

Somerset Corporate Parenting Board
Annual Report
2021-22



1. Summary

- 1.1** The Somerset Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) meets quarterly to take reports from its four sub-groups on progress to improving the lives of children and young people in care. It is also responsible for making sure that the aims of the Somerset's Corporate Parenting Strategy are met.
- 1.2** In 2021-2022 children looked after, care leavers, their carers and the services that support them in Somerset have worked hard to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, many schools are still working on getting back to pre-pandemic attendance levels. The CPB has strived for assurance that our young people's experiences and needs have been understood and met during this recovery period. We also want to ensure those needs shape our local conversation and actions about how we support the outcomes of the impact of the pandemic for our young people and the people who care for them in the future.
- 1.3** During this recovery period the CPB continues to function effectively with reports from officers and partners showing clear progress against the seven Principles of Corporate Parenting and our Ofsted Improvement programme. This annual report highlights the high quality of delivery that our front-line staff undertake, and the Board's ability to influence this delivery through its direct contact with operational leads in its subgroups.
- 1.4** The Board has continued to report progress virtually this year; with officers, sub-groups and members embedding their knowledge of technology and learning how to collaborate effectively through screens. This report highlights clear signs of progress and success as well as acknowledging areas that still need to improve to support our children looked after and care leavers to be safe, well and prepared for adult life.
- 1.5** The Board has also prepared to access the advantages that a unitary council will offer the children and young people we care for from 2023.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Corporate Parenting Board requests;
 - That Council recommends a focus on corporate parenting responsibility as we move to a unitary council
 - That Council supports and promotes a whole council approach to create practical and specific offers to Care Leavers through our Local Offer and the Care Leaver Covenant
 - That Council extend its thanks to the Somerset Care Council's young people for all the hard work that they undertake.



3. Background

3.1 The role of the Somerset Corporate Parenting Board is to ensure that Somerset County Council, together with the four District Councils, fulfil their duties towards children looked after (CLA); corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies, including the NHS and Police. The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 - 2025 and Terms of Reference (TOR), including membership of the Corporate Parenting Board, clearly define roles and responsibilities.

The Corporate Parenting Board has met quarterly throughout the year, receiving regular updates from officers, partners and the Somerset In Care Council (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC) who are a representative group of young people looked after or leaving care and are supported by a Participation Worker (see **Appendix B** for their report). The voice of the child is a key aspect of the Strategy and the Board has continued to engage with young people, both through their representation on the Board, and through SiCC and SLCC which is well established and has an effective and regular link with the Board.

The Council's corporate parenting arrangements were reviewed following May 2017 Local Elections to ensure Somerset continues to provide a robust Corporate Parenting approach. Preparations are now in place to review arrangements after the forthcoming local elections – May 2022.

Full council in June 2017 approved the new elected members, and the updated annual action plan, and the arrangements set out in the corporate parenting strategy. Currently, nine elected members are committed to the Board.

The overall aim of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019 - 2022 is to strengthen good practice through a whole council approach to corporate parenting and a strong and effective approach to partnership working, thus improving the achievement, life chances and opportunities for all children looked after and care leavers.

3.2 Promotion of the Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting:

In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles set out Seven Principles (identified in section one of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people as follows:

1. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
2. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings



3. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
4. to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
5. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
6. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

These principles form the structure of our actions and guide the decisions and challenges we make as a board.

- 3.3** The focus of the Corporate Parenting Board is on the delivery of five priorities covering placement sufficiency and stability, education, health, voice of the child and leaving care through well-established sub-groups with good cross agency working, led by a senior officer, and supported by a Councillor from the Board. Additionally, the key area of foster carer development is led by the council's fostering service. Action owners on the groups take responsibility for issues to deliver solutions within deadlines.

The outcomes of this work are reported quarterly through the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) performance reporting arrangements, against four improvement programmes. Reports are complemented by detailed data and performance measures provided to the Board to support them in their role in leading and challenging service delivery.

- 3.4** This report provides an update of the function and impact of the Board over the past 12 months.



4. 2021 – 2022 Achievements

4.1 Achievements 2021 - 2022 (see **Appendix A**) : this information evaluates the progress against the annual priorities set for 2021/22

4.2 The format/governance of the Corporate Parenting Board:

The Board has continued to meet virtually following the lockdown during pandemic in line with national and local COVID guidelines. Attendance has been strong and use of technology and virtual meeting etiquette has been embedded.

The chair of the Corporate Parenting Board is a member of the Partnership Business Group of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership. The group reports to and aligns to the Safeguarding priorities and those of the Children & Young People's Plan 2019 – 2022.

4.3 The chair especially wishes to highlight the many positive outcomes from the work of the Board and sub-groups especially:

1. Care Experienced people of any age are now part of SCC Guaranteed Interview Scheme, where the essential criteria of a job are met
2. There is more capacity for the Medical Adviser for Adoption for compliance with the Adoption Agencies Regulations
3. The health of Children Looked After and Care Leavers in COVID recovery is promoted with practitioners and carers
4. All 16-17 years care leavers receive hard copies of their Health Passports
5. All children coming in care aged 5+ years meet an advocate to learn about their rights and how to communicate using Mind of My Own
6. 95% of all Child Protection Conferences now have advocacy representation
7. Online Corporate Parenting training to all SCC staff has resulted in 800+ completed modules
8. SiCC and SLCC are involved in the strategic partnership to commission homes for children – Homes2Inspire – a collaboration between commissioning, procurement, CSC, SiCC and SLCC and The Shaw Trust
9. Electronic Personal Education Plans (E-PEPs) are now fully launched with key monitoring delivered by WelfareCall – EPEP, attendance, suspensions and exclusions
10. The Virtual Head now has a strategic role around the education of all children with social workers and support and monitoring in place
11. A collaboration with Job Centre, leaving care service and SomersetWorks has seen a reduction in care leavers who are NEET from 36% (2019/20) to 30% June 2022



12. A specialist senior leaving care worker has been recruited to reduce homelessness
13. Long term placement stability for CLA has increased to 67% compared to 63.6% at the same point last year

4.4 SiCC & SLCC update: (see **Appendix B**)

- The main focus for SiCC and SLCC this year has been the amazing opportunities that the new Strategic Partnership has offered our young people. From high level decision making, branding workshops and interviews, this has been a real development of SiCC and SLCC's skills and capabilities.
- The Annual Achievements Awards ceremony had to be a smaller affair due to COVID restrictions but the young people hosted a considerate and engaging event at Dillington House - enjoyed by all who attended
- The young people interviewed for , and welcomed, their new Participation Worker who brought a wealth of skills and experiences that has changed the way young people engage with the Corporate Parenting Board and has given greater opportunities for more young people to take part.

5. Areas for Development

- 5.1
- Areas for Development (see **Appendix A**) – this information sets out the development areas for 2022/23.

