

<b>Contains Confidential or Exempt Information</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Title</b>	Corporate Parenting Principles; Local Offer and extending Personal Adviser support to all care leavers to age 25
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<b>For Consideration By</b>	Corporate Parent Committee
<b>Date to be considered</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
<b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>	
<b>Affected Wards</b>	All
<b>Keywords/Index</b>	Care Leavers local offer: Corporate Parenting, Support to age 25

**Purpose of Report:**

To inform members of changes in Corporate Parenting principles including a requirement to publish a local offer to care leavers, new responsibilities to extend support from local authority personal advisers to all care leavers up to age 25. There is also a new requirement to expand the role of both designated teachers and Virtual School Heads to include the provision of information and advice to certain previously looked after children and their families. It is anticipated that the new requirements will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That Members note changes in corporate parenting responsibilities as set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 1.2 That Members note the requirement to publish a local offer and extend personal adviser support to all care leavers aged up to 25 (currently ceases at age 21)
- 1.3 That Members ask Officers to consult with the Children in Care Councils and bring back further reports in March 2018 updating progress on the local offer and implementing the new requirements.

**2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered**

- 2.1 The programme has significant implications for the authority in its Corporate Parent role and how we support looked after children, care leavers and their families.

2.2 Information on any additional funding to support implementation has not yet been received. A wider consultation process has just concluded and following this the DfE is expected to publish more detailed guidance re implementation shortly.

### **3. Key Implications**

3.1 The Children and Social Work Act received Royal Assent on April 27 2017. Full implementation is expected from April 2018. New legislative duties include:

- Revised corporate parenting principles in relation to care and pathway planning
- A local offer for care leavers
- Extending support from local authority personal advisers to all care leavers up to age 25
- Expanding the role of both the Virtual School Heads and the designated teachers to include the provision of information and advice to certain previously looked after children and their families. (See Appendix 2)

3.2 The guidance re emphasises that the role that local authorities play in looking after children is one of the most important they do. Members should frequently ask themselves – “Is this good enough for my children?”

A strong ethos should mean that everybody from the Chief Executive down and elected Members through to front line staff prioritise their needs and that there is an embedded culture to support this right across the Council. The roles of the DCS and the Lead Member should set the tone for this across the Council. It is also vital that all parts of a local authority beyond those directly responsible recognise they have a key role too.

3.3 The corporate parenting principles set out 7 key areas that all those working across the local authority – including housing and council tax – have towards achieving the best outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. These are not new requirements but are a re-emphasis of existing duties.

In order to thrive there are 7 key principles that local authorities must address as part of their responsibilities:

- i) To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and well-being of those children and young people
- ii) To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- iii) To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- iv) To help those children and young people gain access to and make best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- v) To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people
- vi) For those children and young people to be safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships and education and/or work and to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

This is not seen as a formulaic approach but embedded in behaviours and attitudes across the Council.

3.4 Corporate Parent Leadership – This should ensure that looked after children and care leavers are part of the local authority “family”. Members should have regular contact with members of the Children in Care (CIC) Councils. They could have a role in recruitment and advising on content of key job profiles e.g. personal advisers. Local authorities have a key role as employers and should consider ring fencing opportunities e.g. apprenticeships for care leavers.

3.5 Local authorities are also under a duty section 10 of the Children Act 2004, to make sure there is co-operation to deliver better outcomes with key partners. These should include housing, immigration, early years, police and criminal justice agencies.

3.6 All good parents take care of their children’s physical health and mental well-being and there are many ways local authorities can do this. This should also include understanding challenging behaviour and the impact of early trauma. Close working with health and public health is required including prioritising this group’s needs within the Joint Strategic Needs assessment (JSNA). Local authorities should also ensure access to leisure and cultural services e.g. music, arts, sport etc.

3.7 The second and third principles relate to taking young people’s views and wishes into account at an individual and strategic level. These principles apply to every child and include those with disabilities. Children and young people should also be involved in the design of services. Where after consideration the child’s wishes cannot be agreed there should be a clear explanation of the reasons why.

3.8 Local authorities should advocate and ensure that children access the best services e.g. Good schools in their local areas. They should also ensure that young people have effective and smooth transitions to independence as care leavers, by publishing a clear local offer that sets out the range of services available to them. They should also have access to effective ETE support and advice and their carers should also be able to access this information.

