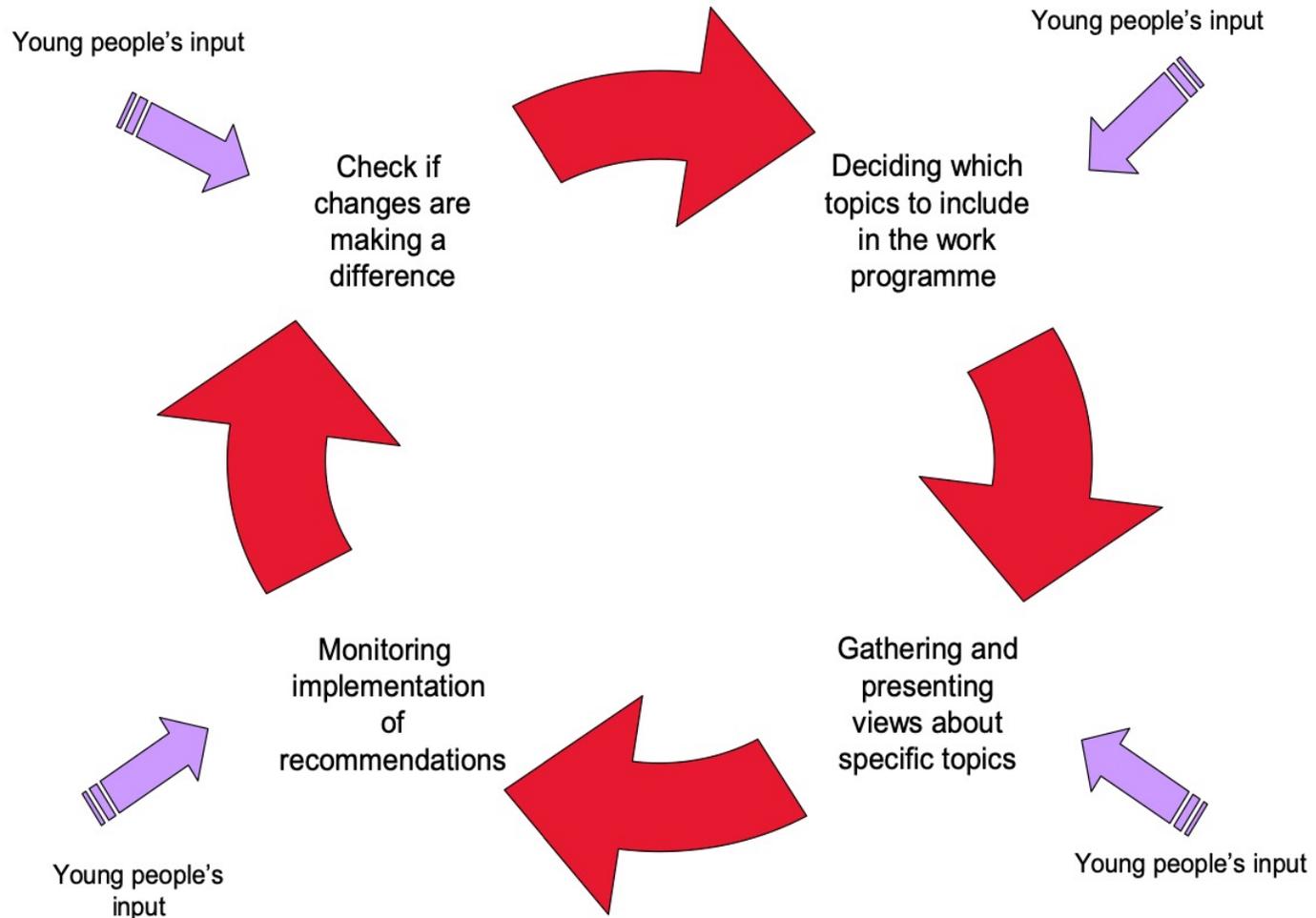
Meaningful ways to work with children in care and care leavers

## Corporate Parenting

Mini-Module:

Rooting the voice of children in care and care leavers  
in your board discussions

# Where the voice of children in Care and Care Leavers can come in



# Ways for the board to work with CYP

- Using the voice of children in care, care leavers and carers is valuable; but you don't have to set up special channels - much exists:
  - **Indirect engagement and listening**
    - Seeking voice through existing mechanisms that the council has, including participation officers and the Children in Care Council
    - Have your say Survey feedback
  - **Working with partners and specialists**
    - Your front line staff
    - CAMHs and CAFCASS
    - Schools
  - **Recruit young mentors or young researchers (scrutiny examples)**
    - Oldham, young people engaged their peers to talk about mental health
    - Doncaster – participation champions
    - Gloucestershire – care leavers co-design work
  - **Use technology and social media**
  - **Informal opportunities such as celebration events**

