

Meeting of:	CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING
Date of Meeting:	1 FEBRUARY 2024
Report Title:	CORPORATE PARENTING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	STEVE BERRY CORPORATE PARENTING & PARTICIPATION OFFICER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There are no implications for the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	An update report to inform Cabinet Committee of progress in relation to the Corporate Parenting activity. Particular points to note are the First Year Overview Report of Specialist Participation Service and the request for Cabinet Committee to make the pledge to sign up to the All-Wales Corporate Parenting Charter on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting with an update on the development of Corporate Parenting in Bridgend and to request that the Cabinet Committee sign up to the All-Wales Corporate Parenting Charter.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting has received an update report on Corporate Parenting Development at each meeting since the commencement of the Corporate Parenting & Participation post. Each of the reports have provided progress on the following areas:

- Establishing a shared vision for Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.
- Establishing a governance structure that supports the strategic and operational approach to Corporate Parenting.
- Establishing a Corporate Parenting Performance Framework.
- Establishing care experienced forums to provide our children and young people with a collective voice.

2.2 It is proposed that update reports on these areas will continue to be presented to the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting until these areas have been fully established.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Establishing a shared vision for Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

- 3.1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board's sixth meeting took place on 16th November 2023. The Board received several presentations for Board members to consider their Corporate Parenting responsibilities as single agencies and as a collective body.
- 3.1.2 One of the main aspirations of the Board is to have member agencies working to an agreed set of commitment and principles. On a local level, Board members have made a shared commitment through the Bridgend Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- 3.1.3 The work of Bridgend Corporate Parenting Board, especially in relation to meaningful involvement of care experienced children and young people to inform strategy, has been recognised by Welsh Government.
- 3.1.4 Welsh Government have also taken the approach of seeking 'commitment' from those responsible for care experienced children and young people by publishing "Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales A Shared Parenting Pledge" (**Appendix 1**). The pledge document is underpinned by a list of principles published within "Corporate Parenting Charter – A promise for Wales – What does that mean for you" (**Appendix 2**). This provides agencies with a point of reference for a shared understanding and expectation for parenting our care experienced population. It must be noted that the Charter embraces a manner of working and there is no specific expectation for a change or demand in resources or financial implications.
- 3.1.5 At the last Corporate Parenting Board meeting it was proposed that member agency representatives would seek the commitment and approval of their respective agency leaders to sign up to the 'Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise for Wales'.
- 3.1.6 It must be noted that Board members stated an ambition for all Bridgend Corporate Parenting Board member agencies to be signed up to the pledge by 1st April 2024 as this would maintain the positive momentum of the commitment to the children and young people they are individually and collectively responsible for.
- 3.1.7 As lead examples of the Board, both Awen Cultural Trust and Bridgend College have already signed up to the pledge. Bridgend have promoted their commitment to our children and young people on their webpages and social media:
<https://www.bridgend.ac.uk/bridgend-college-signs-corporate-parenting-charter/>
- 3.1.8 By signing up to the Charter, Bridgend County Borough Council pledge the following to our care experienced children and young people:
- "We recognise our part as a parent in the largest family in Wales!
 - We fully support the principles set out in this Charter and will live up to the common behaviours.

- We will ensure everything we undertake for care-experienced children and young people is underpinned by empowerment, equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability and protection and fully respects, protects and promotes your human rights under the UNCRC.
- We will engage with children and young people to measure our success and commitment to the charter.
- We will work to deliver a better offer of help for you and all care-experienced children and young people in order for you to thrive and reach your potential.
- Help you gain access to and make the best use of our services.
- Act in your best interests and make you feel secure and well in our relationship with you.
- Encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings and, where needed, provide you with support to promote these.
- Ensure your voice is heard and actively considered in all decisions about you and explain why decisions have been made.
- Provide you with information and resources that you need, in a way you understand.
- Make sure we are accountable to you for the decisions we take and the outcomes that affect your life.
- Help you to reach your potential.
- Prepare you for leaving care and support you to thrive independently.
- Ensure all staff are made aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities during their induction.” – *[Welsh Government 2023]*

3.1.9. Therefore, it is requested that, as lead agency for the Bridgend Corporate Parenting Board, the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting agree on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council to sign up to the ‘Corporate Parenting Charter – A promise for Wales A Shared Parenting Pledge’

3.2. Establishing a governance structure that supports the strategic and operational approach to Corporate Parenting

3.2.1 Board member agencies are currently working on their own Individual Corporate Parenting Action Plan under the agreed aims directly relating to the priorities of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

3.2.2 It has been agreed that once the individual Corporate Parenting Action Plans are completed a master action plan will be pulled together for agreement. The master action plan will be monitored and reviewed on regular basis by the Board.

