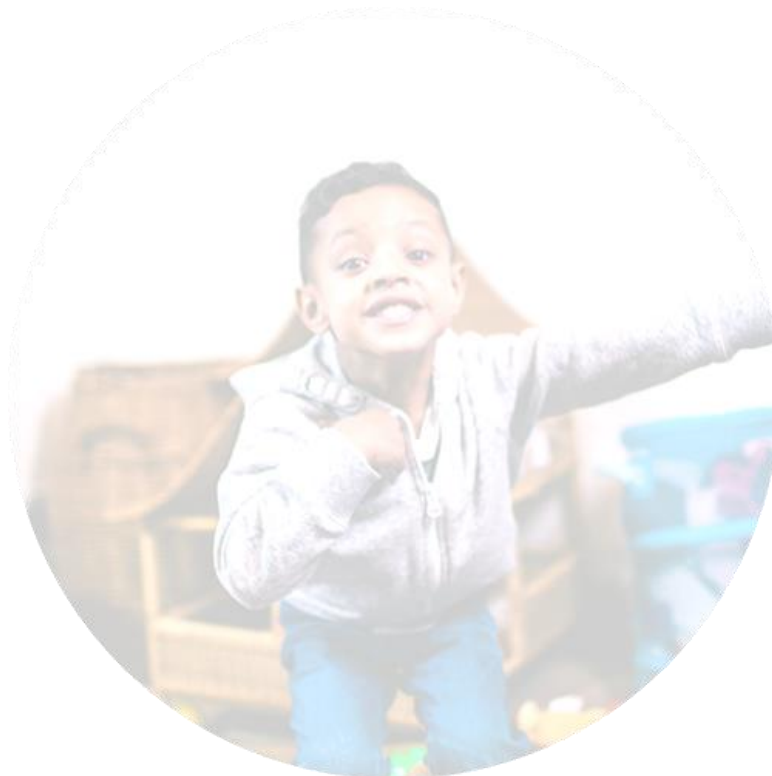


Corporate Parenting - Summary Report 2015/2016



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Message from Andy Pepper, Assistant Director Children in Care Provider Services

In my role as an Assistant Director, and as a corporate parent, I have been in the privileged position to support this fantastic, resilient, diverse and unique group of individuals over the past year.

I believe that a city is defined by the way they treat their most vulnerable, and am proud of the work that has been done by our corporate parents – carers, partners, social workers, councillors, officers, and other workers - who do everything they can to support our young people to become secure, productive, independent and happy members of our city.

We are all aware of how children and young people in care, as well as care leavers, are more likely to experience poorer health and lower educational achievement, as well as having few employment opportunities. We strive to give them the same opportunities as any other child in this city, and work with them to provide services recognising their individuality.

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy has provided a blueprint for our responsibilities and aspirations for young people in care. This work is driven by the revised Corporate Parenting Board, which has a key role in championing the rights of young people and thus focussing, challenging and supporting our corporate parenting work. A task and finish group has also been set up, working closely with the Children in Care Council (CiCC) providing focussed support on specific tasks and really making sure we succeed.

Our projects this year have included improving data – to ensure we are using a proper evidence base to monitor and improve outcomes. We have been linking closely with the CiCC, producing a series of pledges to listen and respond to their priorities. We have worked with the CiCC on some of their top priorities including pocket money and overnight stays - listening and responding to their views, and where possible amending policies to take into account their wishes.

Birmingham City Council, as a corporate parent, has put in place a number of corporate initiatives this year to raise the profile of corporate parenting and highlight the responsibilities of all staff. This has included a project to get staff members to mentor young people in care and provide laptops to support their education. We have also been involved in some critical work to improve pathway planning for care leavers and improve policy and procedure around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing.

One of the more recent initiatives I have put in place is appointing a Corporate Parenting Officer. This motivated individual, who some of you will have met, is tasked with driving and supporting a range of our corporate parenting work. Although the work we do is far more than one person's remit, I wanted to ensure this work continues to be fully supported, and remains at the forefront of what we do.

