

Appendix A

Scrutiny Board

Corporate Parenting Week 12th – 16th June 2023
Additional information of each session

Monday 12th June

The week was opened with a 1-hour virtual live event on Microsoft Teams presented by:

- *Shokat Lal, Chief Executive Sandwell Council*
- *Michael Jarrett, Director of Children's Services, Sandwell Council*
- *Emma Taylor, Chief Executive, Sandwell Children's Trust*
- *Rt Hon Jacqui Smith, Chair, Sandwell Children's Trust*
- *Councillor Simon Hackett, Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Education*
- *Lukas, Chair, Forum for Independent Young Adults*
- *Abdul Kahar, Participation Manager*

The event was led by the voice of the young person, sharing their story as a child going into the care system, living away from their biological family, and now learning to be a care leaver. Our senior leaders and officer highlighted the importance of Corporate parenting and that we are all Corporate Parents.

600-615 of Sandwell Council and Sandwell Children's Trust colleagues tuned in to watch the event. The event sparked interest from colleagues. There was a large interest in how services can improve as Corporate Parents and the experiences of Sandwell children in care and Care leavers.

On Monday afternoon, Sandwell Children's Trust's Head of Services delivered a virtual webinar for 1 hour on Microsoft Teams to Understand the journey of the children in care and Care leavers. The open webinar showcased how the whole multiagency team becomes a part of the child's and young person's journey while in the care system and beyond.

The event was open to Sandwell Council and Sandwell Children's Trust colleagues and to the wider partnership. 40 participants attended the virtual session. Participant's feedback was positive, and participants expressed that the webinar was insightful.

Tuesday 13th June

In the morning, *Dr Jennifer A Nock* delivered a trauma-informed Microsoft teams webinar for 1 hour on *Supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma*.

The webinar focused on the following:

- What is Attachment and why does it matter?
- The impact of developmental trauma The D Word - discipline
- Take away key tools, techniques and relational activities to develop positive, nurturing relationships.

The session was interactive, with handouts provided to the 25 attendees. Participants were asked to consider

- How do professionals work with children?
- How could they adapt their practice with the understanding of the trauma children and young people have experienced?

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The session was interactive, with handouts provided to the 25 attendees. Participants were asked to consider how they work with children and how they could work differently with an understanding of the trauma children and young people have been through.

Key takeaways included a link to a training session provided to foster carers and connected carers, the webinar presentation would be highly invaluable for them as they are part of the Sandwell family, and they should be able to access the training. School leaders were asked to attend and access this training to understand why some behaviours may be present.

Overall, the session supported participants in understanding how as Corporate Parents, we can support children in care to understand their behaviours and work on strategies to support them.

Participants' feedback was the webinar was *'informative and helpful in putting things in a conceptual framework, it was great input, it was very relevant, and it was a nice introduction to childhood trauma, and ways of managing the day-to-day examples were beneficial thank you.'*

The LGA delivered Corporate Parenting Training to the Sandwell Council leadership team face-to-face for 2 hours. The training focused on:

- What is a Corporate Parent?
- What does it mean to be a Corporate parent?
- How can Sandwell Council leadership team be better Corporate Parents?

The group discussed how the council's directorates could be better Corporate Parents. This included reflecting on personal understanding and knowledge of what it means to be a child in care and care leavers.

The 19 participants agreed that the assistant directors would form a group to identify how services can better support Sandwell children in care and care leavers, with the support and leadership from the Corporate Parenting officer and young people. Leaders will focus on the data to identify the service gap and effectively support children and young people.

Participant's feedback was that the training was informative and provided an in-depth understanding of and how they can be Corporate Parents. Some leaders admitted they do not consider children in care and care leavers when making policy decisions. This was echoed across the group. Some leaders felt that children in care and care experienced young people should be a protective characteristic.

To raise the profile of Sandwell Corporate Parenting, the LGA facilitated a 2-hour workshop for the board. The face-to-face session was attended by 19 participants, including elected members, multiagency partners and young people.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023 expired in April 2023. As part of the project to redraft the new strategy, the LGA delivered a workshop to begin redrafting the new vision and strategy. The session focused on the new redrafted 5 pledges and 25 promises, put together by the voices of Sandwell and the forum for independent young adults.

With the support from the young people, partners were split into 4 groups to explore how each pledge and promise would look in the redrafted strategy. The group agreed that the vision

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statement should be written with children in care and care leavers with the consideration of the new pledges and promises.

The LGA suggested that the vision and strategy should be a Sandwell Corporate Parenting vision across all partnerships. The board was advised to lead on the redrafting of the strategy, ensure the multiagency partner's feedback on the final version and sign off at the Corporate Parenting board meeting.

Feedback from members was that by redrafting the pledges and promises, new vision and strategy, the board needs to be clear on how we will measure success between 2023 to 2026.

As part of Corporate Parenting Week, Sandwell Corporate Parenting annual report 2021 to 2023 was sent for approval at full council on Tuesday, 13th June. The report was presented by Councillor Simon Hackett, elected member for Friars Park and Children and Education Services, and young people, Ieasha Khan and Lukas.

They shared their experiences working with the Corporate Parenting Board and Sandwell Children's Trust participation team. They challenged Cabinet and elected members to be better Corporate Parents to the children in care and care leavers in their wards.

Following a round of applause, the Mayor echoed the importance of Cabinet and elected members to be better Corporate Parents, and the full council approved the annual report

14th June 2023

CAMHs and Sandwell transformation partner delivered a 1-hour webinar on Microsoft Teams on Understanding the *Emotional wellbeing and mental health of Sandwell Children in care and Care Leavers*.

