

Corporate Parenting Strategy

Ensuring all our children are safe, happy and healthy and reach their full potential



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1 Foreword

We are passionate in wanting Torbay and its residents to thrive. Central to this vision is making sure that everyone can play their part in supporting Torbay's children, and making Torbay 'child friendly.'

We are so proud of our children and we are committed to do all we can to support them to benefit from the many opportunities that the Bay has to offer. In all we do, we want our children to feel loved, supported and safe. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our incredibly dedicated fostering families and staff for the commitment they demonstrate to our children every single day.

We are committed to being great corporate parents, to ensure that our children have every opportunity to live happy and fulfilling lives.

Corporate Parenting Board



Cllr Steve Darling
Leader of Torbay
Council



Cllr Cordelia Law
Cabinet Member
for Children's



Cllr Nick Bye



Cllr Judith Mills



Cllr Lyn Sykes

2 Corporate Parenting Vision

The Children and Young People's Plan sets out Torbay Council's objectives and priorities for all services which directly affect children and young people across all the communities which make up Torbay. Its overriding objective is:

To ensure that all our children, young people and care experienced young people and adults are safe, happy and healthy in order that they can reach their full potential.

In the context of Corporate Parenting this objective can be re-stated;

To ensure that our cared for children and care experienced young people:

- are safe, happy and healthy in order that they can reach their full potential; and
- have all the opportunities that good parents afford their children.

We are committed to being an effective, caring and ambitious corporate parent and we will show this through;

- our love,
- our focus,
- our language, and
- our actions.

We are loving parents and we care deeply for our children. We will ensure they receive the same standard of care as any good parent would provide, protecting them and supporting them to cope with the dangers and risks of everyday life. We will celebrate and share in their experiences and achievements, no matter how big or small; and we are ambitious for them and will work hard to support them to achieve their aspirations and reach their full potential. We will do everything we can to make sure that our care experienced children are set up for life.

We know that our fostering families are critical in the lives of our children. We are committed to providing support and training for them and embrace them as a part of the Torbay fostering family.

We want Torbay to be a 'Child Friendly' place, a place that champions our cared for and care experienced children.

3 Introduction

This Strategy has been developed, to sit alongside a number of other strategies and plans, to ensure that we deliver for those children and young people who are cared for by the Council and those who are care experienced.

This Strategy is exclusively focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for our cared for children and care experienced young people for whom we are Corporate Parents. It provides the framework for Torbay Council, in all its respects, to fulfil our role in the lives of our children and young people.

In Torbay, we are passionate in believing that ensuring the effective care and protection for our cared for children is the most important responsibility we hold. In order to provide high quality services we must all work together to meet their needs.

The Strategy builds on Torbay's commitment to multi-agency working as we know that the best outcomes for our cared for children and care experienced young people can only be achieved through effective partnership working. The Council, our foster fostering families and independent providers, our NHS and education partners, the Police, the private sector and faith and voluntary sector organisations all contribute to improving the lives of our children and young people.

This Strategy also builds on the progress we have made in improving our services, however it will be further reviewed and updated following the focused work that is currently being undertaken with our cared for and care experienced children, so that we can truly reflect their voice within this strategy moving forward.

4 Context

Legal Duties

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is cared for by the Council if they are:

- Provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours,
- Subject to a Care Order,
- Subject to a Placement Order.

When a child or young person becomes cared for, we become their Corporate Parent.

A young person stops being cared for when they turn 18. At this point, they become a young adult eligible for help and assistance from the Council as care experienced. The Council continues to provide support to care experienced young people until they are 25.

We want to ensure that across the Council, including elected members, senior officers and all staff and fostering families, there is the shared vision, collective responsibility, and commitment to our cared for children and care experienced young people, including the provision of quality services for them.

5 Principles and Priorities

Corporate Parenting Principles

We will ensure that we meet the needs of our children and young people, and we will use these principles to guide every element of our approach.