Part of my wider role this year has included restructuring the Fostering and Adoption Service, increasing in house fostering, working to support improved Early Help, reviewing and improving the placements service and designing and supporting more effective social work interventions to make a child's journey through the care system as high quality and effective as possible.

And finally, a plea to ask you to continue to support our corporate parenting work, and help us to improve outcome for all of our young people in care.

1.1 Corporate Parenting Strategy

The overall aim of the 2015/16 Corporate Parenting strategy is to reinforce the corporate responsibility of everyone in the Council, both elected members and staff and of its partner agencies, to improve the life chances of children in care and care leavers and get the right support and services where they live. The strategy will ensure that Councillors and all those who work with this group of children and young people are aware of what their responsibilities are.

The board will provide governance to ensure outcomes for children in care improve.

Some of the areas of focus are:

- Consolidations in practice, to avoid drift in the system and to ensure resources are used only where intended. Policy, practice and process are strengthened to enable better planned and more appropriate placement in the first instance and, subsequently, more timely permanence planning, case progression and exits from care as appropriate.
- Support more children in care to succeed. Recently attainment of GCSE A* to C grades has improved, but the gap between children in care, in contrast to the wider Birmingham population, still requires improvement. Care leavers are still less likely to find Education, Employment or Training in Birmingham than in similar areas
- Supporting the Care Leavers Pathway Planning accommodation and support
- CSE and Children Missing from Care, Home and Education

1.2 The Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting (CP) Board aims to support and champion Birmingham's looked after young people. The Corporate Parenting Board is made up of a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency group comprising: CICC representative: Elected Members; the Director of Children, Young People and Families; representatives from other Directorates; Rights of a Child; Children's Social Care; BFCA representing the voluntary sector; Health representatives where necessary to the agenda, and BCC Business Change team.

The CP Board meets three monthly and works to champion the rights of looked after children, and have the ability to bring about change to ensure improvements in the outcomes for young people.

Since February 2015 the Corporate Parenting Board has assigned a Corporate Parenting Working Group which was structured to fit the needs and achieve specified goals for children and young people across the city. This has now been restructured into task and finish groups that work on the priorities of the board

The role of the CP Board includes:

- Meeting and talking to children in care and young people on a regular basis to inform the work of the Board
- Ensuring the corporate parenting role is understood by all elected Members, officers working in the Council and in partner agencies
- Monitoring and oversee plans, strategies or policies for children in care, young people and care leavers to ensure performance is maintained
- Monitoring and implementing the Corporate Parenting Strategy

- Reviewing Children in Care data set, identifying issues, then driving and monitoring how these are addressed
- Deciding where focused work is required and communicating this to the Corporate Parenting Board via the Corporate Parenting Business Manager

1.3 The Corporate Parenting Task and Finish Groups

The Corporate Parenting Task and Finish Groups are overseen by the Assistant Director for Children in Care Provider Services, and other members of the group are officers and elected members from within Birmingham City Council and their partners' agencies. The core membership includes:

- Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting – chair
- Corporate parenting champion
- Area Assistant Director
- Representative – provider services
- Designated Nurse
- Representative - LACES
- Representative – Police
- Representative – Place
- Representative - Birmingham Foster Care Association
- Representative(s) – CiC • Rights and Participation Officer
- Representative for the Independent Reviewing Officers - IROs Additional members will attend where appropriate to contribute to agenda items and focus on specific themes.

The working group meets monthly and is focussed on discussion or activity around specific subject areas related to children in care, and has worked closely with the Children in Care Council (CICC), listening to the voice of the young person and addressing their concerns.

Indeed, many of the corporate parenting initiatives mentioned in this report have been implemented with the impetus from the CICC

2.0 Laptops to support educational achievement

In 2015 a successful application was made to the Service Birmingham staff benefit fund. The application was to provide 60 laptops for young people in care across Birmingham who are entering higher education and do not have access to a laptop. This project aimed to try and meet a current funding gap for young people in care, giving them access to laptops in order to support their progression into continued education.

