

**What Makes The Difference?
TOOLS and RESOURCES**

NAME OF TOOL/RESOURCE:

Portsmouth City Council Corporate Parent Strategy 2006-2009

NAME AND REGION OF AGENCY/ORGANISATION THAT DEVELOPED THIS TOOL/RESOURCE:

Portsmouth City Council – South East.

Purpose and brief description of tool/resource:

Outline of council's objectives for service provision to children and young people in care. Contents include:

- Introduction
- Key documents, Purpose, Target audience, Values and Principles.
- Objectives and performance indicators: To seek the best possible outcomes for looked after children and young people; To value and celebrate the diversity of the children and young people and listen to their views; To support and strengthen areas of good practice in corporate parenting; To improve and encourage better communication between corporate parents from all agencies.
- Governance arrangements: consultation; monitoring and evaluation; communication

Publication Date: 2005

Contact details for further information about this tool/resource

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Evidence for the effectiveness/ impact of this tool/resource

Positive impact of this tool/resource:

1. Unknown
- 2.
- 3.



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

With support and commitment from:

Connexions
Portsmouth City Teaching Primary Care Trust

INTRODUCTION

CORPORATE PARENTING

'Corporate Parenting' is the term used to describe the responsibility of local authorities, alongside their partner agencies, to provide the best possible services and support to looked after children and young people.

A child or young person is classed as being looked after when they are either:

1. Subject to a full or interim Care Order, where the local authority shares parental responsibility with the child or young person's parent/s

OR

2. Provided with accommodation on a voluntary basis where the parent or caregiver retains parental responsibility, but recognises that they need support to achieve the best outcomes for the child or young person.

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as being aged 0-18 years, but the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 extends the local authorities responsibilities to care leavers up to the age of 21, or 24 if they are in full-time education.

To be a good Corporate Parent we must ensure that we are meeting all of the statutory duties and responsibilities that we have within our own organisations towards looked after children and young people.

But it is also much bigger than this.....

It is asking ourselves whether, through our every day business and roles, we are best serving the needs of looked after children and young people in Portsmouth, and whether the services and support available to them would be...

'....right / good enough for my own child?'

The central principle of corporate parenting is that each employee and elected member within the local authority, along with its partner agencies, should seek to parent the children in their care as they would their own child or children.

Although the statutory responsibilities to looked after children are primarily discharged by Children's Social Care, corporate parenting is the responsibility of every Directorate within Portsmouth City Council (PCC), and all partner agencies. We must all assume our role as Corporate Parents, in order to provide for, and care for our children in the most effective way possible.

OUR CORPORATE CHILDREN

There are approximately 280 children and young people looked after by Portsmouth at any one time, for whom we are the Corporate Parents. The average age of our children is 10.2 years, and there are roughly the same number of girls as boys. They may live with foster carers, with close friends or family, in a residential care home, or even at home with their parents in some cases.

There are also approximately 100 care leavers for whom we retain a level of responsibility until the age of 21, or 24 if they are in full-time education.

If you want more detailed information about our corporate children, or information about how they, as a group, are doing at school, how healthy they are, how stable their care placements are, and other information, it is available on request from the Local Authority.

KEY DOCUMENTS UNDERPINNING THIS STRATEGY

- **The 2005-2008 Children and Young People's Plan** - priority 9
 - This plan is a statutory document, required by Government, which in Portsmouth outlines 13 priorities for action across services for children and young people in the city
 - Priority 9 is specifically around improving outcomes for looked after children and young people
- **The 2005-2008 Portsmouth City Council Corporate Plan**
 - This plan is a statutory document outlining Portsmouth City Council's priorities.
- **The Green Report** – Corporate Parenting Report Card
 - This is a report which is produced annually and presents data about children and young people who have been looked after for over a year

The Corporate Parenting Strategy complements and supports the Children and Young People's Plan and the Corporate Plan.

PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

The purpose of this strategy is to outline a council-wide vision of our role as Corporate Parents, and to ensure that we are all – supported by our partner agencies - working towards common goals and ambitions for our children.

This strategy spans the period from 2006 – 2009, and it is supported by an action-planning and delivery framework. Both documents will be available on the Corporate Parenting page of the PCC Intranet.

Although this strategy complements and supports other planning mechanisms in the city, it differs in that it outlines what we are doing specifically to support looked after children and young people, and ways to monitor how well we are doing it.

This strategy, and the principles it outlines, is a performance indicator for organisations, services, elected members and individual professionals across the city. We should all be able to demonstrate how we are working towards achieving its vision.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This version of the strategy is for professionals and elected members from all organisations across the city, and an executive summary will also be made available on request from the Corporate Parenting Officer.

A young person friendly version of the strategy will be written in consultation with looked after children and young people. This will outline what they can expect from us as their

Corporate Parents, and will also provide them with a further mechanism for feeding back their views about how, and what we are doing for them.

STRATEGY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

OVERALL AIM

To become a city in which, through the efforts of each and every Corporate Parent, all looked after children and young people are supported and encouraged to achieve the Portsmouth 8 outcomes.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Portsmouth, through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, and in consultation with the community and partner agencies, shares a vision for all children and young people living in the city. The 'Portsmouth 8' are outcomes that we would like to see for all children, and through this strategy we aim to ensure that looked after children and young people have the same chances as their peers to grow up. These outcomes are listed below, and are all directly linked to the Every Child Matters 5 Outcomes.

