

# Barnet Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel

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These **terms of reference** set out the working arrangements and information about the Panel, such as its purpose, membership, and operation.

## Purpose

1. To ensure that Barnet acts as a good corporate parent to Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers (CL) corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.
2. To monitor and challenge the performance of the Council and its partner agencies regarding outcomes for LAC and CL.
3. Communicate the views and opinions of LAC, CL and families to the Council that trigger and influence better outcomes and best practice.
4. To ensure all Councillors are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities through training and communication.

## Objectives

- To support councillors in discharging their duties as Corporate Parents to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of appropriate, high quality placements for all children in care
- To monitor, evaluate and regularly review the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan
- To monitor adherence to the 'Pledge' to LAC
- To consider performance management information, both quantitative and qualitative, from all services delivering to LAC and CL.
- To receive regular activity reports from the Virtual School Headteacher.
- Ensure up to date research and policy development are communicated and consideration given to initiatives to develop services and improve outcomes
- To refer significant issues on activity and outcomes to the Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee

## Term

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed as appropriate.

## Membership

Membership of the Panel comprises of the Members and officers listed below:

### Councillors –

Nine Members of the Council, including the lead member for children's services. It is expected that the panel will comprise cross party membership.

### Officers –

- Strategic Director for Children and Young People
- Operational Director Family Services
- Voice of the Child Co-ordinator
- Virtual School representative
- Lead for Health of Looked After Children
- Foster Care representative
- Other officers as required

When members or officers are unable to attend, they may nominate a suitable substitute to attend in their place.

The Chairman will seek the contribution of other partners and/or key individuals as and when required, including LAC/CL and foster carers.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- To take an overview of the Council's and partner agencies' responsibilities towards LAC and CL.
- To examine ways in which the Council as a whole and partner agencies can improve the life chances of LAC and CL
- Ensure there are good joint working arrangements between council departments and partner agencies.
- To consider and regularly review a Corporate Parenting Strategy setting out key priorities and areas for action
- To provide a forum for LAC/CL to participate and enable them to have the opportunity to talk about issues relating to their own direct experiences of services they have received.
- The Panel will ensure that positives experiences/services are maintained and lessons are learnt and changes made in the areas that require improvement.
- To comment on and contribute to plans, policies and strategies for LAC/CL as appropriate and make recommendations for action.
- To have a monitoring role on relevant Performance Indicators for all LAC/CL.

- Monitor the plans/needs of children in secure accommodation
- To review reports on CL needs including employment, further education, training, housing.
- To review annual reports on the following services: Adoption; Fostering; Complaints.
- To meet with looked after children and their carers on a regular basis to consult and celebrate achievements.

The panel is an informal working group, whose purpose is to advise the Council. It is not authorised to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Panel members are also expected (outside of meetings) to:

1. Participate in relevant workshops
2. Meet with children and young people at formal and informal Children in Care (CiC) Council network events.

### **How the Panel will operate**

- Chair – The Chair should be the Lead Member for Children Services
- Deputy Chair – to be elected by the Panel
- Absence of the Chair or Deputy Chair – A replacement Chair will be elected for the duration of the meeting from the Panel Membership in attendance by a majority vote
- Relationship with Children in Care Council – The Panel will meet at least once a year with representatives from the CiC Council. The CiC Council will set the agenda for these meetings.
- Access to Meetings – meetings will not be open to the public.