The project was administered through the Stakeholder Engagement Team in partnership with LACES services, who were already working with these young people and had already built up relationships and trust. The Safeguarding of the young people whilst online was also paramount to the success of the project. Therefore, Service Birmingham arranged to install remote monitoring software on all the laptops to review the severity of any data captured by the software going forwards.

LACES and the care leaver's service have identified young people who would really benefit from having their own laptop. For the many of the young people, having access to this technology and the internet was an invaluable resource for learning and education. It was a way to feel connected and a part of the wider world, and access resources. It is used as a way of accessing job opportunities, application forms, pay bills, write essays – all vital aspects of living in the modern world. It is primarily an education resource that will raise attainment and aspirations for young people through this programme.

Thirty of the laptops have already been delivered to young people with a second phase following early 2016.

3.0 The Children in Care Council - Analysing Data / Pledges and Responses / 2016 Priorities

The Corporate Parenting Board requested a monthly summary report extract (from the Information Management Team) of the statistical data for children in care in the city. The report highlights the collected data for children in care including indicators for health, placement stability, demographics of numbers entering and leaving care, educational attainment and a range of other performance measurements, some against national indicators. The reporting gives a unique snapshot of the service.

The report outputs are presented to the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council to review and monitor the performance of the service being delivered and also can be seen as evidence of how the service impacts children and young people.

3.1 CiCC Pledges and responses

The Corporate Parenting Board prepared a Birmingham Pledge making ten promises to make sure that children in care are supported to achieve and succeed. The Birmingham Pledge is based on what children have told the Board is most important to them.

A response was produced to each pledge, explaining the work that is currently taking place and future initiatives in this area by the Assistant Director of Children in Care Provider Services. In 2016 the board will look at how to 'better' capture evidence of delivery against the pledges and build on what CYP are telling us.

Promise 1	We promise to involve you in decisions that affect you and to listen to your views?
<p>Response: Children and Young People should have their wishes and feelings taken into account. These should be captured by the social worker and the social worker should be able to evidence children and young people's views within their care plan. A range of creative techniques are used and championed with different approaches being added all the time. We are currently signed up to using a nationally recognised 'mind of my own' online application as well as creative arts based techniques. Where a child or young person does not feel listened to or requires support to express their views then we have an internal advocacy service (Rights and Participation) that will support the child with 'issue based' advocacy. As well as evidencing individual children and young people's views we ensure that children and young people have opportunities to talk to us about their care experience.</p> <p>We are currently undertaking research with a group of children to track their experiences in care. We have a successful Children in Care Council who are launching a Virtual Children in care Council to capture more views and reach a wider number of young people. Opportunities to hear Children's voices are embedded within everyday practice. However our commitment to 2016 is to ensure that we develop a robust system to both evidence children and young people's influence within their care plan and also how we respond to children's experiences and potentially change practise as a result.</p>	
Promise 2	We promise that we will endeavour to find you the best possible place for you to live
<p>Response: We have relatively stable placements however we know some of our children experience three plus changes per year and most issues/complaints are linked to placements. My view is that we need to ensure that we commission appropriate placements for our young people that are able to best support them however some young people may always struggle so we have to ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to make sure they can explain how they are feeling and feel able to express themselves. From a CP point of view we could focus on those very high risk children and acknowledge that there may always be issues with placements but they should be the YP that we make sure get permanent BCC staff and regular visits etc. within timescales.</p>	
Promise 3	We promise to make sure you have every opportunity possible to achieve at school
Promise 4	We promise to encourage you to take part in all available activities that the city has to offer to ensure that your talents, hobbies and interests are met and to support you to do the things you enjoy
<p>Response: As corporate parents we identify and look for opportunities that go above and beyond hobbies and interest and really try and offer (though relatively small numbers) opportunities and experiences that makes life long memories (Olympic tickets/Wembley tickets etc.) however all IROs and SWs also encourage children and young people to pursue their interests. If a child moves placement then professionals should work hard to ensure that children do not abandon their hobbies and interests. Every effort should be made to ensure a child can continue with something they enjoy. A child and young person should know where to go to and complain if this doesn't happen.</p>	

