




Sefton Corporate Parenting Board.

Annual Report 2024

Report to: Sefton Children's Services. Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Report author: Cllr Diane Roscoe.

Date of report: 18th December 2024



Purpose of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board

The term 'corporate parenting' describes the collective responsibility of the council to prioritise the needs of cared for and care experienced children and young people and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

The Corporate Parenting Board is designed to provide the necessary leadership that drives an ambitious and multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children and young people that we care for.

To undertake these functions well it must work in a way that ensures the voice of children and young people is influential in decision making.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board.

It is the role of the Corporate Parenting Board to monitor the key priorities and outcomes for Cared For and Care Experienced children and young people in Sefton. The Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families, Councillor Diane Roscoe, who will champion and monitor the Corporate Parenting strategy and help drive its implementation. The Board consists of cross-party members and senior managers who meet bi-monthly, receive reports, including performance reports, undertake strategic and thematic enquiries into specific elements of the strategy and seek ways of resolving barriers to its success.

Sefton Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines our vision for our cared for and care experienced children and young people and is underpinned by the seven corporate parenting principles as outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The strategy can be viewed at: <https://intranet.smbc.loc/media/905696/FINAL-CP-Strategy-2023-2025.pdf>

Sefton Cared For Children and Young People

A key objective of the board during 2024 has been to oversee the decrease in the number of children and young people entering care. With the continued development of our Early Help model and the new pathways established the number of children in care at December 2024 totalled **516**. This compares favourably to the number of children in care at December 2023 which totalled **612**. It is expected that with continuing development of the Early Help model that the number will fall below 500 by end of March 2025.



5 Key Priority Areas

The 5 Key Priority Areas contained in the strategy are underpinned by multi-agency working groups who report directly to the board on the progress of the action plans driving forward improvements in their key area.

The 5 Key Priority Areas detailed in the strategy are:

- **Being Heard.**
- **Safe and Stable Homes**
- **Raising Aspirations.**
- **Health and Wellbeing.**
- **Transition and Preparation for Adulthood.**



Key Developments in 2024.

Free Travel for Care Experienced Young People. Lead: Sefton CPB

In 2020 Sefton Corporate Parenting Board put forward a proposal to Liverpool City Region and the Metro Mayor to introduce a free travel scheme for care experienced young people in the region. The proposal cited a similar scheme that provides free bus travel to care experienced young people in Greater Manchester which had been launched two years earlier.


Throughout the four years since then Sefton CPB have requested multiple updates regarding the proposal and worked alongside Liverpool City Region to gain greater detail in support of the application.

On the 2nd of October 2024, Liverpool City Region Mayor, Steve Rotherham publicly announced plans to introduce a free travel scheme across LCR for all care experienced young people aged 18yrs to 21yrs. The scheme allows for free travel by bus, train and ferry across the region.

The scheme was launched in November 2024.

The 'Hub' – Lead: Laura Doyle

The Care experienced Service recently opened phase one of the Care Experienced Hub to coincide with National Care Leavers Week 2024. The Hub will transform service delivery to our cared for/care experienced young people aged 16-25 (and beyond) by providing the vital, accessible, wraparound support that our young people so desperately need. The vision for the Hub is to become a 'one stop shop' in which our young people will be able to access essential services in a comfortable environment, free from stigma and judgement. The Hub will offer a wide variety of services including (but not exclusive to), art therapy, housing advice and support, enhanced stay and play groups for young parents, a comprehensive



public health offer and community pantry. In addition, there will be a variety of 1:1 and group sessions available that will support the development of independence skills, enhanced employability support and mental health services. Most importantly, the Hub will seek to address the number one issue reported by care leavers both on a regional and national level, social isolation and loneliness.