6. Appendices

- **Page 7: Appendix A** – Corporate Parenting Board Achievements and Areas for Development 2021 – 2022
- **Page 15: Appendix B** – SiCC and SLCC Annual Report 2021 - 2022
- **Page 19: Appendix C** – Corporate Parenting Board Strategy 2022- 2025
- **Page 37: Appendix D** – Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference 2021 – 2022
- **Page 42: Glossary of Terms**
- **Link to Somerset's [Local Offer for Care Leavers](#)**



Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Board Achievements and Areas for Development 2021 - 2022

<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22</p>	<p>More capacity for the Medical Adviser for Adoption for compliance with the Adoption Agencies Regulations. This investment to support adoption services is through medical, nursing, midwifery and administration support to affect timeliness of adoption reviews.</p> <p>The health of Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers (CL) in COVID recovery was promoted with practitioners and carers knowing where vaccinations and support were available.</p> <p>Dental assessments dramatically decreased during COVID and were slow to improve; in 2021 rose from 55.4% of CLA receiving assessment to 66.8%. All dentists received the Chief Dental Officer for England’s letter reminding them of their responsibility to CLA.</p> <p>All 16- 17 years care leavers received hard copies of their Health Passports; work in place to include 18 years+ who have left care.</p> <p>2 additional CLA nurses recruited to start in post May 2022.</p> <p>Improved hospital discharge for CLA in acute paediatric units with complex needs.</p> <p>92.2% of Initial Health Assessments complete this year which is an overall improvement; Review Health Assessments remain stable at 88%.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2022 - 23</p>	<p>Ensure that all Children Looked After have robust statutory health assessments which are completed in a timely way by the right Health professional, are included in the child’s care plan and are considered at each CLA Review meeting.</p> <p>A greater focus to ensure the mental health health needs of CLs are met including transition to adult services.</p> <p>Improve access to and uptake of annual dental assessments.</p> <p>Learning from Safeguarding Reviews where CLA is involved to be embedded into subgroup agenda.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group

<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22</p>	<p>Route One staff now meet anyone over aged 5 years when they first come into care and demonstrate Mind of My Own; regular staff training on Mind of My Own is now offered to CSC teams.</p> <p>95% of all Child Protection Conferences now have advocacy representation.</p> <p>SiCC & SLCC renewed The Pledge to incorporate into CPB Strategy 2022-2025.</p> <p>Face to face meetings of the Care Councils re-commenced after lock down, with other options including Zoom meetings, WhatsApp chats and 1 to 1 meetings for young people who are unable to attend the core meetings.</p> <p>Young people took part in a review of the Strategic Partnership with Oxford Brooke university and congratulated on for the level of their collaboration and engagement.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2022 - 23</p>	<p>Those charged with the responsibility of acting as corporate parents in Somerset are aware of the expectations upon them and the purpose of their role.</p> <p>Children and young people are supported to participate in their CLA reviews and have their views heard.</p> <p>Route One delivering introduction to Mind of My Own and to monitor statements of concern.</p> <p>SiCC and SLCC website to be refreshed.</p> <p>Review of The Pledge.</p> <p>Embed greater access to Advocacy especially for CP Conferences and CLA reviews, and increasing access to Independent Visitors (IVs).</p> <p>Extend the reach and purpose of SiCC and SLCC.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice of the Child Sub-Group

<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22</p>	<p>Significant increase in the use of advocacy – 703 pieces of advocacy delivered this year including to CLA, Secure Panel, Family Group Conferencing, Complaints, Children In Need and Child Protection Conference.</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) training launched internally through The Learning Centre (TLC) in June 2020; <500 internal staff have undertaken the module this year but >300 external take up.</p> <p>SiCC and SLCC made an animation called How to make a Complaint about Children’s Services – to support children and young people through the process.</p> <p>Scaled down Annual Achievements Awards ceremony 2021 due to COVID requirements – 120 young people attended.</p> <p>SiCC & SLCC collaborated on the production of the CPB Strategy 2022 – 2025 including their own foreword, the design and The Pledge.</p> <p>IRO letters sent post care review have been improved and valued by recipients.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2022 - 23</p>	<p>The voices of children and young people are informing service provision.</p> <p>The voices of young people who are suffering or at risk of suffering exploitation are heard and acted upon.</p> <p>CPB training available externally through The Learning Centre (TLC- guest access) to partners in district councils, health, police and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>Further develop advocacy offer in Somerset to vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Celebrate our children’s and our work force achievements.</p> <p>Learning from the Voice of Exploited Children.</p> <p>Learning from complaints from children about the care they receive.</p> <p>Young people collaborate in Corporate Parenting Strategy.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice of the Child Sub-Group • Corporate Parenting Board – Partnership Team

<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>4. To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22</p>	<p>SiCC and SLCC involved in the strategic partnership to commission homes for children – Homes2Inspire.</p> <p>Members of SiCC and SLCC supported the work on recommissioning the Pathways to Independence (P2i) Contract.</p> <p>Young people with care experience supported to sit on interview panels for senior staff including Operations Manager, Mendip, Route One Advocacy manager, Assistant Director Commissioning and on a panel for Step Up to Social Work.</p> <p>CLA and Care Leavers receive quarterly SiCC and SLCC newsletter that gives them opportunities to participate.</p> <p>Quality audit of 49 young people about their experiences of CSC reported high satisfaction on their relationships with their workers, a good focus on aspirations and an acknowledgement of young people’s strengths.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2022 - 23</p>	<p>Children and young people have an understanding of the role of social workers before they may need one.</p> <p>Members of SiCC and SLCC continue to support the work on recommissioning the P2i Contract.</p> <p>The voices of children and young people are informing service provision.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parenting Board – Partnership Team • Voice of the Child Sub-Group

<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22</p>	<p>EPEP now fully launched and with improved analytics.</p> <p>Quality assurance processes in place to improve quality of EPEPs.</p> <p>Young people developed Top Tips for Involving Children & Young People in their PEPs.</p> <p>Average 97% PEPs in place.</p> <p>Key monitoring delivered by WelfareCall – EPEP, attendance. Suspensions, exclusions.</p> <p>Reduction in Children Missing Out on Education (CMOE) through attendance, exclusions and lack of school places.</p> <p>Virtual School Head implemented Extension of Duties to certain previously children looked after.</p> <p>Increased attendance <90%.</p> <p>Virtual Heads now has a strategic role around the education of all children with social workers and support and monitoring in place.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2022 - 23</p>	<p>Ongoing improvement of monitoring systems and the redeveloped processes, following Capita training for VS staff.</p> <p>Development of newly formed Governance Board who hold Virtual School staff to account for outcomes.</p> <p>Continued focus on lowering number of fixed term exclusions.</p> <p>Deliver training to schools/settings.</p> <p>Improve the quality of PEPs.</p> <p>Develop an enhanced offer of extracurricular activities i.e. working with Somerset Outdoor Learning residential team.</p> <p>Continue to ensure that all CLA have an education placement.</p> <p>Embed processes that support progress and reduce the attainment gap between CLA students.</p> <p>Develop post 16 processes that include routinely held PEP meetings for CLA that are NEET.</p> <p>Continue to develop the joint working between CSC, VS and SEND in order to improve placement stability and access to and engagement with good educational provision.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Sub-Group – • Virtual School

**SEVEN
PRINCIPLES**

6. For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work

**ACHIEVEMENTS
2021-22**

SiCC and SLCC wrote and designed an animation for children coming to care called Your Journey; now given link by their social workers.

