



London Borough  
of Hounslow

ONE  
HOUNSLOW

# CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY



# CONTENTS

1. FOREWORD	3
2. INTRODUCTION	4
2.1. What is Corporate Parenting?	4
2.2. Corporate Parenting Principles	4
2.3. Who are Corporate Parents?	5
2.4. Aims of Corporate Parenting	6
3. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLEDGE	6
4. CARE LEAVER OFFER	7
5. ENGAGING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	8
6. HOUNSLOW CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL	9

## 1. FOREWORD



**Cllr Lilly Bath**  
Cabinet Member for  
Education, Children,  
Skills and Employment

Hounslow's Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2022 – 25 and sets out our responsibilities for the children and young people in care. Whenever a child or young person is cared for by Hounslow the Council becomes their Corporate Parent.

Councillors, staff and partner agencies are collectively responsible for making sure that children and young people that are looked after receive the best care possible, achieve their full potential and are supported to establish the foundations for a happy, healthy and productive life.

The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is to ensure that we are all working towards common goals and ambitions for children in care and care leavers. No one individual, team, service, or agency can do this alone which is why collaborative working, at both a strategic and operational level, is essential. This strategy complements and supports other planning mechanisms across Hounslow but it specifically focuses on children in care and care leavers. It holds everyone responsible including professionals, services, partners and elected Members. We should all be able to demonstrate how we are working together to achieve its key aims.

In Hounslow we are committed to the three pillars for corporate parenting which include:

### PLACEMENT STABILITY

### EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

### EDUCATION PROGRESS

We will strive to ensure that our young people are in stable and secure placements, have good mental health and are engaged in education, employment and training.

Looked after children are likely to be faced with circumstances that may disadvantage them compared with their peers. We take our corporate parenting responsibilities very seriously and continually aim to do better and set high aspirations. Hounslow has a legal and moral duty to provide a standard of care that any good parent would want for their own child.



**Steven Forbes**  
Executive Director of  
Children's and Adults'  
Services

# 2. INTRODUCTION

## 2.1. What is Corporate Parenting?

Corporate parenting is a statutory collective duty of the local authority to act in the best interests of looked after children and care leavers, providing them with the best possible care and protection. Corporate parenting is a shared responsibility across the Council with direct case responsibility held by Children’s Services.

Elected Members exercise their responsibility for corporate parenting in a number of ways, including performance monitoring through the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings with looked after children and care leavers.

The three pillars of Hounslow’s Corporate Parenting delivery are **Placement Stability**, **Emotional Wellbeing** and **Education Progress**. A core objective for the service in achieving these pillars is to improve our inclusion of young people’s views and feedback to inform service development. We place young people at the heart of our delivery, keeping in mind the Council’s values, especially “pass on the power and do new” and taking a “You said, we did” approach to valuing and acting upon this.

## 2.2. Corporate Parenting Principles

The **Children and Social Work Act 2017** (introduced in April 2018) outlined the seven key corporate parenting principles which all councils should adhere to in relation to services and care provided to looked after children and care leavers.

These include:

- ① To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- ② To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- ③ To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- ④ 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

- ⑤ To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- ⑥ For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- ⑦ To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Children Act 1989 also places a duty on key partners, including Health, Education and Housing services which provide essential services to looked after children and care leavers. They must work collaboratively with Children’s Services to fulfil their functions effectively according to the Act. This includes providing help, support and services to meet corporate parenting responsibilities.

## 2.3. Who are Corporate Parents?

The publication ‘Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice’ (National Children’s Bureau 2008) identifies three levels of understanding and responsibility in relation to Corporate Parenting which remain relevant:

<b>Level 1: Universal Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Councillors and elected Members</li> <li>• All Partners, including Health, Schools, Police etc</li> </ul>	<p>This is the minimum standard which requires all elected Members, Council officers and partner agencies to understand the needs of looked after children. Members and Officers should ensure the best possible care for looked after children and Care Leavers, show commitment to the Hounslow Pledge and Care Leaver Offer.</p>
<b>Level 2: Targeted Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Parenting Panel</li> <li>• Scrutiny Panel</li> <li>• Senior Management Team</li> <li>• Children’s Services Managers and Professionals</li> </ul>	<p>Elected Members who are part of the Corporate Parenting Panel and other corporate parenting forums will be aware of relevant issues and expectations regarding services to looked after children and care leavers.</p>
<b>Level 3: Specialist Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member for Children, Learning and Employment</li> <li>• Executive Director of Children’s and Adults’ Services</li> </ul>	<p>Senior roles will provide systematic leadership across the authority in relation to the needs of, and services to, looked after children and care leavers.</p>

Elected Members set the strategic direction for services provided by the Council, as well as the allocation of resources. It is important for Members to use their influence to ensure the needs of looked after children and care leavers are met, which would include any actions they can take themselves needed to consistently work to improve outcomes.



