



Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel (2024-2027)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 For the purposes of the Constitution, the Corporate Parenting Panel acts as a regulatory body of the Council. The Panel's objective is to be a collaborative forum which enables Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to comply with its statutory responsibilities towards vulnerable children in care, together with young people leaving care.
- 1.2 These responsibilities are defined particularly under Part IV of the Children Act (1989) and Part 1, Chapter 1 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017)

2.0 Purpose of the Corporate Parenting Panel

- 2.1 The focus of the Corporate Parenting Panel is to help ensure the Council and local statutory partners achieve improved outcomes for children in care and young people leaving care in relation to the following:
- They are safeguarded from all forms of harm.
 - To promote their health and wellbeing.
 - To ensure they achieve their potential through good educational attainment.
 - To enable them to make a positive contribution to society.
 - To help them make a successful transition to adulthood and attain skills and qualifications that will enable them to access sustainable employment and become active citizens in their communities.
- 2.2 As part of this, the principal role of the Panel will be to scrutinise and hold to account, the progress of Children's Services and local partners in achieving the following:

1. The objectives, indicators and targets of the Barnsley Children in Care and Young People Leaving Care Strategy (2022-2025) namely:

- (a) Children in care are looked after in a safe and caring home.
- (b) To promote, support and respect the identity of every child in care or leaving care.
- (c) That children in care receive a good education.
- (d) Children in care and those leaving care are healthy.
- (e) Young people leaving care are prepared for their future and make a successful transition to adulthood.
- (f) Children in care and young people leaving care have a 'voice' and are involved in decisions aimed at improving their outcomes.

2. The 'Seven Principles for Corporate Parenting' set out in Part 1, Chapter 1 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017), namely:

- (a) To act in the best interests and promote the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people in care.
- (b) To encourage young people in care to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- (c) To actively consider the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people in care.
- (d) To help children and young people in care gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the Local Authority and its relevant partners.
- (e) To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for such children and young people.
- (g) For such children and young people to be safe and for stability to be assured in their home lives, relationships, education and work.
- (h) To prepare young people leaving care for adulthood and independence.

3. Outcome 4 of the National Framework for Children's Social Care, namely that children in care and care leavers benefit from caring and loving homes.

3.0 Responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel

3.1 The Panel will exercise the following responsibilities:

- To provide clear strategic, partnership- based leadership in relation to corporate parenting.
- To ensure the Council acts as a good corporate parent in accordance with our 'Pledge' to children in care and our 'Covenant' to young people leaving care.
- To monitor and review progress, together with ensuring achievement of the objectives inherent within the Barnsley Children in Care and Young People Leaving Care Strategy.
- To focus on improving the range of outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

- To consider recommendations from internal reviews, peer reviews and inspections of services for children in care and young people leaving care. To hear the voice of looked after children and care experienced young people, including involving them in meetings. To monitor the education needs of care experienced children, promoting positive engagement of education partners in corporate parenting.
- To ensure Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council actively promotes the equality and inclusion of children in care and young people leaving care across its services.
- To ensure that the experience and perspective of the entire range of care experienced children and young people, including those with special or complex needs inform the co-production of services and help shape policy and strategy as well as monitor performance.
- To act as the Governing Body for the Virtual School for looked after and other groups of vulnerable children.
- To raise the ambitions and aspirations of children in care and young people leaving care and at the same time improve the life chances of these vulnerable groups of young people.
- To advise the Lead Member for Children's Services, Cabinet and Full Council on matters and developments concerning corporate parenting.

4.0 Functions of the Corporate Parenting Panel

4.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel will develop an iterative work programme which will include consideration of the following:

- Statutory reports, including annual reports concerning adoption, fostering and the commissioning of services.
- Performance reports relating to the data set of current and future indicators for children in care and care leavers, including placement stability, timeliness of assessments and reviews, together with the performance of adoption and fostering services along with the Local Authority's children's homes.
- Performance in meeting the health and education needs of children and young people in care.
- Services to care leavers, including accommodation, access to further and higher education, together with help with the costs of living.
- To review any complaints from children in care or young people leaving care in relation to their quality of practice.
- To undertake meetings with children in care and care leavers, front-line practitioners and foster carers to obtain an understanding of practice and standards of care.
- To undertake quality assurance visits to services and teams to obtain an understanding of practice and standards.

5.0 Membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel

5.1 The membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be reviewed each year and nominations will be agreed at the Annual Meeting of Full Council, based

upon the Council's rules concerning political proportionality in the appointment of elected members to Council bodies.