Information on council tax exemption now published on Local Offer for Care Leavers.

Restructure of Fostering service has led to greater understanding of needs and a revised offer.

There are 223 fostering families in Somerset who foster 234 children; 138 are fostered by Independent Fostering agencies and 28 new carers were approved in 20/21.

17% increase in Fostering to Adopt arrangements (20 young people).

The Board welcomed district council representation on the Board and police representation in the Leaving Care sub group in 21/22.

A dedicated team has been set up to support children who are missing from home to find solutions and build relationships.

There were 474 episodes of missing for CLA; 63% Return Home Interviews within 72 hours.

Young residents in P2i accommodation collaborated in service redesign.

P2i Innovation Fund launched for agencies to support our most vulnerable young people in P2i.

Placement stability for CLA placed more than 20 miles from home and out of county remains stable at 30%.

Long term placement stability for CLA who have been in care for more than 2.5 years and have been in the same placement for more than 2 years has increased to 67% compared to 63.6% at the same point last year (against a target of 70%).

Engagement & Participation team worked with the YOS on better hearing the voices of young people they are working with.

**AREAS FOR
DEVELOPMENT
2022 - 23**

Quality of information given to children and young people coming into care reviewed and refreshed by SiCC and SLCC with children's social care business support.

Focus on consistency in council tax exemption.

Embed changes to Fostering Service and monitor improvement.

Following May 22 elections welcome, train and embed new members to the CPB and review processes for the future.

Retain a focus on missing children and their vulnerabilities.

Retain a focus on quality and stability of placements.

RESPONSIBILITY

- **Corporate Parenting Board – Partnership Team**
- **Sufficiency Statement**
- **Fostering and Adoption**



<p>SEVEN PRINCIPLES</p>	<p>7. To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living</p>
<p>ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22</p>	<p>Care Leavers Covenant included in SCC's Procurement Social Value policy.</p> <p>50 lops tops gifted to P2i providers to support care leavers with employment, education and training.</p> <p>The 25 years+ offer for Care Leavers formalised and published on the Local Offer.</p> <p>Leaving Care accommodation rated 96% suitable.</p> <p>An audit of Pathway Plans found the majority to be at a Good or Outstanding OFSTED judgment.</p> <p>A specialist senior leaving care worker recruited to reduce homelessness.</p> <p>P2i Innovation fund for 12-month pilot to support residents; launch of pilot event attended by 109 practitioners.</p> <p>An intensive 6 week tracking of NEET care leavers, and greater partnership working with Job Centre+ resulted in individual conversations and bespoke initiatives; reduction in care leavers who are NEET from 36% (2019/20) to 30% June 2022.</p> <p>The Leaving Care service is in touch with 98.3% of care leavers of all ages; 100% of 18-20 year olds.</p> <p>Changes to recruitment policy entitles anyone with care experience to the same benefits as veterans and disabled people.</p>
<p>AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2022 - 23</p>	<p>Develop the participation of CLs, and inclusion of the voice of CLA and CLs in service delivery and developments, aligning the work of SiCC & SLCC with LC champions.</p> <p>Making full use of the Leaving Care Covenant within the Corporate Parenting community.</p> <p>Continue to improve and publicise the Local Offer for CLs, ensuring that the voice of CLA and CLs is central to service delivery of SCC and partners.</p> <p>Ensure that CLA and CLs are offered appropriate support in transition and beyond in respect of their health and wellbeing needs.</p> <p>Improve outcomes for CLA and care leavers CLs in respect of Education, Training and Employment.</p> <p>Ensure that the range of accommodation available is safe and meets the needs of all CLA and CLs.</p>
<p>RESPONSIBILITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leavers Sub-Group

Appendix B – SiCC & SLCC Annual Report 2021 - 2022

SiCC and SLCC Annual Report | 2021-22



Where we live

- **SCC tender for Children's Homes – Members of SiCC and SLCC were involved in the Strategic Partnership through five layers of engagement:**

- Met potential bidders in dialogue sessions
- Created questions to be part of the formal scoring interview process
- Designed the scoring template for visits to bidder's children's homes
- Sat on a young people's panel for Registered Manager post interviews

- Involved in an online session with the marketing team of the Shaw Trust to explore views on branding.

- **Looked at the revised minimum standards for P2i accommodation**



Where we live continued

- Visited bidder's children's homes to engage with their young people to ask questions that were scored as part of the overall process
- Attended a reflective session the week after visits to confirm scores
- A young person representative on the Steering Group, attended the solutions based workshop and branding workshop with SCC staff, elected members and partners from the Shaw Trust and Homes2Inspire



Celebrating our successes

- Planned and ran the Annual Achievement Awards 2021
- Planned the SiCC and SLCC team building away day
- Launched the quarterly newsletters
- Enjoyed the Christmas Party

Annual Achievement Awards 2021



The Spring SiCC and SLCC Newsletter



High Quality Workforce

- Interviewed for our new Participation Worker
- Interviewed for Route1 worker
- Met with a research fellow from Oxford Brookes to discuss our participation within the selection of SCC's Strategic Partner



Damien Erangey, our new Participation Worker, recruited by members of SiCC and SLCC



Somerset
Care Councils



Safe and Sound Transitions

- Held discussions about how transitions are managed and what makes a difference
- Facilitated online SiCC and SLCC meeting – 'Do you think that the Local Authority should support you to learn to drive?'
- Updating the Coming Into Care document and created a short animation

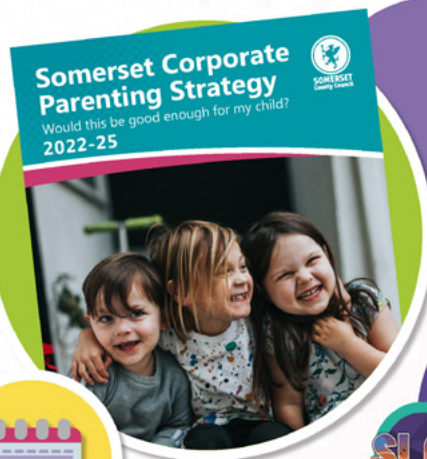


Somerset
Care Councils



Looking forward

- Continue working on our priorities
- Design a Fostering Care survey with commissioning
- Hold a Care Leavers 18+ Unitary session
- Co-produce the Corporate Parent Board strategy
- Update recruitment leaflets and logo



Aims over the next year

- Continue supporting the development of the Strategic Partnership.
- Supporting the fostering service to update forms
- Attending the fostering service Fish & Chips Day to promote SiCC and SLCC
- Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) to get involved with a project to create a film and document for other UASC young people coming into Somerset
- Collating a book of poetry and spoken word from young people in care and leaving care about their experiences by the SiCC and SLCC Creatives
- Developing localised SiCC and SLCC groups around Somerset
- Helping young people to engage in their Child Protection conferences



Appendix C – Corporate Parenting Board Strategy 2022 - 2025

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy

Would this be good enough for my child?
2022-25



Contents

- 3 Foreword**
- 4 Introduction**
- 6 Principle 1** - To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of children and young people
- 7 Principle 2** - To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people
- 8 Principle 3** - For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- 9 Principle 4** - To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- 10 Principle 5** - To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living
- 11 Principle 6** - To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- 12 Principle 7** - To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- 13 Measures of success, monitoring and evaluation**



Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to have been asked to write the foreword to our new Corporate Parenting Strategy. This strategy takes account of what our children looked after, and our care leavers have been telling us about their experiences of being in our care, as well as linking with the key priorities of the Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2022 - 2025 and our Sufficiency Statement.