Promise 5	We promise to take care of your health and encourage you to be healthy
Promise 6	We promise to provide you with a good and clear assessment of your needs, an up to date care plan and a PEP (personal education plan)
Promise 7	We promise that you will have your own social worker who visits you regularly and gives you details about how to contact them or someone else if they are away when you need them
Response: We have statistics about how many visits are within 6 weeks. However we need to do more work to make sure children and young people are aware of how many visits they are entitled to and how to make contact with a worker	
Promise 8	We promise we will help you stay in touch with your family, friends and other People who are important to you.
Response: Contact is an issue for children and young people in care. We should ensure that children and young people can stay in touch with people that are important to them however sometimes this is difficult. A child/young person should know and understand their contact arrangements. They should be fully explained to them and evidenced in their care plan (complaints happen when children/young people feel let down and out of the loop).	
Promise 9	We promise to listen to what you have to say
Response: I think as a board we are exploring different ways to hear from children and young people and get a proper feel for their experience in Birmingham's care. We need to ensure that BCC fulfils its statutory duties but we also need to be ambassadors for our children and drive practise that is responsive to children's views. This is a common thread and children and young people experience things differently to adults. They are in receipt of our care and we can in error make decisions that we feel are in young people's best interests, without thoroughly exploring a child's view or appreciating the many different views there may be.	
Promise 10	We promise to work with you and give you all the help and support you need to successfully move from care to adult life .
Response: We would like your views as to how best the BSCB Board can support the changes in approach and what can BSCB Board members do as partners to support the work – e.g. through their agencies becoming foster friendly, or providing independent visitors etc. etc.	
I think BSCB should identify their priorities and campaigns for 2016 and then come back to us to hear how these issues may affect children in care (different to how it effects non children in care) They should be working with scrutiny to ensure policy and process doesn't have an adverse effect on in care/care leavers. They should ensure that in care/care leavers have a particular focus and drive within any of their campaigns.	

3.2 CiCC 2016 Priorities

Children in Care Council have met several times in 2016 to agree a logo and mission statement and take part in discussion around identifying priorities and how they would like to move forward in 2016. These priorities feed directly into the objectives for the corporate parenting task and finish groups.

The CiCC new mission statement;

'Birmingham Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a welcoming group of young people in care.

We are friendly, energetic and enthusiastic.

We are powerful, positive and amazing!

We want to give children in care a voice and we want to tell YOU that if you are in care then YOUR VOICE MATTERS!'

There are a few outstanding objectives from 2015 that still remain as some of their key priorities.

- Pocket money still remains as it is not fully realised until the launch of the new BCC guidance and recommendations in April 2016
- The compilation of positive stories from children and young people across Birmingham about being in care.

For the year 2016 the council are currently planning some of the following objectives;

1. Working on developing their YouTube account to share information about CiCC and other info appropriate and relevant to children in care.
2. They are developing a recruitment campaign that also includes capturing the voices of children outside of the borough through the use of a virtual children in care council.
3. They have a number of meetings set up with professionals and already this year have presented at a conference organised by Cafcass

4.0 Pocket Money and Savings Review

The Corporate Parenting working group responded to a request from the CICC who raised a concern that there was a perceived difference in the levels of personal pocket money paid to children and young people in care across the city, which appeared to change based upon whether or not the children or young person had been home fostered or living in residential accommodation.

