

## SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	9 February 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Corporate Parenting Charter: A Promise for Wales
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer: Social Services
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Government have formally launched a Corporate Parenting Charter: 'A Promise for Wales'. The Charter, sets out 11 principles on equality, eradicating stigma, working together, inclusive support, fulfilling ambitions, nurturing, good health, a stable home, education, thriving in the future, and after care support. The Charter also sets 9 promises for how care experienced children and young people will be treated, listened to, and involved in decisions that affect them.

The Charter has been published initially on a voluntary basis. Public sector organisations are encouraged to sign a pledge to fully support the principles set out in the Charter. The pledge commits organisations to ensuring that everything they undertake for care-experienced children and young people is underpinned by empowerment, equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability and protection. The expected approach is to fully respect, protect and promote their human rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The pledge includes a commitment to engage with children and young people to measure organisational success and commitment to the Charter.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Flintshire County Council signs 'the pledge' and adopts the Corporate Parenting Charter: 'A Promise for Wales'
2	The Children's Services Forum take a lead in measuring organisational success and commitment to the Corporate Parenting Charter.

## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Explaining The National Corporate Parenting Charter: A Promise for Wales</b>
1.01	On 22 September 2023 Welsh Government formally launched a Corporate Parenting Charter: 'A Promise for Wales'. The Charter forms part of an ambitious vision for transforming children's services in Wales.
1.02	As part of this vision Welsh Government want to ensure that care experienced children and young people have the same life chances as every other child or young person in Wales. Their rights must be equally respected, and their voice heard, listened to and reflected in action. This was a key message to emerge from a national Care Leavers Summit, which involved carer leavers from Flintshire.
1.03	In collaboration with the Young Ambassadors who attended the Summit, representing care experienced children and young people, Welsh Government developed a shared vision for the future which strengthens public bodies in their role as 'corporate parent'.
1.04	The term "corporate parenting" can be defined as promoting the collective responsibility of the whole public sector to safeguard and promote the rights and life chances of care-experienced children and young people. This is a responsibility of everyone working in the public sector.
1.05	The Charter, sets out 11 principles on equality, eradicating stigma, working together, inclusive support, fulfilling ambitions, nurturing, good health, a stable home, education, thriving in the future, after care support. It encourages all public sector bodies to sign up to these principles as well as 9 promises that set out how care experienced children and young people will be treated, listened to, and involved in decisions that affect them.
1.06	These principles and promises align to the key themes of the UNCRC. They also reflect the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children).
1.07	<b>Why a Charter – What is it for?</b>
1.08	The Charter is a set of principles and promises developed in collaboration with care-experienced young people. It provides a set of promises that can be adopted by any public sector body when engaging with care-experienced children and young people. It also sets out shared principles that all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services to care-experienced children and young people.
1.09	The Charter has been designed for all public sector bodies and senior leaders to sign up to as a good Corporate Parent. Flintshire local authority has the opportunity to be an organisational leader in committing to the Charter. It is important to note that the Charter is not exclusive to local

	<p>authorities and public bodies, and members of the third sector and private sector are encouraged to sign up and become a Corporate Parent. There is a real opportunity to consider how we adopt and promote the Charter locally with partners to ensure the best outcomes for our care experienced children and young people.</p>
1.10	<p><b>Shared Principles and Promises as Corporate Parents</b></p>
1.11	<p>The Charter sets 11 shared principles for Corporate Parenting and these are set out on page 3 of the Charter (Appendix 1). The Charter also sets out the following promises all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people:</p>
1.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them</li> </ul>
1.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect</li> </ul>
1.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will involve all experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.</li> </ul>
1.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will keep all care experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.</li> </ul>
1.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people</li> </ul>
1.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people</li> </ul>
1.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.</li> </ul>
1.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.</li> </ul>
1.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions</li> </ul>
1.21	<p>These promises reflect our existing commitment and approach as a Corporate Parent.</p>
1.22	<p><b>The Pledge</b></p>
1.23	<p>The Charter has been published initially on a voluntary basis. An online Pledge has been developed for organisations to sign up to the Charter. The Pledge is set out below:</p>
1.24	<p>We recognise our part as a parent in the largest family in Wales!</p> <p>In signing this pledge, we fully support the principles set out in this Charter and will live up to the common behaviours.</p>