The strategy sets out how Somerset intends to fulfil its responsibilities against the Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting in a way that puts children and young people at the centre of improvements in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our services. It forms the framework in which Somerset staff, elected members and relevant partners will work. It is our children and young people's Pledge Tree - their Tree of Life giving them stability, strength, support and shelter as they grow up and take their place in society.

I look forward to supporting the independent chair of our Corporate Parenting Board in leading member support to the delivery of this strategy.

Frances Nicholson

Frances Nicholson
Lead Member for Children's Services



Cllr Frances Nicholson
Cabinet member, Children and Families



Julian Wooster
Director of Children's Services

Dear Somerset Corporate Parents

We are children and young people who happen to be in care – please don't judge us or make assumptions or think that we need special treatment – we just want to be treated like any other young person.

SiCC and SLCC (Somerset In Care and Leaving Care Councils) have a trusting relationship with all of our agencies to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard by the Corporate Parenting Board - through a range of resources that we produce; such as films, policies and procedures and events. We put the 'core' into Corporate Parenting!

We expect you, as our corporate parents, to ensure our priorities are upheld in a strategic plan that makes a difference and improves the quality of our lives. That's why we have helped the Board to refresh their Pledge to all children looked after and care leavers in Somerset – we hope you enjoy reading the pledges throughout this strategy.

We want you to recognise the significance of your responsibilities to help us to become confident young adults with good prospects and stable lives.

You can help us to thrive.

Best wishes

The members of SiCC and SLCC



Jill Johnson OBE
Chair of the Somerset Corporate Parenting Board

Introduction

When a child comes into care, they become “looked after” and Somerset County Council (SCC) becomes their Corporate Parent. This means that everyone who works for SCC, in any capacity, its elected members and its partners have a special and important responsibility in fulfilling the corporate parent role, underpinned by *The Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting*.

Somerset County Council is committed to being an effective and trustworthy corporate parent for any child or young person who is in our care, irrespective of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, faith or ability.

Every good parent knows that children require a safe and nurturing environment in which to grow and thrive. Parents protect and support their children in coping with the dangers and risks of everyday life. Parents are ambitious for their children and strive to support them to reach their potential. Parents celebrate and share in their children’s achievements, however large or small. A child who is cared for by the Council has the right to expect everything from a corporate parent that they would expect from a good parent in the community.

Services that support children looked after are corporate parents, and we are all accountable to the children and young people who are looked after in Somerset. We must all strive for children in our care to succeed in the same way that any parent would strive for their own children. This can mean providing advice and guidance to a young person who is starting to live independently, supporting carers, ensuring that children’s mental health is safeguarded, helping a young person find a job, or listening to their hopes and dreams, problems and insecurities.

There is a wide range of people and organisations who need to work together, including:

- *The Somerset Corporate Parenting Board*
- Elected members
- All Council services
- Children’s services
- The Virtual School
- Schools, Colleges and other education providers
- Health service providers
- Housing providers
- Community organisations



Number of CLA*
in Somerset

48.9

per 10,000 children

Number of
CLA* in England

65.4

per 10,000 children



Aims and Objectives

The Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting form the aims and objectives of this strategy:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people



Care leavers in
touch (all ages)

98.3%

* Children Looked After (CLA)

Would this be good enough for my child?

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 | 5

Principle 1

To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of children and young people

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Support you to have your physical, emotional and mental well being needs met

The Health and Wellbeing sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Designated Nurse - Children Looked After and Care Leavers, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Ensure that all Children Looked After have robust statutory health assessments which are completed in a timely way by the right Health professional, are included in the child's care plan and are considered at each CLA*** Review meeting
- Ensure that the emotional and mental health needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are recognised, prioritised and addressed
- Ensure that the Health elements of the adoption pathway remain compliant with statutory responsibilities and are adequately resourced to provide sufficient Adoption Medical Advisor, nursing and administrative capacity
- Monitor the ongoing recovery of health services to CLA and Care Leavers which have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the longer term physical and emotional impact on CLA and CL
- Look at the learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and other reviews and ensuring all actions are taken and embedded.

SLCC worked with CLA commissioners, to look at options for how they receive their health information when they leave care.

CLA more than 28 days with IHA
90.3%

Percentage of children of four or more years looked after with more than 1 year SDQ**

83%

Percentage of CLA after more than 1 year with a dental check

55.2%

* Initial Health Assessment (IHA), **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Principle 2

To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people

Our pledge to you

We will:

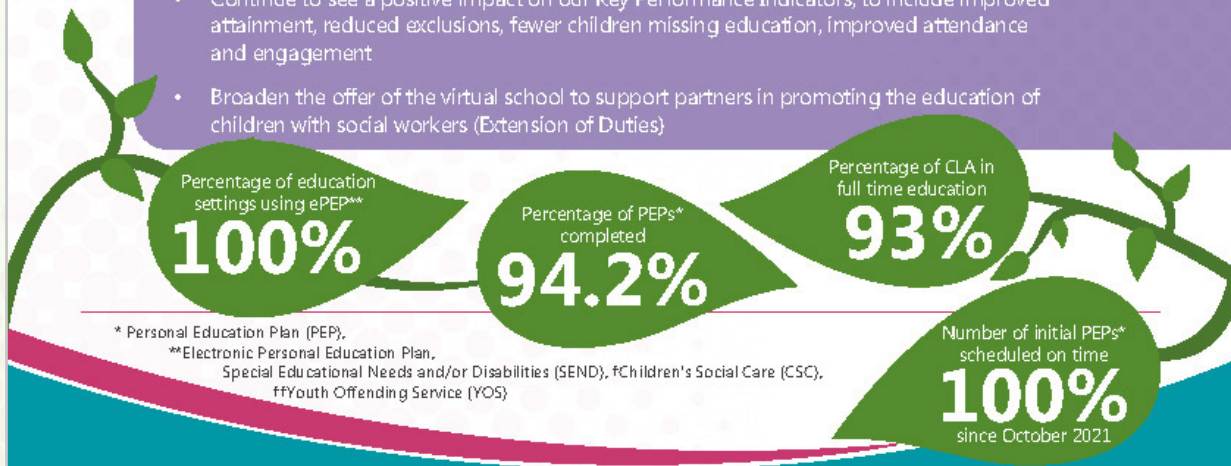
- Push you to be the best you can be
- To understand your goals and help you to achieve them
- Help you to believe in yourself
- Have high aspirations for you and support you in education, training and employment