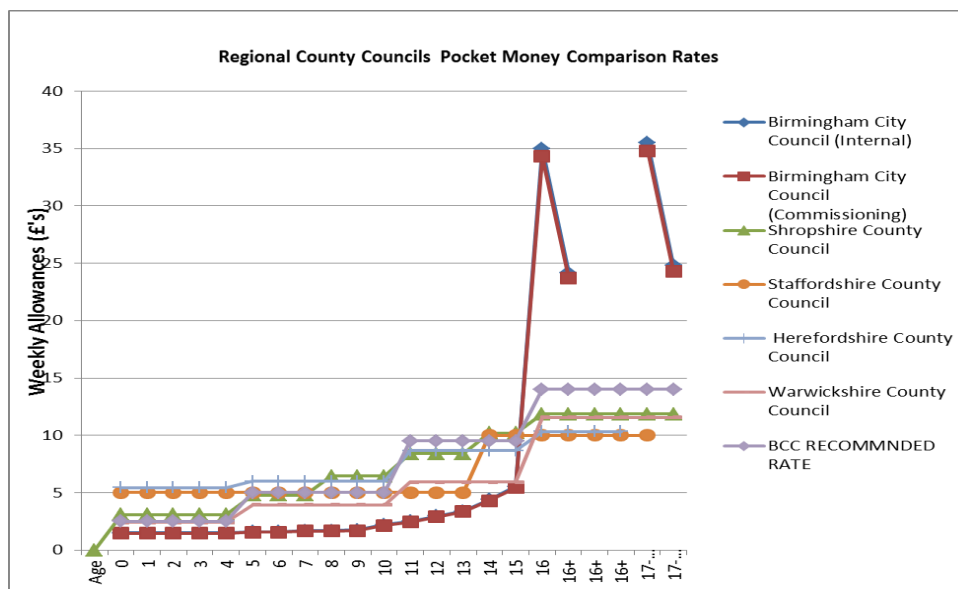
The Corporate Parenting working group listened and assigned a pocket money working group to investigate, made up of fostering team managers, finance team leads and Birmingham Foster Carers Association (BFCA). Firstly, the group was required to identify whether or not a standard policy for pocket money and savings existed across the service. It then carried out the following tasks:

- Reviewing an ongoing consultation by the CICC on pocket money rates paid to young people, and gathering feedback from them and their foster carers. The team then reviewed all the responses to get a clearer understanding of young people's perceptions.

- Reviewing the existing guidance on pocket money rates issued to children and young people within Birmingham, whether based in residential homes or foster carer homes.
- Identifying and analysing the national pocket money rates of Birmingham's statistical neighbours, Core Cities and Regional authorities.
- Once the feedback had been reviewed the working group proposed the recommendations to the Corporate Parent Working Group for setting a new pocket money rate and savings policy comparable to statistical neighbours Core Cities and Regional authority rates.
- Developing separate pocket money and savings policy documents which would standardise rates across all Birmingham's looked after service areas including, Internal Fostering, Commissioning Services, Residential fostering, and other residential settings like schools or secure units/young offender institutions.

The progress and findings from the working group were communicated periodically to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Figure 1.0 PM Regional Comparison Pocket Money rates



The pocket money working group recommended new comparable rates which on average equated to an overall increase in the weekly amounts of pocket money received by young people across the city. The policy is scheduled to go live in April 2016.

5.0 Overnight Stays

The CICC told the Corporate Parenting Board that young people in care were having difficulty arranging sleepovers or overnight stays with friends. They sometimes had to wait several weeks for social workers to agree to individual requests which meant they missed out on opportunities which were available to their peers who were not in care.

The Corporate Parenting Working Group listened and investigated the guidance which was being issued nationally by other similar local authorities and ensured Birmingham City Council's policy was consistent with this.

The guidance which followed stated that:

- The child's carer including Foster Care or Residential Care has the 'delegated authority' to agree to requests for overnight stays.
- This could be subject to certain exceptions which would normally be agreed with the social worker, carer and child and recorded in the placement plan.
- DBS checks are not normally required for overnight stays but may be needed for regular contact.

Procedure Review: A new online children's social care procedure manual for social workers and carers was launched in July 2015. This contains a section on Social Visits and Overnight Stays which includes a definition of what might constitute an overnight stay and suggested guidelines and procedure.

Birmingham City council procedures online reference link:

http://birminghamcs.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_overnight_stays.htm

6.0 Foster Friendly Families and Friends

The Corporate Parenting Working Group investigated an initiative set-up by The Fostering Network called Foster Friendly Families, where employees who foster within an organisation who could have additional time off work to support them in their fostering.

The Corporate Parenting working group liaised with the Fostering Network Charity, the Department For Education (who are the government's first Foster Friendly employer) and BCC HR team to identify the initial requirements to adopt the initiative, and then to formulate a policy to implement it across the organisation.