3.3. Establishing a Corporate Parenting Performance Framework

3.3.1 As part of producing individual action plans, Board member agencies have been invited to consider information to evidence progress and performance on parenting responsibilities.

3.3.2 The performance data from all agencies will be discussed at the March 2024 meeting to agree a dataset for the following financial year.

3.4. Establishing care experienced forums to provide our children and young people with a collective voice

3.4.1 The Specialist Participation Service, contracted to TGP Cymru, has produced an overview report for their first year of contract, **Appendix 3**. This is being provided as information to enable Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee to be aware of the work undertaken.

3.4.2 The overview report highlights the engagement of children and young people, objectives of the Participation Service and the Youth Forum it supports along with activities and achievements of the Bridgend Youth Forum facilitated by TGP Cymru.

3.4.3 Whilst there are a range of activities undertaken and projects underway, the greatest achievement for the Participation Service and the Youth Forum has been their instrumental involvement in the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the launch of the strategy.

3.4.4 The report provides an insight into how our young people have felt about being involved in the forum:

- “We are the experts and the ones in care or leaving care so should be fully involved.”
- “I feel we are taken seriously and not just a tick box”.
- “Other young people coming into care will be happy and reassured I think that children and young people have been fully involved and not just the adults sorting this stuff out”.

3.4.5 It must be noted that the Participation Service and the Youth Forum have recently been involved in a national campaign in partnership with Foster Wales to dispel misconceptions about young people in care. With the aid of former Welsh Children’s Poet Laureate a mural has been produced in Brackla, Bridgend. The campaign has been covered on the Foster Wales website:

<https://bridgend.fosterwales.gov.wales/teens-in-care>

4. **Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, or socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. **Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 Long term – the establishment of the Corporate Parenting Board will address how agencies can address their responsibilities for Corporate Parenting in a strategic manner to make robust plans for the future.

5.2 Prevention – the proposals that have been made mean that the responsibilities we all have for Corporate Parenting are identified and established into what we need to

report on. Measuring and reporting on these responsibilities through the Corporate Parenting Board will enable us to take early action on any issues identified.

- 5.3 Integration – the Corporate Parenting Board has a multi-agency membership, along with an extended multi-agency membership through its 5 sub-groups. This membership is intended to provide sufficient representation to cover who has specific responsibilities for our children and young people in particular circumstances. The purpose of the next Board meeting and the sub-group meetings being held in this quarter, is to identify where professionals and agencies need to work together in the future to forge a coherent approach to the care of our children and young people.
- 5.4 Collaboration – the success and effectiveness of our Corporate Parenting in Bridgend is dependent on how well agencies work together to achieve shared goals and aspirations for our children and young people. These goals and aspirations are cited within the ‘Bridgend Corporate Parenting Strategy – Our plan for you....’
- 5.5 Involvement – due consideration has been given to how different ‘providers of care’ are involved in the proposals around Corporate Parenting. Specific attention and proposals are given to enabling the voice and lived experience of our children and young people.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There is no direct impact on Climate Change through the implementation of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 All safeguarding implications have been fully considered within Corporate Parenting development. No safeguarding issues were raised within the work cited in this report.
- 7.2 The subject matter of this entire report relates directly to corporate parenting and any implications are discussed within it.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Corporate Parenting development does not have a specific allocated budget. Where costs have arisen to support participation of children and young people, engagement, meetings and training of professionals the costs have been met from within the Children’s Services core budget.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting, on behalf of Bridgend County Borough Council, sign up to the ‘Corporate Parenting Charter – A promise for Wales A Shared Parenting Pledge’.

- 9.2 It is also recommended that Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting notes the progress made by the Specialist Participation Service that supports our care experienced Youth Forum as identified within this report.

Background documents

None