The education sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Virtual School, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Embedding and monitoring the use and impact of the ePEP** including progress data
- Improve the quality of PEPs* so that an increased % of PEPs* are found to be 'good' or better according to our QA process
- Deliver a system for monitoring attendance of Children Looked After which works for our schools and settings, while also providing the virtual school with the live data needed to act promptly where there are attendance concerns
- Ensure we are listening to our young people and their carers, and learning from their views and feedback
- Develop and clarify our Post-16 offer, following the appointment of a Lead Advisory Teacher to oversee and champion this work
- Continue to strengthen our partnership working, with SEND***, CSC† and YOSH††, to ensure holistic support to young people with multiple vulnerabilities
- Continue to see a positive impact on our Key Performance Indicators, to include improved attainment, reduced exclusions, fewer children missing education, improved attendance and engagement
- Broaden the offer of the virtual school to support partners in promoting the education of children with social workers (Extension of Duties)



* Personal Education Plan (PEP).

**Electronic Personal Education Plan.

†Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), †Children's Social Care (CSC).

††Youth Offending Service (YOS)

Would this be good enough for my child?

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 | 7



Principle 3

For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Respect you and treat you as an individual
- Work hard to give you a choice of the best and safest places for you to live.
- Make sure that if you have to move it is a planned transition wherever possible
- Celebrate your birthday and other successes and achievements, including your school prom and with family if you choose to, and its safe to do so.
- Support you to see the people who are important to you, if it is safe to do so and support you to make new friends
- Be available when you need us, or someone else we know if not
- Help you to be safe and reduce the possibility of being bullied
- Try to keep the same social worker for you where possible

The lead officers are the Strategic Commissioner, Children's Commissioning and the Strategic Operations Manager, Fostering in Somerset

The priority focus for this group is

- Develop the strategic partnership to deliver homes for children and young people, aligned high needs fostering and therapeutic education in Somerset
- Strengthen and develop relationships with all providers who care and support our children and young people
- Create and embed 16+ standards
- Re-design prevention and supported accommodation for young people aged between 16-25 at risk of homelessness
- Share and implement the learning from the fostering feasibility study to increase stability of children and young people living in foster homes
- Continue with the 'step-forward' programme for children and young people moving from residential homes to be with foster families

CLA placed more than 20 miles from home

31.2%

RHI within 72 hours

62%

"Just being in the WhatsApp group, I think, has had a positive impact on the mental health of carers, for sure to have that support. To know that they can throw those ideas out and have that support as well, which is quite nice"

Carer taking part in Fostering Feasibility study 2021

Children looked after at least two and half years staying in the same home for two or more years

67%

Carers taking part in the Fostering Feasibility study valued the directory that gave them access to over 360 local organisations and has led to young people engaging in a new activity

* Return Home Interview (RHI)

Would this be good enough for my child?

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 | 8

Principle 4

To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Make sure you are made aware of the same opportunities as other young people of your age
- Support you in the same way as if you were our own child.

The Voice of the Child sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service – Quality Assurance, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Celebrate young people's successes through the Annual Achievements Awards
- Promote and raise awareness of the Corporate Parenting Board through our training offer



Would this be good enough for my child?

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 | 9

Principle 5

To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Teach you independent living skills and provide practical support if you need it
- Provide adult in your lives who inspire you
- Support you when you live independently and keep in touch regularly
- Help to get the most suitable accommodation for you

The Leaving Care sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service, Children's Social Care, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Develop the participation of care leavers (CLs), and inclusion of the voice of children looked after (CLA) and CLs in service delivery and developments, aligning the work of SiCC & SLCC with Leaving Care Apprentices
- Making full use of the Leaving Care Covenant within the Corporate Parenting community
- Continue to improve and publicise the Local Offer for CLs, ensuring that the voice of CLA and CLs is central to service delivery of SCC and partners
- Ensure that the health and well-being needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers are met, particularly during periods of transition
- Improve outcomes for children who are looked after CLA and care leavers CLs in respect of Education, Training and Employment
- Ensure that the range of accommodation available is safe and meets the needs of all CLA and CLs

"It is very useful to be involved as it could be used as evidence for my college course as the learning from this experience was towards my qualification in customer service."

Member of SiCC and SLCC 2021

Care Leavers who are NEET (all ages)
36.4% (21)
vs 41.7% in 2020

Care leavers who are suitably accommodated
96.3%

Leaving Care Local Offer:
Information and advice for Somerset's Care Leavers aged 16 to 25. [Click here](#) for more information.

About the Care Leaver Covenant: The Care Leaver Covenant is a national inclusion programme that supports care leavers aged 16-25 to live independently. [Click here](#) for more information.

* Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Would this be good enough for my child?

Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 | 10

Principle 6

To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

Our pledge to you

We will:

- Listen to your views
- Make sure you know who your worker is
- Make it easy to contact your worker and where to get their contact details
- Make sure you understand your rights and how you can make a complaint and get support from Route 1 Advocacy.
- Make sure you know how to get involved with the Care Councils
- Help you to communicate with us in the best way for you (i.e. social media, Mind of My Own etc)

The Voice of the Child sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service – Quality Assurance, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Improve the way we hear the voice of the child and young person
- Refresh and promote the Pledge
- Supporting young people to be a part of our recruitment processes



Volunteer Advocates & Independent Visitors ensure that young people's voices are heard. [Click here](#) for more information.

"It feels important to be able to make a difference for others and be part of something that will support and help young people"
Member of SiCC and SLCC 2021.

'Making a complaint against Children's Social Care' film

Making a complaint about Children's Social Care



'Mind of My Own' film

* Child Protection (CP)

Principle 7

To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people

Our pledge to you

We will:

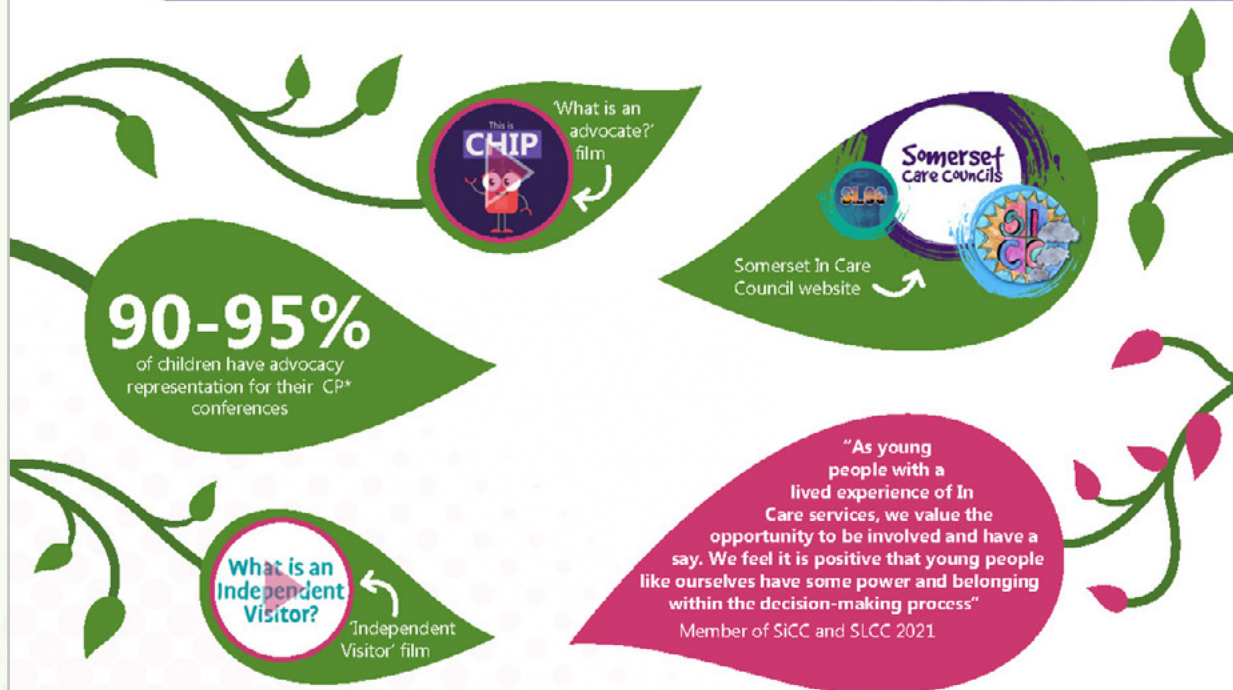
- Involve you in the decisions that affect you and aim to respect your wishes
- Tell you in good time about any proposed changes being made to your care plan – even in an emergency.

The Voice of the Child sub-group takes the lead for the delivery of this principle.

The lead officer is the Head of Service – Quality Assurance, supported by a lead member and relevant officers who meet quarterly in advance of board meetings.

The priority focus for this group is

- Promote advocacy to our children and young people throughout their journey
- Support the functions of the Somerset In Care Council and Leaving Care Councils (SiCC and SLCC)





Measures of Success: Would This Be Good Enough for My Child?

The Corporate Parenting Board monitors the services that Somerset County Council (SCC) and our partners deliver to our children looked after and care leavers, with the aim of continually improving outcomes. The Board is made up of elected members, Council officers and our partners. It holds the responsibility for producing a three-year strategy that reflects the needs of our looked after children and care leavers and our statutory obligations to them.

The Corporate Parenting Board Strategy is underpinned by a robust three-year plan to achieve its strategic goals. The plan is flexible to recognise the changing needs of children looked after and care leavers and social care legislation.

The progress of plan is reported to the Board quarterly with supporting data from the SCC Business Intelligence Team and our partner agencies.

On reading the quarterly reports, the first question the Board must answer is, "Would this be good enough for my child"? Elected members are ultimately accountable for the quality of the service, so is the data telling them what they need to know?

The Board publishes an Annual Report for approval by the full County Council meeting. The Somerset In Care and Leaving Care Councils (SiCC and SLCC) annually evaluate improvement through their 'We Said, You Did' report which forms part of the Annual Report.

The Board is an associate function of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership which receives quarterly reports for assurance on the safeguarding of our children looked after and care leavers.

Monitoring and evaluation

This strategy will be monitored and evaluated by the successful delivery of the Corporate Parenting three year plan through:

- Listening to children and young people who are looked after
- The effective use of local data to identify areas for improvement and the extent to which national and local indicators around children looked after are being met
- Receiving reports from across service areas and from partners as required
- Peer review and challenge
- Feedback from partners, agencies, parents, carers and children and young people about services
- Continued revision of actions in the plan in the light of monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective delivery of the strategy.



The Pledge Tree

The children and young people of SiCC and SLCC (Somerset In Care and Leaving Care Councils) decided that the Pledge should reflect the qualities of a tree - the roots give stability, the trunk gives strength, the branches give support and the leaves give shelter.



SOMERSET
County Council

someraset.gov.uk



Children in Care in Somerset Pledge

The pledge is the promise that we make to you - we commit to keeping you safe, happy and healthy, and to help you reach your full potential.

Our pledge is to let you know what we should be doing for you, and for you to know what your rights are.

Priority 1

To promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people



The Pledge

Support you to have your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing needs met.





Priority 2

To encourage children and young people to express their views and wishes and feelings

The Pledge

Make sure you know how to get involved with the Care Council

Make sure you know who your worker is

Make it easy to contact them and where to get their contact numbers.

Make sure you understand your rights and how you can make a complaint and get support from Route 1 Advocacy

Help you to communicate with us in the best way for you (i.e. social media, Mind of My Own etc.)

Listen to your views



Priority 3

To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people

The Pledge

Tell you in good time about any proposed changes being made to our care plan - even in an emergency

Involve you in the decisions that affect you and aim to respect your wishes



Priority 4

To help children and young people gain access to all services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners

The Pledge

Make sure you are made aware of the same opportunities as other young people your age

Aim to support you in the same way as if you were our own child



Priority 5

To understand your goals and help you to achieve them

The Pledge

Push you to be the best you can be

Have high aspirations for you and support you in education, training and employment

Help you to believe in yourself



Priority 6

For children and young people to be safe and stable in their home lives, relationships and education or work

The Pledge

Support you to see the people who are important to you, if it is safe to do so and support you to make new friends

Celebrate your birthday with family if you choose to and other successes and achievements; including your school prom

Make sure that if you have to move it is a planned transition wherever possible

Work hard to give you a choice of the best and safest places for you to live

Help you to be safe and reduce the possibility of being bullied

Respect you and treat you as an individual

Be available when you need us, or someone else you know if not

To keep the same social worker where possible



Priority 7

To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

The Pledge

Teach you independent living skills and provide practical support if you need it

Provide adults in your lives who inspire you

Help to get the most suitable accommodation for you

Support you when you live independently and keep in touch regularly



Appendix D – Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference 2021 - 2022

Overall aim

To improve the life chances of Somerset’s children and young people in our care-and those leaving care- through a joint approach to the delivery of services. Somerset County Council (SCC) and its partner agencies together aim to continuously improve the outcomes of the children and young people we care for to bring them in line with their peers.

Objectives

1. To listen to the voices of children and young people in our care, and those leaving care, either directly from them as individuals or through the Care Councils - Somerset in Care Councils (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC), or indirectly (through national/local inspection and surveys, parents/carers, independent reviewing officers, advocates and others) and to use what we learn to improve services and outcomes
2. To take the lead for the children and young people in our care and leaving care, raising awareness and priorities across all agencies, making sure all agencies’ responsibilities toward children looked after are being met
3. To promote the role of all elected members as “corporate parents” and to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place by SCC to enable all members to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in this area
4. To review the Corporate Parenting Strategy annually to ensure that it is current and effective and to recommend any changes to the SCC Executive for decision and to Full Council to be endorsed
5. The Corporate Parenting Board members, will offer leadership and, via its work plan for children looked after and care leavers, will keep the focus on strategic priorities, that include:
 - a. Health care needs, including physical and emotional health and wellbeing
 - b. Safeguarding, including placement stability, quality of care placements and appropriate supported accommodation
 - c. Educational attendance, attainment, and aspirations
 - d. Positive activities, including leisure, volunteering, sporting and social activities, and prevention of offending
 - e. Employment and training (including work experience and employment opportunities provided through SCC and partner agencies and contractors), housing and support
6. To ensure that SCC and its partners support SiCC and SLCC and deliver against the commitments made in the Pledge to children looked after and the Charter for care leavers
7. To ensure progress is regularly and actively monitored and reviewed.