We will always;

- act in their best interests and promote their physical and mental health and wellbeing,
- encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings,
- take account of their views, wishes and feelings,
- ensure that their identity needs are met,
- help them gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by us and our partners,
- promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for them,
- ensure that they are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education and work, and
- prepare them for adulthood and independent living and support them as they continue to grow and mature in their early adult lives.

We recognise that our fostering families are an integral part of Torbay's corporate parenting vision and are a crucial part of the team for our children. Our Fostering Statement and Charter sets out how we work with and support our fostering families.

Priorities

We have identified a number of priorities in ensuring we are the best corporate parents we can be. We will focus on these priorities. Set out below each of the Priorities are the relevant Pledges that we have made to our children and young people. The Pledges have been reviewed by The Circle as part of a consultation with young people in care and care experienced adults.

Priority 1: We will work with our children and young people

- We will come prepared, and we will listen.
- Our children and young people's views will come first, but we will be honest about what we can do.
- We will explain our children and young people's rights using language that is easily understood.
- We will use Language that Cares.
- We will respect our children and young people's privacy and work to ensure that they are not singled out or bullied at school, college, or in any other setting.
- We will use our training to be thoughtful about the challenges our children and young people have faced.
- We will celebrate our children's and young people achievements with them in the ways that they would like.

Priority 2: We will ensure our children and young people's homes are safe and meets their needs

- We will work with our children and young people's carers to ensure their home is the best it can be.
- We will work together to keep our children and young people safe (safety planning).
- We will work with our children and young people's carers to ensure that they have opportunities that they enjoy and enable them to have a voice if they want to.
- We will plan visits in advance and involve our children and young people in those plans.
- We will help our children and young people to stay in contact with any family they may have if they want that and explain the reasons if this is not possible.

Priority 3: We will support our children and young people to achieve their aspirations and fulfil their potential

- We will ask children and young people about what their goals are and support their achievement.
- We will develop a Personal Education Plan of the things they do in school, so they are helped to do well.
- We will work closely with schools, colleges or providers and offer our children and young people easy to understand reasons for any changes.
- We will encourage and support our children and young people to take up opportunities in education, employment and training until the age of at least 21, in ways that suit them.

Priority 4: We will ensure that our children and young people's physical, emotional, mental health needs are met

- We will work together to support our children and young people have a sense of well-being and personal identity.
- We will develop a plan to ensure our children and young people are healthy and wanting to have good choices called a Personal Health Plan.
- We will support our children and young people to access regular health and dental checks and any appointments or treatment they may need – virtually and in person.

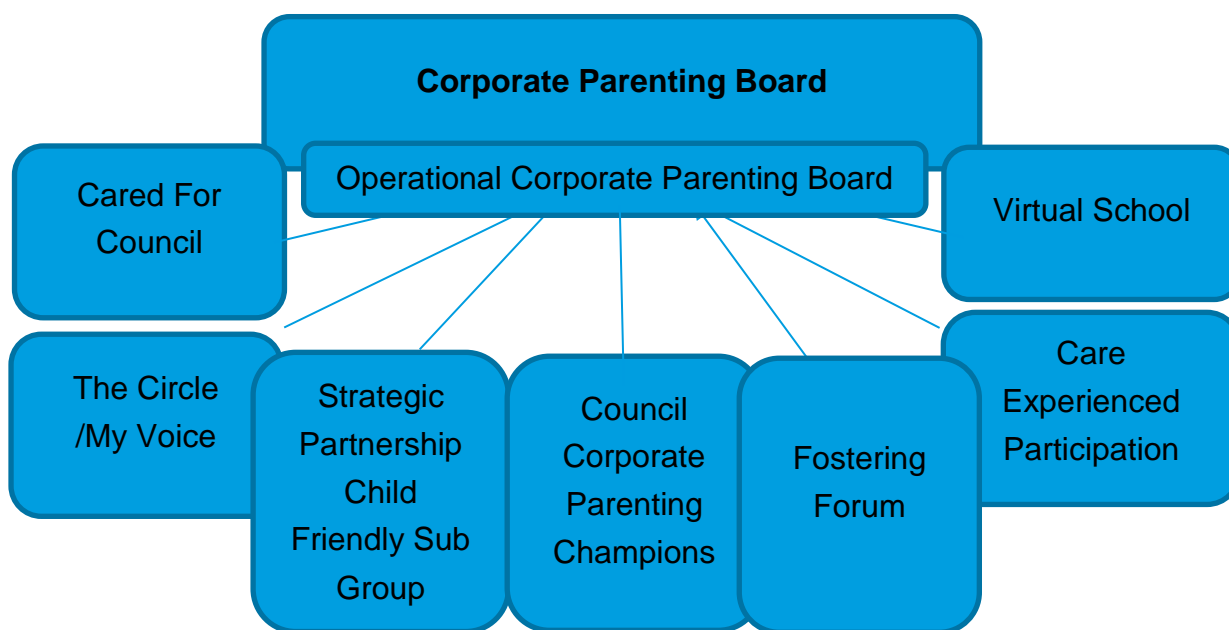
Priority 5: We will support our children and young people to develop into independent, confident and responsible adults