	<p>We will ensure everything we undertake for care-experienced children and young people is underpinned by empowerment, equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability and protection and fully respects, protects and promotes your human rights under the UNCRC.</p> <p>We will engage with children and young people to measure our success and commitment to the charter.</p> <p>Our pledge is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Work to deliver a better offer of help for you and all care-experienced children and young people in order for you to thrive and reach your potential.</li> <li>✓ Help you gain access to and make the best use of our services.</li> <li>✓ Act in your best interests and make you feel secure and well in our relationship with you.</li> <li>✓ Encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings and where needed provide you with support to promote these.</li> <li>✓ Ensure your voice is heard and actively considered in all decisions about you and explain why decisions have been made.</li> <li>✓ Provide you with information and resources that you need, in a way you understand.</li> <li>✓ Make sure we are accountable to you for the decisions we take and the outcomes that affect your life.</li> <li>✓ Help you to reach your potential.</li> <li>✓ Prepare you for leaving care and support you to thrive independently.</li> <li>✓ Ensure all staff are made aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities during their induction.</li> </ul>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The Charter takes into account legislative duties set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The expectations and requirements of the Charter are consistent with our existing approach to Corporate Parenting.
2.02	Welsh Government are in the process of considering the development of guidance to support implementation of the Charter as well as including a dedicated chapter on Corporate Parenting within the Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked after and accommodated children) under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Once available this further guidance will help inform an implementation and monitoring plan for the Charter. This work will be led through the Childrens Services Forum ensuring the involvement and lead role of young people.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	The Charter provides a whole organisational commitment to our care experienced children and young people. An implementation plan will be developed to ensure that there is a shared understand of the commitment across Council Services and consistency of experience in our interactions with care experienced children and young people.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	A National Corporate Parenting Implementation Group, comprising local authorities, as well as Voices from Care Cymru, the Children’s Commissioner’s office, the National Youth Advocacy Service, Children in Wales, National Adoption Service, and Public Health Wales was established in 2019. The Group played a key role in developing the national Charter.
4.02	In Flintshire we will work with care experienced children and young people to agree a set of principles for how we can deliver and monitor compliance with the Charter. Our care experienced children and young people will be central to this work

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales “A SHARED PARENTING PLEDGE”
5.02	Corporate Parenting Charter –A Promise from Wales Becoming a Corporate Parent –What does that mean for you?

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Craig Macleod, Senior Manager: Children <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 701313 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:craig.macleod@flintshire.gov.uk">craig.macleod@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

8.00	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p><b>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)</b></p> <p>The UNCRC consists of 54 articles that set out children’s rights and how governments should work together to make them available to all children. Under the terms of the convention, governments are required to meet children’s basic needs and help them reach their full potential. Central to this is the acknowledgment that every child has basic fundamental rights.</p>



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales

“A SHARED PARENTING PLEDGE”

[gov.wales](http://gov.wales)

# What is Corporate Parenting?

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- **Corporate parenting promotes the collective responsibility of local authorities to safeguard and promote the rights and life chances of care-experienced children and young people. Children can find more information about their rights here: [Children's Commissioner for Wales – UNCRC Childrens Rights](#).**
- **Supporting care-experienced children and young people through their childhoods and as they leave care should be the responsibility of all public sector bodies.**
- **We want these bodies to understand and develop their responsibilities towards care-experienced children and young people, and to ensure they have the same life chances as all children living in Wales.**



# Why a Charter? What's it for?

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- **A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter has been developed in collaboration with care-experienced young people.**
- **This Charter is a set of promises that can be adopted by any public sector body when engaging with care-experienced children and young people.**
- **It also sets out shared principles that all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services to care-experienced children and young people.**
- **We want all public sector bodies and senior leaders to sign up to this Charter as a good Corporate Parent. This Charter is not exclusive to local authorities and public bodies, and we would welcome any members of the third sector and private sector to sign up and become a Corporate Parent.**
- **The development of this Charter takes into account the overarching duties laid out in Part 2, General Functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Specifically, that a person exercising functions in relation to an individual for example a looked after child must have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the individual (including, for example, language). [www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act](http://www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act)**
- **The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) will be revised to include additional guidance on the Charter. The updated Code of Practice will be published in 2024 and Charter will be reviewed as part of this process.**



# Which kind of public sector body, public service or professionals do we mean?

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**This charter is for any public sector body or individual who engages with or is responsible for care-experienced children and young people to adopt. For example:**