- Having the right to an active say in any development
- Healthy
- Emotionally secure and confident
- Having succeeded as far as they can at school
- Having facilities and opportunities to play safely
- Having stayed out of trouble
- Living in a safe place
- Having the opportunities to succeed in achieving their dreams

We recognise that looked after children and young people often start from a position of vulnerability and disadvantage that may mean they need more help and support to achieve these outcomes than their peers.

It is also important for us to remember that looked after children and young people are not one homogenous group, and that we must recognise, understand and react to the diverse and varying levels of needs that they have.

This strategy recognises that prevention is vital and that we should, where possible, ensure that children in need are supported to remain within the care of their own families and communities, and that children only become looked after in order to safeguard and promote their welfare.

OBJECTIVES

1. To seek the best possible outcomes for looked after children and young people and improve all key performance indicators relating to them. (Link to objective 4)
2. To value and celebrate the diversity of the children and young people we care for, and to ensure that, as Corporate Parents, we listen to their views.
3. To support and strengthen areas of good practice in corporate parenting, and to develop and promote new commitment to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people.
4. To improve communication of our role as Corporate Parents, and encourage better communication between Corporate Parents from all agencies.

OBJECTIVE 1

<p>To seek the best possible outcomes for looked after children and young people and improve all key performance indicators relating to them. (Link to objective 4)</p>	<p>Performance Indicators</p>
<p>Ensure that all statutory duties towards looked after children and young people are carried out in full by organisations.</p>	<p>CYPP performance indicators – Priorities 7 & 9</p>
<p>Improve support to carers.</p>	<p>Corporate Plan priorities 2 & 12</p>
<p>Ensure looked after children and young people, and their carers, have access to the full range of opportunities and services available to them.</p>	<p>Green Report outcomes</p>
<p>Ensure looked after young people and care leavers are prepared for, and supported in their transition to adulthood and independent living.</p>	<p>Number of carers attending training or other support sessions.</p> <p>Satisfaction survey of carers annually.</p>

OBJECTIVE 2

<p>To value and celebrate the diversity of the children and young people we care for, and to ensure that, as Corporate Parents, we listen to their views.</p>	<p>Performance Indicators</p>
<p>Further develop various planning tools, and mechanisms for looked after children and young people to engage with these.</p>	<p>Number of children and young people contributing to their reviews.</p>
<p>Celebrate and reward the successes and achievements of looked after children and young people, and their carers.</p>	<p>Number of young people rewarded for achievements.</p>
<p>Ensure appropriate and varied consultation and feedback mechanisms are in place for all looked after children and young people.</p>	<p>Number of young people taking part in consultation exercises across a variety of forums.</p>
<p>To understand and be able to respond to the diverse needs of discrete groups within the looked after population.</p>	<p>The production of a profile of need for discrete groups.</p>

OBJECTIVE 3

<p>To support and strengthen areas of good practice in corporate parenting, and to develop and promote our commitment to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people.</p>	<p>Performance Indicators</p>
<p>Ensure achievement against the action-planning and delivery framework of the strategy, and monitor contributions from all PCC directorates and partner agencies.</p>	<p>Range of organisations/ departments contributing to the strategy.</p>
<p>Ensure sufficient resources are available to meet the strategy objectives</p>	<p>Amount of unidentified funds needed to meet the strategy's requirements.</p>
<p>Initiate and maintain appropriate strategic governance arrangements</p>	<p>Number of meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.</p>
<p>Promote corporate parenting responsibilities through formal planning arrangements in every service and organisation</p>	<p>Number of high-level business plans NOT mentioning Corporate Parenting.</p>

OBJECTIVE 4

<p>To improve communication of our role as Corporate Parents, and encourage better communication between Corporate Parents from all agencies.</p>	<p>Performance Indicators</p>
<p>Promote and facilitate a greater understanding of roles and responsibilities between professionals.</p>	<p>Training uptake of various professional groups.</p>
<p>To work alongside all partner agencies to develop our own activities designed to compliment and enhance their services to promote the best possible outcomes for looked after children and young people.</p>	<p>All PCC staff informed of their corporate parenting role as part of their induction.</p>
<p>Ensure communication of our role and the strategy to different stakeholders, and in a variety of formats</p>	<p>Improvement in health indicators for looked after children.</p>

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

CONSULTATION

The draft strategy was considered by a variety of people and organisations:

- Children, Families and Learning Directorate Management Team within PCC
- Strategic Directors Board
- Children & Young People's Services briefing in PCC, chaired by the Executive Member
- Head teachers across the Primary, Secondary and Special school phases
- Associate Director for Children & Families at Portsmouth City PCT
- Connexions Manager – Portsmouth

The Elected Members of PCC will have approved the final strategy.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The performance of the strategy will be evaluated by the Corporate Parenting Officer, and reported to the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children and Young People's Executive on a bi-annual basis. The evaluation will be based on the performance indicators against each objective.

This board will consist of senior level managers from every directorate within PCC, Portsmouth City PCT, Connexions, and schools. It will be chaired by the Executive Member for Children and Young Peoples Services within PCC. Feedback on our performance will also be sought from looked after children and young people, and their carers.

The more general performance of the looked after population can be accessed through the Green Report or the Children & Young People's Plan.

COMMUNICATION

The communication of this strategy will be carried out in line with the actions relating to Objective 4 of this strategy.

There will also be a young person friendly version of the strategy developed alongside young people, and both versions will be available on-line via the Portsmouth City Council website.