- We will support our children and young people to know that challenges and uncertainty are part of life and growth.
- We will ensure our children and young people to have support and advice, so they are less likely to take certain risks or be open to exploitation by others.
- We will work with our children and young people to develop the life skills we all need to achieve our goals and have the best opportunities for the future.

6 Governance

The Council's Community and Corporate Plan sets out our aspirations for the community of Torbay including children and young people. The Council's objective is to ensure that all children and young people are safe, happy and healthy in order that they can reach their full potential.

Whilst corporate parenting is the responsibility of the Council as a whole and of its partners, on a day-to-day basis our arrangements are set out below.



Corporate Parenting Board

This Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and comprises of a wider group of members drawn from all political groups together with partner representatives and senior officers from Children's Services.

The Board meets every two months and forms a key element within the Council's Constitution, providing a forum for regular, detailed discussion of issues and a positive link with our cared for and care experienced children and young people.

An Operational Corporate Parenting Board will be established, which will be chaired by the Chief Executive. The Operational Corporate Parenting Board will provide an operational oversight of all of the Corporate Parenting activities being undertaken and will operationalise decisions of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Fostering Forum

A Forum which enables our fostering families and senior managers to come together to focus upon how we work together to provide the very best care and opportunities for our children.

Virtual School

Torbay Virtual School provides the framework through which the educational needs of our cared for children are met working closely with educational providers, carers, social care and health practitioners, and children and young people. The work of the Virtual School is overseen by a Governing Body and led by the Virtual School Headteacher.

Educational attainment and progress for our children is subject to regular review to determine the effectiveness of the arrangements put in place for them via their Pupil Education Plan. The Virtual School also produce an annual report for the consideration of the Governing Body, Corporate Parent Members Group and Full Council.

The Circle and My Voice

The Circle and My Voice is facilitated by Torbay Youth Trust and brings together some of our cared for children to take part in activities on a regular basis and to obtain their views on the effectiveness of our arrangements for them. Their views have been instrumental in developing Torbay's Pledge for our cared for children.

Care Experienced Participation Group

This Group is facilitated by the Torbay After Care Team in conjunction with the Torbay Youth Trust and brings together a representative group of our care experienced young people to ensure their views are heard in the development and delivery of our services for them. Their work has been fundamental to our pathway plans.

Council Corporate Parenting Champions

All departments across the Council and our wholly owned companies, will have designated officers as Corporate Parenting Champions. The Champions will come together on a quarterly basis to help to shape their department's role in ensuring that we are good corporate parents, and that we provide opportunities for them as a result of the relationships we have as a Council.

Strategic Partnership Child Friendly Subgroup

Our Strategic Partnership will have a subgroup, which is focussed upon how organisations and communities come together collectively to become Child Friendly and support our cared for and care experienced children and young people, including opportunities that can be provided for them.

This document can be made available in other languages and formats.