How will these objectives be delivered?

The Board will work to an agreed plan, which will be based on the Seven Principles of Corporate Parenting to be delivered, as set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025 and aligned to the Children and Young People's Plan 2022-2025, the Sufficiency Statement (refreshed annually), the Corporate Parenting Pledge and the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

Board members will also regularly meet and hear from children looked after and care leavers, including those in foster care, residential care and independent accommodation by attending celebratory events for the achievements of children looked after and other events organised by the Participation and Engagement team and other services. Individual members will feed back on opportunities they have identified for support for employment, apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience.

The Board will:

- receive regular reports from relevant Officers to provide an insight into life for children looked after in Somerset
- consider regular reports that set out performance against key agreed outcome indicators to monitor progress over time, and compare Somerset's performance with top quartile authorities and recommend actions for improvement
- regularly monitor and receive reports in respect of SCC and partners' progress against external regulator recommendations
- establish links with other key groups responsible for representing children looked after (e.g., Foster Carers Consultative Group).

Status

The Board is a leadership and advisory body with no formal decision-making powers but will seek to influence decision makers to drive improvement across the Council and its partners. Consequently, it will make recommendations where necessary to SCC Executive to impact and influence SCC decisions and policies.

Formal Board meetings will not be open to the public or press because of the sensitive nature of the business and will not be subject to the Access to Information Rules set out in the Council's constitution. When reporting to the Full Council, Executive, or elsewhere, the expectation is that those reports will be public unless there are good reasons to recommend the exclusion of the public and press to consider confidential information.

All members of the Board shall respect and maintain the confidentiality of the Board's business.

The Corporate Parenting Board will maintain a close working relationship with the Council's Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee to ensure they do not duplicate each other's work.

Accountability

The Board will be accountable to **Full Council**, via an annual report, in recognition of Council's budget setting responsibilities, the role of all elected members as corporate parents, and to enable Council to maintain an overview of the Strategy and the delivery of the Board's Annual Plan.

Reporting

The Board will report on its activities to:

- **Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP)**, which brings together all the relevant agencies to agree how to identify and meet the needs of children and young people in Somerset. The SSCP is responsible for coordinating agencies so that together they fulfill their statutory duties relating to safeguarding and targeted and universal services to effectively meet the needs of children, against the priorities of the Children & Young People's Plan 2022- 2025.
- **Somerset in Care Council** via the Voice of the Child Officer who is a full Board member
- **Somerset Leaving Care Council** via the Voice of the Child Officer who is a full Board member
- **Executive**, reporting as and when necessary, as the key decision-making body for County Council services including endorsement of the Strategy every 3 years.
- **Scrutiny** Committees, as and when requested, in relation to reviewing the effectiveness of the Board and the Strategies the Board is responsible for.

Voting Arrangements

Formal meetings of the Board will operate by consensus of those present rather than through any formal voting mechanism in recognition of the wide membership and the roles of the Board to advise and challenge.

Membership

The emphasis for Board members is leadership, and so the Board's core appointed elected membership will include any member who, as one way of exercising their role as corporate parent, has the passion and commitment to volunteer as a core Board member. Members will be nominated by their political group leader and notified to the Deputy Director Children's Social Care as the Lead Officer. There will be no limit on numbers of Members although the Chair's discretion will ensure the Board operates effectively.

Newly elected members will undertake mandatory corporate parenting training and will also be offered any ad-hoc relevant training and development i.e. Local Government Association training for Corporate Parents.

Core Board Members

- County Council Elected Members
- "Voice of the Child" Officer
- Lead Member for Children & Families
- Director of Children's Services
- Deputy Director Children and Families
- Foster Carer Association
- District Council Elected Member – representative/s – nominee(s)
- NHS Somerset executive member
- Representation from Somerset in Care Council (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC)
- Independent Lay person

Lead Contributors

- Virtual School Head
- Strategic Manager, CSC Quality & Assurance
- Strategic Manager, Children looked After and Leaving Care
- Designated Nurse Children Looked After and Care Leavers
- Strategic Commissioner, Children's Commissioning
- Senior Business Intelligence Analyst, Performance Planning and Business Intelligence
- Police representatives
- All other County Councillor
- Providers of Council or NHS commissioned services.

Co-opted Members

Co-opted members to be invited as and when the agenda requires i.e., housing, specific voluntary groups etc.

Chairing Arrangements

The Chair and Vice Chair will be members on the Board with the Chair appointed by the Leader of the Council when a new council is convened and the vice chair appointed at the first formal meeting of the Board following the Full Council meeting post local government election.

Officer Lead

Deputy Director Children and Families, SCC



Frequency of meetings

The Board meets quarterly with subgroup meetings held as required to fulfil the Board's quarterly reporting and annual plan. Subgroups will report formally to the Board every quarter. Representatives from the Care Councils will attend regularly and a standing agenda space will be held for the voice of the child. The Board and its subgroup meetings may take a range of different formats, including visits to different locations and informal meetings with children and young people, and those who support them, when possible.

Thematic meetings can be called in between quarterly Board business to look at areas of interest or concern in more detail.

Meetings will be held either virtually via Teams or face to face in County Hall or suitable alternative venues.

Corporate Parenting Board Action Log

Will be reviewed at every Board meeting, for updates and progress on the subgroups.

Preparation for the Board

Chair to meet with the Lead Officer a minimum of two weeks before each formal meeting to agree the agenda and papers.

Agendas and papers for formal Board meetings will be sent to the members of the Board at least five working days prior to the meeting.

Support to formal meetings of the Board

This will be provided by the Partnership Business Manager – Children's Quality Assurance, Safeguarding & Care team and Corporate & Children's Management Support Team.



Glossary of Terms

ACRONYM	FULL TERM	DESCRIPTION
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service	CAMHS is the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. These are local, specialist mental health support teams run by the NHS throughout the UK. These services are free and help young people under 18 who have emotional, behavioural or mental health problems.
	Care Leaver	<p>The leaving care age in England is 18 years old, however some young people do leave care aged 16 or 17. There are different categories of care leavers depending on age, when the care leaver was in care and for how long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible child is a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after • Relevant child is a child aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16, but who were looked after immediately before being detained • Former relevant child is a young person over 18 who was previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'. Councils support this group until aged 21, or longer if they are in education or training • Qualifying child is any young person under 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who stops being looked after or accommodated in a variety of other settings, or being privately fostered, after the age of 16. This also includes young people who are under a special guardianship order • Former relevant child pursuing education is any former relevant child whose case was closed, for any reason. If they're planning to continue education or training they can ask the council for support. If eligible, any help would last until their 25th birthday • Extension to 25 years old - If you are under 25 year old and previously open to the leaving care team, under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 you are entitled to return for support.