6.1 BCC Supporting Foster Carers and Family & Friends Carers

Birmingham City Council has become one of fewer than 30 councils across the country to establish itself as a Foster Friendly employer. A partnership has now been secured with the University of Birmingham where BCC Foster Carers are being used as mentors.

There is no right in law to leave for fostering purposes; however, BCC is now making Fostering Leave available to support employees who are also Local Authority foster carers or family & friends carer. This is in addition to current annual leave provisions, public holiday leave, and flexi-leave where applicable. It is also separate from the current provisions for Special Leave.

Staff can access up to 10 days paid and 10 days unpaid foster carers leave per leave year if they are a:

- BCC or other Local Authority foster carer, for example temporary, short term, long term, out of hours emergency or respite fostering
- Caring for a child under a residence or special guardianship order and the child would otherwise be a BCC or other Local Authority 'looked after' child (family and friends carer)

7.0 Corporate Parenting Volunteers

The Corporate Parenting Volunteers scheme began in early 2015, based on the simple idea of pairing up Birmingham City Council's large, altruistic and dedicated workforce, and some of our 2,000 young people in care who need some extra support. In February 2015 a website, short film and basic communications campaign

<http://inline.brm.pri/corporateparenting> attracted nearly 50 staff members to pledge their support for young people in care, and in April we had our first training session for staff members to find out more.

The project evolved through 2015 from initially offering a range of options for staff members, to specifically targeting support with educational attainment in partnership with our LACES service. Two further training sessions for groups of staff were run, each attracting over 20 staff members committed to supporting young people in care.

Advised by social work colleagues, a bespoke training package has been developed by the team which gives safeguarding information, as well as information and guidance, and the opportunity to discuss issues affecting young people in care.

In November 2015 the third corporate parenting training took place where 13 further staff members committed to providing targeted support with educational attainment.

Additional training has been offered including Mentoring and Effective Relationships, and volunteers are encouraged to share ideas and advice via a Yammer group.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from both young people and staff and the scheme continues to grow – raising awareness internally about young people in care and giving very practical and much needed support.

Comments from corporate parent volunteers;

John Greenwood, Business Analyst, *“So far I've helped two young people improve their maths skills so they can gain qualifications. At first I thought they would just need practical tuition, but equally they need self-confidence and a steady focus on getting where they want to be. It's not always comfortable having those conversations, and I don't pretend to be a counsellor, but I do try to boost their self-awareness at the same time as we're sorting out the algebra”.*

Lourell Harris, Corporate Performance Manager, *“My team is more of a back end function, but I wanted to do something to help. For me this seemed like a natural progression, a way to support children in care without actually working in the frontline. The young person I worked with had the aim of getting to university, but needed some support to stay on track. We met up fortnightly, with the odd text message in between. I really, really enjoyed working with her, and was so excited when she came in to thank me - and tell me that she's got her place at university”.*

8.0 Care Leavers and Apprenticeships framework / Linkages

An apprenticeships pathway for young people in care was developed by Employment & Skills team in 2014 and piloted with a group of 9nine care leavers, 4four of whom completed a full year apprenticeship within Birmingham City Council.

The Corporate Parenting Working Group has since undertaken a review in 2015 of similar good practice within other local authorities including Trafford, Derbyshire, Glasgow and Newcastle to see how they are helping to support Care Leavers to access apprenticeships.

A paper on the good practice findings was presented to Councillor Holbrook mid-December 2015 which built upon the previous recommendations from the pilot and included:

- The appointment of 3 additional dedicated Employment Advisors in the Care Leavers 18+ team who can help support this work
- The setting up a care leaver's forum.

The BCC Care Leavers 18+ Team are currently progressing an offer made by University Hospital Birmingham (UHB) to take on up to 60 young people in care or leaving care via their Learning Hub through a mixture of pre-apprenticeship training and apprenticeships.