The session focused on:

- Early Trauma and attachment difficulties
- Understanding the Emotional wellbeing and mental health of Sandwell Children in care and Care Leavers
- Transition information

The session informed partners about the support offered in Sandwell from CAMHS and Sandwell Council as part of our corporate parenting responsibility. It highlighted children's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs in care and care leavers.

Facilitators signed posted participants who wanted to understand more about the Emotional wellbeing and mental health of children, young adults and families.

The 19 participants responded that the session was interesting, insightful, and useful and insightful information. During the questions and answers, participants were interested in further understanding the topic.

To mark Corporate Parenting Week, OICB partners celebrated in Sandwell Hospital. Attending over the day was designated nurses, designated doctor, foster carers forum representatives, care leavers, Sandwell Children's Trust fostering recruitment and Cllr Simon Hackett.

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Partners set up a stand outside the reception area near the children's outpatients. This was an opportunity to raise awareness as Corporate Parents and health partners. NHS staff visited the stand throughout the day and were reminded that they are Corporate Parents, including:

- Junior doctors
- Paediatric consultants and nurses
- Business manager for children and young people at Sandwell Hospital
- Medical Director for Children and Women's
- Clinical Director for Acute Paediatrics.
- We handed out information and took contact of individuals interested in fostering for Sandwell, handed out leaflets on Adoption in Backcountry.

Photos of the day were taken by children's trust and SWBH comms and shared in hospital communication.

Sandwell Virtual school set up a face to face event to give the wider partnerships an opportunity to understand and learn more about the education of children in care and care leavers. The event *Meet the Virtual School - Understanding the Education of children in care and Care Leavers as Corporate Parents* was also an opportunity to:

- Understand the importance of education for Sandwell Children in Care
- How Personal Education Plans play a critical part in raising aspirations
- How the extensive package delivered by the Virtual School helps our children and carers to raise expectations.

The session was set up to run in 3 x 1-hour slots. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the event was cut short to 1 hour and only 3 participants attended including Cllr Simone Hackett the first session.

In the evening, Voices of Sandwell and Forum for Independent Young Adults invited Cabinet members, Sandwell council Chief executive, directors and the Corporate Parenting Board to attend their face-to-face weekly forum at the METSEC building in Oldbury from 5:30 till 7pm.

Sandwell Children's Trust participation team aimed for the session to engage senior leaders, the children, and young people. It was an opportunity for partners to meet their Corporate children, learn more about their interest's and meet the children they are championing for. Both young people and partners engaged in group workshops which focused on the 5 pledges and 25 promises. This was an opportunity for the young people to explain their pledges and promises, and as Corporate Parents we should interrupt them. Both Forums felt that understanding key terms of care system, the impact emotional wellbeing and mental health, and but also for seniors. leaders and partners to understand that all the pledges and promises are important.

Participants included 9 of Sandwell Children's Trust multiagency team, 7 Sandwell councils colleagues including the chief executive, 7 cabinet members and 15 young people. Overall, it was a successful event, with activities ranging from everyone making animal noises, singing, game boards and the opportunity to a face to face interaction with the young people.

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15th June 2023

The employment and skills team set up a 2-hour face-to-face networking/ workshop session at the METSEC Build with 6 business partners and 8 care-experienced young people.

The session aimed for businesses and Care experienced young people to discuss how businesses can better support young people in their organisations. The Session was divided into 3 workshop groups to have various discussions led by the questions for business partners and young people below:

- Q to employers – What experience do you have of employing care leavers?
- Q to Care leavers – What advice would you give to prospective employers wanting to support care leavers?
- Q to employers – What training do you feel your organisation has or may require supporting a care leaver in the workplace?
- Q to Care Leavers – What do you want to gain from a work opportunity?
- Q to Care Leavers – What are the challenges to taking up an offer of a work experience placement and/or apprenticeship/job?
- Q to employers – what are the next steps for organisation?
- Q to Care leavers - Any other questions?

The 3 groups were engaged in progressive discussions regarding the best way to support care experienced young people in the workplace. Some outcomes were that businesses understood that one size does not fit all, and what may be good for one young person is not good for all young people. Young people were vocal in expressing that not everyone person will want to share that they are a care leaver, but others may feel it is helpful to have businesses and employers know to ensure the best support is in place in case they are going through any personal issues.

Businesses and employers admitted that they could do more for care experienced young people. They understood that part of the work is to be more empathic and understanding is part of the work to remove the negative stigma around Children in care and care leavers. Businesses fed back that the session gave them a better understanding on the needs of children in care and care leavers.

In the evening, the LGA delivered a 1-hour virtual Corporate Parenting training on Microsoft teams to newly elected members and wider partners, *Corporate Parenting through the non-executive Councillor Lens*. The training focused on informing partners:

- What is a Corporate Parent?
- What does it mean to be a Corporate parent?
- How can Sandwell Council leadership team be better Corporate Parents?
- The importance of being a partnership to support children in care and care leavers.

23 participants attended the virtual training. Partners engaged in progressive discussions on how best to support children in care and care experienced young people. Participants felt that Sandwell children in care and care leavers should be a protected characteristic and care leavers should be entitled to receive birthday and Christmas presents.

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16th June 2023

As a partnership, those who coordinated the week, including Cllr Simon Hackett, delivered a virtual questions and answers session for partners who participated in the week's virtual and face-to-face events. This was an opportunity for those who participated to ask further questions about the week and share what they took away from the week.

To close the week, a video recapping the week's aim was shared with the group. The 22 participants reflected on the week's outcome, what we will do better next year and how we will keep ensuring Corporate Parenting continues to be a topic of conversation throughout the year.

Key actions from the week for Corporate Parenting to:

- Redraft the Corporate Parent strategy
- Create a new vision
- Measure what success of the new 5 pledges and 25 promises will look like.
- Form an Assistant director's group to identify 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.