ACRONYM	FULL TERM	DESCRIPTION
	Care Plan	<p>Every child and young person who is looked after will have a Care Plan. The provision of services and other help for them and their family will be set out in the plan. The Care Plan will say what the council and other agencies will do to meet the child's needs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health • education • identity • family relationships • hobbies <p>and sets out the plan for the child's future. It will describe the child's contact arrangements with family and friends. Where appropriate, it will include how parents or guardians will help to look after them.</p>
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group	Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) commission most of the hospital and community NHS services in the local areas for which they are responsible.
CP or CPC	Child Protection or Child Protection Conference	A Child Protection Conference is a meeting, which is arranged by Social Services because there are serious concerns about the care or protection of a child(ren). The Conference shares information about the child(ren) and discusses the concerns with the family and other professionals to see if any action is required to make ensure the child(ren) is safe and well cared for in the future.
CICC	Children in Care Council	The children in care council (CICC) is a way that children and young people in care can share their experiences of the care system, to help their 'corporate parents' get things right and look after them properly. In Somerset they are called SiCC & SLCC.
CLA	Children Looked After	<p>In England and Wales the term 'looked after children' is defined in law under the Children Act 1989. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. Looked after children fall into four main groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are accommodated under voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20); • Children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38); • Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection (section 44 and 46); • Children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21).
CME	Child Missing Education	Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at a school (for example, at home or in alternative provision).

ACRONYM	FULL TERM	DESCRIPTION
CSC	Children's Social Care	<p>By law, Children's Social Care has to give priority of service to children with specific categories of need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those at risk of serious harm and who may need a protection plan • Those who are, or may need to be, looked after by Children's Social Care and are unable to remain living at home (birth to 18 years including unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people) • Private Fostering – such arrangements have to be notified to the local authority (Children's Social Care) • Those aged 16 or over who are leaving the care of Children's Social Care or have previously left care and are eligible for Leaving Care services • Where Children's Social Care involvement is required by the courts <p>In Somerset we also provide a number of specialist services, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recruitment, assessment and supervision of foster carers • Placing and supporting children with foster carers • The recruitment, assessment and support of people who want to adopt • Matching and placing children with adopters • The provision of residential care for children who are no longer able to live at home and where that is the appropriate option • Supervising children who are privately fostered • Young carers
CYPP	Children & Young People's Plan	The children and young people plan (CYPP) explains how services will work together to support and help young people who live or go to school in Somerset. We collaborate on the CYPP with children, young people, parents and carers and the professionals and volunteers who support them.
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	The body in England and Wales which looks after providing criminal records checks for employers or employees.
EHCP	Education, Health & Care Plan	Schools in England must provide support to children with special educational needs (SEN) as part of their standard offer to children. Where a child requires additional support that goes beyond what a school, college, or nursery can typically deliver from their own budgets or staffing then they may need an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
EHE	Elective Home Educated	A choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time.
ETE	Education Training Employment	The status given to a young person who has been supported into Education, training and/or employment.

ACRONYM	FULL TERM	DESCRIPTION
IHA	Initial Health Assessment	A statutory health assessment that is required to be completed within 28 days of a child coming into care. It is completed by a paediatrician or a designated CLA nurse.
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer	Person who chairs reviews for children living in children's homes or foster care.
IV	Independent Visitor	Adult volunteers who provide independent, one-to-one befriending support to children in care. Their role is to "visit, advise and befriend" the young person with whom they are matched. In Somerset, this service is provided by Route One Advocacy.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training	Young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training.
P2i	Pathway to Independence	Offers housing and advice for young people aged 16-24 across Somerset. It is a jointly commissioned initiative by Somerset County Council, District Councils working with a consortium of provider organisations.
	Pathways Plan	From 16 years, a child should be supported to leave care using a Pathway Plan. The plan shows how the young person will be helped to prepare for the future and includes what's happening with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Finance • Health and wellbeing • Emotional Issues and behaviour • Education, training, employment, work experience and volunteering • Relationships with family, friends and support networks • Identity, such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation • Hobbies, sport, leisure, social life • Parenthood (for those about to become a parent) • Keeping safe • Practical skills and other skills for living independently
PEP	Personal Education Plan	All looked-after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part. The PEP (pre-school, to age 18) should be initiated as part of the care plan.
PP	Pupil Premium	Pupil premium is funding to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England. Evidence shows that disadvantaged children generally face additional challenges in reaching their potential at school and often do not perform as well as other pupils.
QA	Quality Assurance	Work that is carried out in children's services that supports learning and service improvement includes audits and practice reviews.

ACRONYM	FULL TERM	DESCRIPTION
RHA	Review Health Assessment	A statutory assessment for all children looked after and supports and informs the child's care plan, undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 6 months for children under 5 years old • Annually for children and young people aged 5-18
SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	The strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) is a short behavioural screening questionnaire for children aged 3 to 16. The questionnaire is used to assess children's mental health, and can be completed by children and young people themselves, by their parents or by their teachers. It can be used for various purposes, including clinical assessment, evaluation of outcomes, research and screening.
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disabilities	A child or young person aged from 0 to 25 years old is said to have special educational needs or a disability if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a learning difficulty or disability which makes it much harder for them to learn than the majority of other pupils of the same age • require special educational provision to be made for them because they have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools
SENDIAS	Special Education Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support	Somerset SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support) can give children, young people and their parent carers information, advice and support about SEND. This can include information on Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessments and Plans. The service is free, confidential and impartial.
SiCC and SLCC	Somerset In Care and Somerset Leaving Care Councils	Somerset's in care councils where children and young people in care can share their experiences of the care system, to help their 'corporate parents' get things right and look after them properly.
Stat Neighbours	Statistical Neighbours	Statistical neighbours provide a method for benchmarking progress. For each local authority (LA), these models designate a number of other LAs deemed to have similar characteristics. These designated LAs are known as statistical neighbours.
SSCP	Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership	The partnership responsible for safeguarding children in Somerset made up by three organisations –Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group –have joint and equal responsibility to safeguard children and young people.

ACRONYM	FULL TERM	DESCRIPTION
UASC	UnAccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	Children who are outside their country of origin to seek asylum in the United Kingdom, are separated from parents and relatives, and are not in the care of someone who is responsible for doing so. Before the age of 18, separated children are the responsibility of the local authority who assesses the child's needs and provides accommodation, education and health care.
VS	Virtual School	The Virtual School is a statutory service which exists to support and challenge all those involved in the education of children in care. The Virtual School Headteacher must be able to demonstrate how the pupil premium and other funding is raising the achievement of looked-after children.
CYP	Children and Young People	An abbreviation often found in reporting in children's services.

