

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 14 th May 2024
Report Subject	Corporate Parenting Charter: A Promise for Wales
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)

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

1.00	EXPLAINING A NATIONAL CORPORATE PARENTING CHARTER: A PROMISE FOR WALES
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	Why a Charter – What is it for?
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>Shared Principles and Promises as Corporate Parents</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"> • 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.
1.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
1.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will involve all experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
1.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will keep all care experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
1.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
1.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
1.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
1.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
1.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
1.21	<p>These promises reflect our existing commitment and approach as a Corporate Parent.</p>
1.22	<p>The Pledge</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! 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. 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"> ✓ 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. ✓ Help you gain access to and make the best use of our services. ✓ Act in your best interests and make you feel secure and well in our relationship with you. ✓ Encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings and where needed provide you with support to promote these. ✓ Ensure your voice is heard and actively considered in all decisions about you and explain why decisions have been made. ✓ Provide you with information and resources that you need, in a way you understand. ✓ Make sure we are accountable to you for the decisions we take and the outcomes that affect your life. ✓ Help you to reach your potential. ✓ Prepare you for leaving care and support you to thrive independently. ✓ Ensure all staff are made aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities during their induction.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>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.</p>
2.02	<p>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.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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.

5.00	APPENDICES
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?

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Craig Macleod, Senior Manager: Children Telephone: 01352 701313 E-mail: craig.macleod@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - 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>