8.1 Recommendations

An update was presented to the Corporate Parenting Working Group in August 2015 with the following recommendations:

1. As recognised for several years, specialist / dedicated careers information, advice, guidance and employment support needs to be fully integrated into the Care Leaver Team, also linking closely with LACES staff prior to the young person's transition from school to ensure continuity;
2. Closer links need to be created with BCC Public Health, to work together on meeting shared objectives around increasing young people's health and well-being through participation in training and employment; there may be opportunities for creative use of resources here.
3. There needs to be more promotion and take-up of work experience by care leavers; there is a joint DWP/BCC campaign through which any unemployed person over 18 and on benefits can go on 2 – 8 weeks work experience, with no mandation or sanctions, retaining benefits and getting travel expenses paid;
4. Foster carers need more guidance on how they can support young people in the current labour market awareness;
5. Although the viability of a separate 'Employment Charter for Care Leavers' was eventually dismissed, we need to look corporately at more targeted use of Birmingham Charter for Social Responsibility to gain employer support for the City's corporate parenting role and capture opportunities;
6. BCC needs to continue to work with DWP to improve their offer to young people leaving care, around both the services provided by DWP work coaches and the efficient handling of benefit claims.
7. A dedicated Care Leavers Employment Team is needed to coordinate the various EET opportunities available to Care Leavers. Funding to be identified for 4 workers, but this may need reviewing in the future.
8. A Care Leavers Forum should be created to oversee activities and ensure the Voice of the Care Leaver is at the heart of improvements and opportunities available.
9. Further investigate working with organisations highlighted who have supported other authorities with good practice like Catch 22 (Derbyshire – Care Leavers Charter Mark) and New Belongings (Trafford)

9.0 Pathway Planning accommodation and support

In January 2016 the CP group alongside elected members co-chaired an Initial presentation workshop held with a number of key stakeholders regarding Care Leavers Accommodation

and the Support Framework around it. Feedback was collated from the workshop and has been used to shape and inform a proposed project approach and key deliverables.

In February 2016 the corporate parenting task and finish group chaired a project meeting to agree the scope for the re-design and improvement of the Care Leaver's accommodation pathway and to start building a clear project plan for the projects key objectives. This would include:

- A clear project structure
- Agreed products
- Agreed resources needed to deliver it
- To identify risks, issues and dependencies associated with the work

The project scope covers

- Young people (from 16 and 17 year olds in care and 18-25 care leavers) for whom we are the corporate parent.
- The pathway assumes that this is likely to impact on the 15.5+ age group
- This will be an holistic view of all of the needs of young people who will be travelling the leaving care journey
- The project covers the accommodation and support pathway
- This project does not cover the wider pathway plan, unless identified for particular cohorts.
- The project does not cover the interim arrangements being put in place with 16+ supported accommodation providers

The project approach is based up Product-based planning:

- Core idea in PRINCE2 projects
- Iterative
- Looks at what needs to be produced to deliver the project

The Potential Deliverables in Service Design includes

- An as-Is Summary
 - Including current position relating to practice and commissioned services, data analysis
 - Needs Analysis
 - Future Delivery Options
 - Agreed Design Principles
 - Agreed Future Delivery Model including high-level processes

The Potential Deliverables in Practice Changes includes

- Agreed Policies
- Agreed Procedures
- Agreed Staff Guidance
- Agreed Staff Changes (if any)
- Agreed Pathway Plan
- Agreed Electronic Form Changes
- Agreed Training Plan
- Agreed Training Content
- Agreed partnership arrangements

The project is now in the phase of initial scoping before a comprehensive project initiation document (PID) is compiled and presented to the service for discussion and project approval.

10.0 CSE and Missing young people

Children running away and going missing from care, home and education is a central issue for Birmingham safeguarding children board. Current research findings estimate that 25 per cent of children and young people, who go missing are likely to suffer significant harm.

There are specific concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. Many looked after children (LAC) missing from their placements are vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation, especially children in residential care.

New policy and procedure have now been issues and the Corporate Parenting Board will be championing issues of CSE and Missing as one its 2016 priorities.

11.0 Corporate Parenting District Presentations

In 2015 the Corporate Parenting Board carried out a series of presentations to each of the 10 district ward councillors (Table 1.0) regarding what the CP board does and what are the CP responsibilities, with a view to engage the elected members and get them involved in the corporate parenting priorities across their wards.