## 2.4. Aims of Corporate Parenting

We are committed to ensuring that children looked after are able to enjoy a childhood where they are safe, well cared for and supported to achieve their full potential.

We will achieve this by:

- Acting in the best interests of our children and young people and promoting their physical and mental health wellbeing
- Encouraging our children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings and taking these into account
- Supporting our children and young people to access and make the best use of services provided by Hounslow Council and our partners
- Promoting high aspirations for our children and young people, seeking to secure the best outcomes for them
- Ensuring our children and young people are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- Preparing our children and young people for adulthood and independent living
- Ensuring our strategies and policies reflect and promote the priorities and ambitions for looked after children and care leavers.

## 3. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PLEDGE

The Government's "Care Matters" (2006) initiative required local authorities to develop a local Pledge for looked after children, young people and care leavers.

The Pledge sets out the looked after children, young people and care leaver's entitlements as well as specific opportunities and support that is available to them. The Children in Care Council has a role in developing the Pledge and reviewing it over time.

As corporate parents, the Council has a responsibility to ensure these promises are met. The Pledge is intended to support young people to reach their potential and achieve healthy, successful and independent lives.

The Hounslow Pledge includes:

- Access to leisure activities
- Access to a bike (where appropriate)

- Learning to drive
- Savings
- Rights and entitlements
- Education and future aspirations
- We will keep you safe, give you a safe place to live and help you to feel safe
- We will help you to keep healthy
- We will give you accurate information about your rights and entitlements, we will listen to your views and do our best to make sure what you tell us, has a meaningful influence.

[www.hounslow.gov.uk/lookedafterchildrenpledge](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/lookedafterchildrenpledge)

## 4. CARE LEAVER OFFER

The Leaving Care Act 2000 places a duty on all local authorities to support young people to make the transition from care to adulthood. Key care leaver services that the local authority are obliged to ensure that young people can access include:

- Suitable housing
- Provision to support their emotional well being
- Support to engage with education, employment and training.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has further strengthened Hounslow's duties to care leavers.

The Local Offer to care leavers provides information to support care leavers aged 18-25 who are in the care of the local authority. It is a clear and comprehensive guide that outlines the services and support which are available to young people.

The offer will help care leavers make the most out of services and help them to live independent lives as adults. The offer includes information on:

- 1 Introduction to leaving care
- 2 Where you will live
- 3 Financial support
- 4 Important documents
- 5 Education, employment and training
- 6 Health
- 7 Getting your voice heard.

[www.hounslow.gov.uk/care\\_leaver\\_offer](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/care_leaver_offer)





## 5. ENGAGING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Hounslow has strong engagement with looked after children. The local authority engages with young people regularly, through a range of well-established and represented forums and processes. We will ensure that our children and young people are provided with the opportunities to inform and contribute to shaping services through co-production.

We will achieve this by:

- Providing children and young people with the opportunity to participate in decisions about their lives, to contribute their views about services they receive and are kept well informed about matters that affect them
- Consulting with children and young people in the most appropriate way possible to ascertain their views, wishes and feelings
- Responding quickly to address children and young people's complaints and resolve any dissatisfaction.

Forums and meetings in which young people are involved include:

- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Themed Workstream Meetings (Fostering, Housing, Identity)
- Children in Care Council
- Care Leavers Forum
- Focus groups to inform policy development
- Care Leaver drop in sessions.

## 6. HOUNSLOW CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

The Corporate Parenting Panel is well established in Hounslow with leadership from Members and senior staff, alongside engagement from children and young people. The Panel includes representation from Councillors, Council officers, partners and young representatives who are supported by the Participation Officer. Meetings take place quarterly and are co-chaired by a care experienced young person and the Cabinet Member for Children, Learning and Employment.

During the last two years, the Panel has established themed workstream sub-groups that involve professionals, young people and Councillors. These are in place to ensure focus on specific issues and concerns relating to both looked after children and care leavers.