

# Report to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

3 July 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Corporate Parenting Week
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Children and Education, Michael Jarrett
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Michael Jarrett, Director of Children and Education <a href="mailto:Michael_Jarrett@sandwell.gov.uk">Michael_Jarrett@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Sally Giles, Assistant Director – Children's Commissioning, Partnerships and Improvement <a href="mailto:Sally_giles@sandwell.gov.uk">Sally_giles@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Rosa DaSilva, Corporate Parenting Officer, <a href="mailto:Rosa_DaSilva@sandwell.gov.uk">Rosa_DaSilva@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 that the Scrutiny Board considers and comments on the report detailing the feedback from corporate parenting week, which took place from the 12 June to 16 June 2023.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations


- 2.1 As part of the continuing activities to raise awareness around corporate parenting and the responsibilities that are shared across the Council and partners it was agreed by the Cabinet Member for Children and Education, in partnership with the co-chair of the Corporate Parenting



Board (who is also the chair of the Forum for Independent Adults), that Sandwell deliver a focussed programme of activities in the form of a 'Corporate Parenting Week'

2.2 The purpose of this item is to provide an update for consideration and discussion on the delivery of this programme of activities.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people</p> <p>Every councillor and officer within the council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child.</p> <p>Having an effective corporate parenting function ensures services and partners are appropriately challenged to provide the best possible services for children in care and care leavers.</p>
---	---

### 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 In 2022, the Local Government Association (LGA) facilitated training sessions for Sandwell Cabinet Members, Elected Members and the Corporate Parenting Board. The LGA recognised the progress Corporate Parents as a multiagency team are making with regard to improving the approach to Corporate Parenting in Sandwell.

4.2 The first annual Sandwell Corporate Parenting Week was held on Monday 12 June - Friday 16 June 2023. As a partnership, SMBC, Sandwell Children's Trust, Black Country NHS Foundation and CAHMS colleagues were aiming to:

- Raise the profile of corporate parenting across partnerships.
- Ensure a clear understanding of what it means to be a corporate parent.



- For individuals to develop the confidence to become a good corporate parents.

The week delivered various activities and sessions which were held virtually and face to face.

- 4.3 The week was opened with a 1-hour virtual live event on Microsoft Teams presented by Chief Executive Sandwell Council, Director of Children's Services, Chief Executive Sandwell Children's Trust, Chair Sandwell Children's Trust, Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Education, Chair of Forum for Independent Young Adults and Participation Manager Sandwell Childrens Trust.
- 4.4 Over 600 employees from Sandwell Council and Sandwell Children's Trust colleagues attended the virtual event, which was led by the voice of a care experienced young person, now a care leaver, who shared the story pf their journey through care.
- 4.5 During the week sessions delivered were:
- Sandwell Children's Trust's provided a webinar to help colleagues understand the journey of the children in care and care leavers.
  - Dr Jennifer A Nock delivered a trauma-informed webinar on supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma.
  - LGA delivered 3 sessions across the week: Face to face corporate parenting training to Sandwell Council leadership team and assistant directors, a virtual training session for newly elected members and a workshop for Corporate Parent Board which focussed on developing a new corporate parenting strategy.
  - CAMHs and Sandwell SMBC delivered a 1-hour webinar on Understanding the Emotional wellbeing and mental health of Sandwell children in care and care leavers.
  - Health Partners celebrated Corporate Parenting week at Sandwell Hospital. They set up a stand outside the reception area near the children's outpatients. This was an opportunity to raise Corporate Parents awareness to all health professionals.



- Sandwell Virtual School provided partners with an opportunity to understand and learn more about the education of children in care and care leavers
- The Employment and Skills Team held set up a face-to-face networking workshop with business partners and care-experienced young people to identify what and how support can be offered to ensure that young people access employment and apprenticeships.
- The question and answer's session was delivered by key members of the board.

4.6 Throughout the week, feedback has been positive and there has been clear learning across the Council, Sandwell Children's Trust and partners – See Appendix A for feedback.

4.7 Key actions were identified from Corporate Parenting Week which will be a focus over the next 12 months:

- Redraft the Corporate Parent strategy
- Create a new vision
- Create a performance that measures what success looks like in terms of the new 5 pledges and 25 promises.
- Create an Assistant Director's group to which identifies gaps in services for children in care and care leavers.
- Work as a multiagency partnership to ensure Sandwell children in care and care leavers become a protective characteristic
- Ensure further corporate parenting training is provided to business partners
- Ensure all Elected Members and colleagues receive corporate parenting training in the next 12 months.

## 5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative to delivering a 'corporate parenting week' would be to continue to deliver the standard activities of the Corporate Parenting Board, this may mean that the wider workforce and partners do not fully understand their responsibilities and young people do not feel listened to.



The plan therefore would be to hold a Corporate Parenting Week every year to shine a spotlight on this important area and ensure all staff in the Council and partner agencies about their corporate Parenting responsibilities.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The activities were delivered from existing resources, with a small additional contribution from the virtual school to fund an external speaker.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	<p>The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority, or is under 25 and was looked-after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent.</p> <p>There is an established Corporate Parenting Board that is co-chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Education and a care experienced young person.</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	The Council's strategic risk register identifies no red risks relevant to this report.
<b>Equality:</b>	An Equality Impact Assessment screening is not required for this report. However, effective delivery of the corporate parenting function will have a positive effect on the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families in Sandwell, including those with protected characteristics.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The health and wellbeing of children in care and care experienced young people is a key element of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.
<b>Social Value</b>	The Corporate Parenting Board oversees activity that contributes to social value including working to increase the opportunities for young people to gain work experience and access apprenticeships and employment and training opportunities.



<b>Climate change</b>	There is no direct climate change impact associated with this report.
<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	The report details the activities that were delivered as part of corporate parenting week and contribute to this priority.

## 7. Appendices

Appendix A – Detailed session breakdown

Appendix B – Initial feedback from participants