- **Politicians–Welsh Ministers, Members of the Senedd, (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 4).**
- **Independent Bodies – The Children's Commissioner, The Future Generations Commissioner and The Welsh Language Commissioner.**
- **Local Authorities – councillors, chief executives, directors of social services, local authority commissioners and procurement teams, housing and education, Foster Wales and National Adoption Service.**
- **Local Health Boards.**
- NHS Trusts.
- **Regional Partnership Boards.**
- **Social Care Providers – Local authorities, residential children's homes and independent foster agencies.**
- **Social Care Professionals and practitioners – social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), personal advisers, youth and support workers, residential children's home staff, foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive parents.**
- **Housing Providers – housing associations.**
- **Education – schools, governors, universities, colleges and Qualifications Wales.**
- **Transport for Wales.**
- **Third Sector Organisations and voluntary adoption agencies or services.**
- **Inspectorates – Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Estyn and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW).**
- **Cafcass Cymru.**
- **Department for Work and Pensions.**
- **Police – youth justice teams and those supporting individuals in custody.**
- **Employers/Apprenticeship/Traineeship providers.**
- **Other public bodies: National Resources Wales, National Park Authorities, The Arts Council of Wales, Sport Wales, National Library of Wales and National Museum of Wales. (As listed in Section 6 of the Wales Future Generations Act 2015).**

## Shared Principles for Corporate Parents

- **Equality – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC)**
- **Eradicate Stigma – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)**
- **Togetherness – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).**
- **Support – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information an training.**
- **Ambition – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).**
- **Nurture – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).**
- **Good Health – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).**
- **A Stable Home – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).**



- **A Good Education – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).**
- **Thrive – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).**
- **Lifelong – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children’s best interests (Article 3).**

## **Our Promises as Corporate Parents**

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**Set out below are the promises all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people:**

- **We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.**
- **We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.**
- **We will involve all experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.**
- **We will keep all care experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.**
- **We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.**
- **We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.**
- **We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.**
- **We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.**
- **We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.**



# References

Reference	Description
<b>UNCRC Article 2</b>	<b>The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 4</b>	<b>Governments should make these rights available to children.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 12</b>	<b>Respect for children's views. Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 19</b>	<b>Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 20</b>	<b>Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 21</b>	<b>Adoption. Government must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 24</b>	<b>Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 25</b>	<b>(Review of treatment in care). If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example with a foster family or in a hospital they have a right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 28</b>	<b>Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 29</b>	<b>Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 31</b>	<b>All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.</b>
<b>UNCRC Article 39</b>	<b>Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.</b>

# UNCRC

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**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children up to the age of 18. It recognises not only their basic human rights but gives them additional rights to protect them from harm as one of the most vulnerable groups in society. In 2011 the Welsh Government made the UNCRC law in Wales, with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Measure places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have a due regard to the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols when making their decisions. Altogether there are 54 articles in the convention. Articles 1-42 set out how children should be treated.**

**For further information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child please visit: [The Welsh Government's UNCRC website](#) [Children's rights](#) | [Sub-topic](#) | [GOV.WALES](#).**



# Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## Becoming a Corporate Parent – What does that mean for you?

Corporate Parenting is about supporting care experienced children and young people to have the same opportunities in life as all children and young people in Wales.

**By signing up to be a corporate parent, you are agreeing to consider the following principles when delivering your existing services and support, planning new services and/or engaging with care-experienced children and young people:**

## The Principles

### Principle 1

**Support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales.**

**Example: Support a care experienced child or young person to find a stable home with provides them with the opportunity to access education and fulfil their potential.**

### Principle 2

**Recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care.**

**Example: Treat all children and young people the same no matter their background.**

### Principle 3

**Work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services.**

**Example: Ensure forums or stakeholder groups are in place or established to develop new services includes care-experienced representatives.**



### Principle 4

**Ensure those working in your organisations working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people's needs and/or have access to information and training.**

**Example: The needs of care-experienced children and young people are referred to in induction training of new staff.**

### Principle 5

**Ensure that every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and is able to enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities.**

**Example: Can concessionary and/or discounted access be made available for sport, leisure and cultural activities to care-experienced children and young people.**



## Principle 6

**By making all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved.**

**Example: By actively listening to all care-experienced children and young people you engage with.**

## Principle 7

**By providing support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people.**

**Example: Ensuring care-experienced children and young people are supported to attend appointments and are directed to the right service to meet their needs.**

## Principle 8

**By seeking out and providing stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people.**

**Example: By ensuring that the needs and wishes of the child and young person is central to any foster or adoption placement being considered.**

## Principle 9

**By providing opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be.**

**Example: Offering care experienced children and young people work experience placements, work shadowing opportunities, internships, traineeships and apprenticeships.**

## Principle 10

**By ensuring all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood.**

**Example: Can you provide one-to-one mentoring on how to manage their finances, their career/employment guidance and further education opportunities.**

## Principle 11

**By working to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available to care experienced young people after leaving care.**

**Example: Providing access to support and information through a variety of channels – websites, apps, social media and meetings.**