# Child-centred corporate parenting

**We have heard that outstanding approaches to being corporate parents include an active two-way relationship with the Children in Care Council**

*The Children in Care Council provides some children and care leavers with an opportunity to share their views on services they receive. However, the council is underdeveloped, with only nine children attending regularly. This limits the capacity for children and young people to influence service development and co-production in Nottingham city*

*Ofsted July 2022*

- *Themed Meetings – focusing on key areas at each meeting*
  - *Link Champions – councillors – meet with CYP on their theme*
  - *CYP Take-over day; CYP supported to attend CPB meetings*
  - *Dedicated CP Children's Panel*
  - *You said, we did approach*
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## Discussion

- How do you currently work with the Children in care council
  - How could you improve this?
  - How do you know you are delivering your promises?
  - How does the Corporate Parenting Board hear the views and wishes of CYP?
  - How does the Corporate Parenting Board use this to plan its work strategically?
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### **Embedding Voice**

- Map out existing channels across the partners to understand how voice of CiC and CL is captured;
- Understand how these can be used by the CPB – or where there are gaps that need filling;
- Utilise the ½ termly events as a mechanism for voice –themed meetings and assigning Link Champion Councillor to each theme.
- Build a normal cycle of Link Champion attending ½ termly events to gather voice and use in CPB meetings
- Participants were keen ensuring naturalistic and fun opportunities