Table 1.0 Ward Councillors

Councillor	Ward
Cllr Valerie Seabright & Cllr Debbie Clancy	Northfield
Cllr Alex Yip	Sutton Coldfield
Cllr Sharon Thompson	Ladywood
Cllr Mick Brown	Erdington
Cllr Barry Bowles	Hall Green
Cllr Sue Anderson	Yardley
Cllr Barbara Dring	Perry Barr
Cllr Susan Barnett	Selly Oak
Cllr Uzma Ahmed	Hodge Hill
Cllr Caroline Badley	Edgbaston

The presentation meetings relayed the following responsibilities, expectations and participation for corporate parenting by all the elected members.

Corporate Parenting Champions

- Meet regularly as a group
- Chair - Cllr Seabright
- Channel to the CP Board through Cllr Seabright
- Defined role
- Drive the engagement of all elected members
- Model the defined behaviours
- Participate in Task & Finish groups
- Develop and deliver Corporate Parenting responsibilities including through practical actions e.g. mentoring young people in interview techniques

Elected members

- To understand Corporate Parenting
- To be more involved
- To receive more training
- Will be held to what they need to do
- Commit to attend
- Demonstrate the defined behaviours
- More engagement with children and young people

Engagement

- Children and young people's themed and consultative events
- Focused events – on relevant serious issues
- Communication with young people – using technology
- In addition to attending CP board meetings members develop relationships with the frontline workers and with children and families
- Within the local community

Follow on steps

The follow on steps from the presentation was to launch the CP Champions group in 2015 and to arrange CP training for elected members including behaviours on the following;

- Voice of child – central to everything
- Energy
- Responsibility
- Pro-activity
- Accountability
- Engagement
- Having the same aspirations and commitment to children and young people in care as any good parent would have for their own children

12.0 Regulation 44 – Councillor's Engagement

Ensuring the safeguarding and the quality of care in Birmingham Children's homes are at the core of the Regulation 44 task. The registered person of the residential home must ensure that;

- An independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.
- The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether;

- (a) Children are effectively safeguarded; and
- (b) The conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

Regulation 44 reports should be a reliable and regular source of external monitoring ensuring the home has the leadership, resources, skilled and supported staff to meet the needs of each child, and provide a safe, facilitating environment.

Through the corporate parenting board many elected members of Birmingham City Council have taken on the responsibility of the independent person carrying out these monthly visits.

12.1 Responsibility of Members

"We must continue unequivocally to ensure that all professional staff in the city working with children, and with families ...walk in the shoes of a child, and see the world through the eyes of a child, whenever they do something that might affect the life of a child for the better. We want their decisions to be shaped by the children and young people they serve"

- **Jane Held – Independent Chair BSCB**

"We can't put enough emphasis on the role of elected members to ensure the Council acts as an effective Corporate Parent "

- **Local Government Association**

12.2 Role of the visiting Member

- Get an understanding of what is like to live in the home
- Explore the conduct of the home rather than its implementation of policy and procedure, guidance and regulations
- Explore the culture and atmosphere of the home
- Seek young peoples' experience of living in the home
- Explore how the home is managed and staff approach to young people
- Make a judgement on how well the home is meeting the needs of the young people living there.
- Get an understanding of how other agencies support the young people and the staff

Members:

- Should hold no allegiance to adults working in the home
- Should focus the visit on the quality of care received
- Are not expected to have specialist skills
- Are not expected to be experts on legislation, childcare theories of the management of the home
- Should ask questions and explore the way the home is run
- Are free to ask apparently naïve questions – where staff cannot explain in simple words, either they do not understand it themselves or they are not being entirely open
- Should complete a report of their visit
- Should report any safeguarding concerns immediately

Following the visit by the councillors a report will be produced and e-mailed to the children's commissioning team. The report will be circulated to the Home Manager, Service Manager and Assistant Director for Children in Care Provider Services for a response. Finally, the responses will then be returned to the visiting Member.

12. 3 Other seminars for members are being arranged to raise the aware of why Children and young people come into care. The issues of CSE and missing will be highlighted.