- 5.2 However, both the Cabinet Spokesperson (Children's Services) (*the statutory lead member for children's services*) together with the Cabinet Support Member (Children's Services) will be permanent members of the Panel, with consideration being given to appointing the Cabinet Spokesperson (Place Health and Adult Social Care) and Cabinet Spokesperson (Public Health and Communities) or their Cabinet Support Members to the Panel.
- 5.3 Co-opted members of the Panel should include the following:
- The Executive Director (Children's Services) (*the statutory director of children's services*)
 - Service Director (Children's Social Care and Safeguarding) Barnsley MBC
 - Service Director (Education, Early Start and Prevention)
 - Head of Service (Children in Care and Care Leavers) Barnsley MBC
 - The named or designated doctor and nurse for children in care Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
 - The lead officer for children's and adolescent mental health services South and West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
 - The Virtual Head Teacher for looked after and other groups of vulnerable children, Barnsley MBC
 - Head of Service (Joint, Integrated Commissioning of Children's Services) Barnsley MBC and Barnsley Place Partnership
 - Chief Superintendent (South Yorkshire Police: Barnsley District)
 - Head of Young People's Skills and Enterprise, Barnsley MBC
 - Youth Participation and Engagement Manager, Barnsley MBC (*as the representative of the Barnsley Care4Us Council*)
- 5.4 Stewardship of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- 5.5 The Cabinet Spokesperson (Children's Services) will be nominated at the Annual Meeting of Council to act as the permanent Chairperson of the Panel during the municipal year. Similarly, the Cabinet Support Member (Children's Services) will also be nominated at the Annual Meeting of Council to act as the permanent Vice-Chairperson of the Panel during the same period.
- 5.6 Frequency and Support for Meetings of the Panel
- 5.7 The Corporate Parenting Panel will meet at least four times during the municipal year and two additional meetings of the Panel will be held and led by young people in care. These additional meetings will focus upon issues of relevance and importance to these young people.
- 5.8 The Service Director (Children's Social Care and Safeguarding) assisted by the Head of Service (Children in Care and Care Leavers) will support all the arrangements for meetings of the Panel.

- 5.9 The Service Director (Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding) together with the Head of Service (Children in Care and Young People Leaving Care) will also be responsible for ensuring any officers with specific, operational responsibility for any service concerning children in care and care leavers attend meetings of the Panel and report upon matters of relevance.
- 5.10 Meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel should be available to view by the public and media upon request, even if public attendance is not possible. The agenda and documents for the meetings of the Panel will be circulated five working days prior to each meeting. The provisions of Part 1, Schedule 12 (A) concerning the exemption of information from publication will apply to all meetings of the Panel.
- 5.11 Meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be declared as being quorate and any recommendations validated subject to the attendance of at least four elected representatives. In accordance with the Council’s Constitution and the Code of Conduct for Elected Members, any declarations of interest of a personal or pecuniary nature will need to be submitted and recorded.
- 5.12 The minutes of meetings of the Panel will not normally be submitted to the Cabinet or Full Council unless it is on an exceptional basis. The Chairperson of the Panel together with the Executive Director (Children’s Services) will submit an annual report on the work of the Panel both to Cabinet and Full Council.

6.0 Elected Member Training

- 6.1 Newly nominated elected member representatives to the Corporate Parenting Panel will receive an induction outlining their role and responsibilities as Panel members within the Council’s broader role of corporate parent.
- 6.2 All elected member representatives of the Panel will also receive one formal ‘refresher’ session on the role and responsibilities of the corporate parent as well as a set of three briefer sessions, based upon the following:
- The role and purpose of the Corporate Parenting Panel, including the Terms of Reference, together with an overview of other statutory or strategic partners.
 - Meeting the health and wellbeing needs of children in care, our corporate responsibilities, together with those of statutory local partners.
 - Meeting the educational needs of children in care and our corporate responsibilities.
 - Ensuring meaningful participation and engagement among children in care and young people leaving care. Ensuring the ‘Voice’ of the child informs the planning and commissioning of services, either individually or collectively via the Care4Us Council.
 - Our responsibilities concerning the sufficiency of placements for children in need of care.

- Understanding and interpreting reports on the performance of services against local and national benchmarks, including Outcome 4 of the National Framework for Children’s Social Care.

7.0 Review and Updating the Terms of Reference

- 7.1 These Terms of Reference will be periodically reviewed as part of ensuring the Panel continues to effectively fulfil its role and responsibilities in improving the range of outcomes for children in care and young people leaving care.