3.9 Corporate parents should promote high aspirations and work towards securing the best outcomes for their looked after children and care leavers eg identifying a good university where they have the potential to succeed and supporting them to get there. At an individual level promoting individual children’s confidence and aspiration is important e.g. establishing mentoring or role model schemes and encouraging work taster days. Also encouraging work at regional level with other CICs.

3.10 Being safe and having stability is seen as a key priority. This is critical in order that children can thrive, have stability in their lives for education and work and build resilience by forging strong and trusted relationships. This includes stability of placements and support for carers and where appropriate access to Staying Put foster care schemes for care leavers and the new Staying Close model for residential. It also means access to support in transition and support to prevent homelessness and rent and council tax arrears.

3.11 Preparing for adulthood and independent living is an overarching priority with effective planning to manage day to day life. This can include use of semi independent accommodation and training flats. Good preparation, a gradual transition and flexible ongoing support are key to helping young people achieve a successful move to independent living. This involves local authorities having very close working with housing authorities.

3.12 Local authorities also need to prepare and publish a local offer for care leavers. This should set out services and support the Council will provide in relation to:

- Health and well being
- Relationships
- Education and training
- Employment
- Accommodation
- Participation in society.

Councils should work with their Children in Care Councils in developing their local offer.

**A draft local offer is attached as Appendix 1**

**3.13 Extending support from Personal Advisers to all care leavers to age 25:**

Section 3 of the Children and Social Work Act has introduced a new duty on local authorities to offer Personal Advisers (PAs) to all care leavers up to age 25. Including those up to age 25 who had previously indicated they did not want one. Support should be proactively offered to care leavers at least annually. It is anticipated that this new duty will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

Officers are currently considering how best to deliver this new requirement with Horizons at the centre of the post 21 offer.

3.14 In addition there are new requirements on the Virtual Head Teacher to extend and offer advice to new groups of children including those on Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and adopted children not previously covered by guidance. Ealing's VHT has been considering how best to achieve this locally and had discussions with designated teachers. (See Appendix 2)

3.15 Consultation has recently concluded nationally on all this new legislation and further guidance to local authorities on implementation is expected very shortly. In the meantime work is ongoing locally on implementation and consultation and involvement with the Children in Care Councils, on drawing up the local model and the local offer. A full Report will be brought back to the next Corporate Parent Panel in March 2018.

## **4. Financial**

### **a) Financial impact on the budget (mandatory)**

Further information is expected from the Department of Education re additional limited funding to implement the new requirements otherwise this needs to be contained within existing resources.

## **5. Legal**

The proposal is set within existing Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004, the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Children and Social work Act 2017.

## **6. Value for Money**

All services need to ensure they are efficient and provide best value.

## **7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal**

N/A

## **8. Risk Management**

There will be risks associated in implementing the new guidance but these will be reviewed on a case by case basis with the aim of reducing risk whilst increasing protective factors for young people.

## **9. Community Safety**

Increasing community safety and reducing risk of young people's involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour is a key part of the new leaving care proposals as care leavers are significantly over represented locally and nationally in the youth justice system

## **10. Links to the 5 Priorities for the Borough**

If none, say so. Please keep to one paragraph.

*The 5 Priorities are:*

- **Making Ealing Safer**
- **Securing Public Services**
- **Securing Jobs and Homes**
- **Delivering Value for Money**
- **Making Ealing Cleaner**

This new guidance clearly links with a number of the Future Ealing priorities for children, young people, crime reduction and increasing skills and employment opportunities.

## **11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion**

By better responding to young people's expressed views regarding their placements and wish to remain locally community cohesion will be enhanced.

## **12. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications**

These implications are being continuously considered as part of the consultation processes for full implementation from April 2018.

## **13. Property and Assets**

There are no property implications.

## **14. Any other implications:**

N/A

## 15. Consultation

Ongoing consultation with young people, staff and foster carers underpins the proposal. The authority will continue to involve the local HCildrne in Care Councils in consultation for local implementation.

## 16. Timetable for Implementation

Implementation is expected from April 2018.

## 17. Appendices

Appendix 1– Draft Local Offer

## 18. Background Information

N/A

### Consultation (Mandatory)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
<b>Internal</b>				
<b>External</b>				

### Report History

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>
For information	NO
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