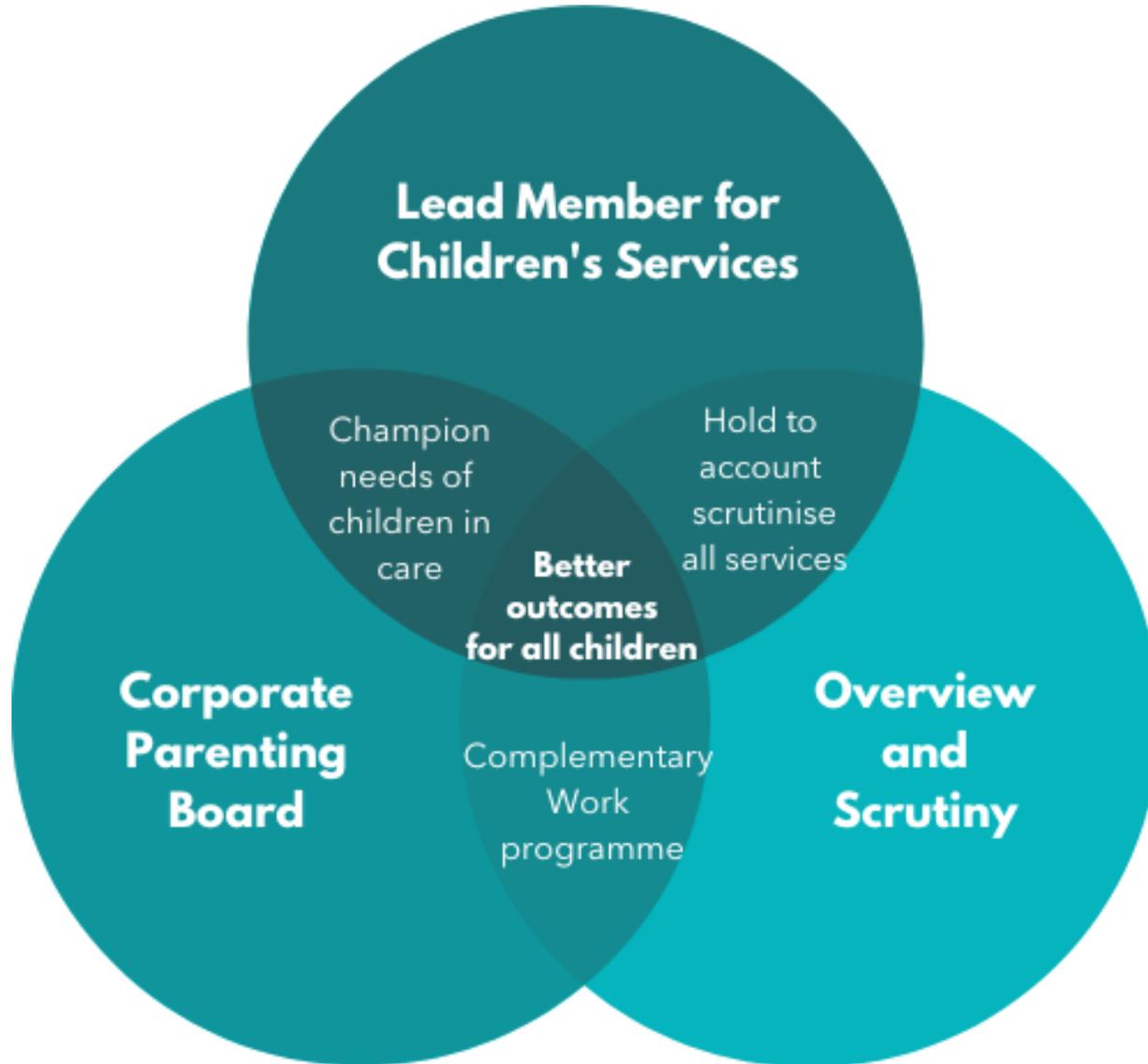
### **Reports**

- Develop child-friendly reports that are easier to understand. Possibly use Link Champion to see if what is contained in the reports actually happens / is correct.
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# Corporate Parenting

Mini-Module:  
Scrutiny 'S & s'

# Simple snapshot of governance



# Corporate Parent Board - role

- Provides the strategic leadership that drives an ambitious and multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for CiC and CL.
- Champions the role of the Corporate Parent – to all councillors, officers and partners.
- Works as a board to overcome any barriers to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- Understands the needs of children in care and care leavers, and
  - Produces a strategy for the improvements needed;
  - Develops a ‘pledge or promise’ detailing how they will care for and care about them.
  - Monitors how well the strategy is being implemented and how well services perform

**Principle role is leadership**

# Children's overview and scrutiny - role

- Has a vital role in the wider governance system that holds the authority's decision-makers to account.
- Influences policies and decisions made by the council and partners involved in delivering public services
- Gathers evidence and uses the insight on issues affecting local people and make recommendations based on this.
- Adds value and makes a positive contribution to the lives of children and local people.
- Acts as a 'critical friend' in assuring the Council and their partners execute their duties effectively.

**Principle power is influence**

# Main differences

## Scrutiny

Holding the Cabinet to account



Policy development and review



Challenging and improving performance – big S



Supporting the achievement of value for money



Ensuring the council is child focused and doing its best for all children



A public meeting



## Corporate Parent Board

Leadership and overcoming barriers

Developing strategy with partners to improve services

Challenging and improving performance – small s

Ensuring services are efficient and effective for CiC and CL

Acting as parents for CiC & CL championing and supporting

Not (usually) public

**Joint planning adds value**

# Corporate Parenting and Scrutiny

There are benefits to working more collaboratively with overview and scrutiny:

How do you currently work with scrutiny to:

- Plan your work programme?
- Ensure no gaps in oversight?
- Use the right tool (OSC or CPB) to get the right impact?

## Briefly discuss:

**How can you take your work with scrutiny to the next level?**

**Public vs non public meetings – which is best for you?**

# Mini-module: Scrutiny and Corporate parenting

## Participant discussions and recommendations

### **Clarity of role:**

- Clarify the different roles that Scrutiny and CPB play – emphasising the leadership role of CPB;
- Change constitution to non-public meetings for the CPB;
- Routinely plan your work programme with scrutiny to understand which tool – Scrutiny or CPB is best to receive information;
- Remember - CPB role is to overcome barriers and improve!

### **Terms of reference**

- Create a terms of reference that details clearly the role that members of the CPB has and how this is different from scrutiny.
  - Use this to ensure that all councillors and officers understand the role of a corporate parent.
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## Corporate Parenting

Mini-Module:

Leadership, partnership and Aspiration

# The two sides of leadership

Leading and  
developing a Strong  
Corporate Parenting  
Ethos

Demonstrating  
strong leadership to  
children in care and  
care leavers

# Leading and developing a Strong Corporate Parenting Ethos

The Corporate Parenting Board is the vehicle to provide leadership and brings together partners to:

- Provides the leadership that drives an ambitious and multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- Oversees completion of actions identified within the CPB strategy
- Promotes the pledge / promises in a meaningful way
- Champions the role of the corporate parent - encouraging all councillors

## Briefly discuss:

**What is your shared vision for children in care and care leavers?**

**What are your promises and how do you monitor them?**

**How can you take your leadership and partnership to the next level?**



# LGA Training and resources



## Courses

- Leadership Essentials 2 day courses for councillors providing learning and networking opportunities on specific themes, including Scrutiny and Children's Services <https://local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/leadership-essentials>
- E-Learning – coming soon



## Resources

- Corporate Parenting Resource Pack
- Your first ten days as a lead member for children's services  
*Includes a glossary of key terms.*
- LG Inform: benchmarking and data reports generated for your area
- Must Know for Lead Members of Children's Services
- LGA Children and young people policy pages



## Peer mentoring

- Peer mentoring for CPB Chairs from an experienced children's services lead member or scrutiny chair.