We have recently called upon the support of signatories to the Caring Business Charter to assist us in ensuring the Hub will become the huge success we know it can be. The Hub provides us, as Corporate Parents, a unique and exclusive opportunity to completely transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities. Local businesses will play a key part to help us to do this by providing practical support directly linked to their expertise. e.g. facilitating a DIY session at the Hub or talking to a group of young people about how to start their own business. Alternatively, some businesses have expressed an interest in sponsoring/donating some additional items to furnish the Hub that will support the social aspects of the project by providing the home comforts and small luxuries that many of us take for granted. We were especially appreciative of a donation of £5000 from Peel Ports to support young people to develop their independence skills which was gratefully received and allows us to further develop our offer.

We have collaborated with our colleagues in Green Sefton and are proudly working in partnership with Natural Alternatives to transform the outside spaces. Plans are afoot to create raised beds for planting our own vegetables and herb garden. We also plan to build bespoke seating areas and even a pergola! Our care experienced young people have been consulted on what they wanted the hub to look/feel like and we have tried to incorporate as many of their ideas and suggestions into the final design. Our young people have been involved in painting and decorating the centre and have chosen a new name, for the site previously known as Melrose - 'The Hub'.


The response from partners has been overwhelmingly positive and provides a solid foundation upon which we can collectively grow our Local Offer and guarantee to our Care Experienced young people. Sefton have signed up to the National Positivtree movement in which a tree will be planted on site to symbolise our ongoing commitment to growing and nurturing our local offer. This will form part of a national campaign and will benefit from regional and national press.



A Whole Council Approach.

Throughout 2024 a key priority for the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has been to embed the culture of a 'Whole Council Approach to Corporate Parenting' across all departments and partners. With this in mind, regular reporting on progress and gaps takes place at ELT with representation by the Chief Executive on the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board.

Significant improvements have been seen across the Council and partners throughout 2024 including:


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- Increased partnerships and joint working across departments such as establishment of a Strategic Housing Partnership Group in collaboration with Children’s Social Care.
 - Strategic Housing Lead now provides regular reports to CPB.
 - Joint work undertaken with Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead to embed Protected Characteristics status for those who are care experienced within the working culture across the Council.
 - Joint work undertaken between Children’s Participation Lead and Community Safety Manager to explore introduction of targeted youth provision for cared for and care experienced children and young people.
 - Widened representation on the Corporate Parenting Board to include Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health and Chief Executive of Sovini.
 - Chief Executive of Council and senior officer attendance at visit from Mark Riddell, DfE Advisor.
 - Meetings held between care experienced young people and senior officers of Sefton Council to discuss issues relevant to them such as housing and employment.
 - Action plan developed by Strategic Housing Lead to address key issues of Allocations / Letting & Void Standards / Lack of Support / ASB & Management Issues & Property Conditions / Establish wider awareness across the council informed by the voice of care experienced young people.
 - First Housing conference held on 13th June 2024. Executive Leadership Team, Social & Private landlords in attendance as well as some of our young people.
 - Free transport offer is agreed and will soon be in place across LCR for all care experienced young people aged 18yrs to 21yrs.
 - Housing Support Allocation Fund allocation of £50k to support our young people with bills during the Winter months.
 - Development of the ‘Hub’ is well underway with significant support from departments within the Council as well as local businesses via the Caring Business Charter.
 - More of our young people are being supported into education, employment and training due to establishment of multi-agency ‘Into Work’ panel in collaboration with Caring Business Charter initiative.
 - Higher Education numbers are greater this year than previous years.
 - Mandatory ‘Real Life’ training has started for staff. Sessions involving our care experienced young people will be further developed to produce a learning resource.
 - Housing survey undertaken by OVH to better understand young people’s experiences of the housing process and what it was like for them when they moved into their first property.



Children and Young People’s Participation

At the heart of everything the board are working to achieve are the views, thoughts, wishes and feelings of our cared for and care experienced children and young people.

The board receive two reports at every meeting from our children and young people’s groups – Youth Ambassadors (11yrs to 15yrs) and Making A Difference (16yrs plus). Young people



from both groups meet regularly with board members while four members of the Making A Difference group are board members and attend every meeting.

In addition, the board hold an annual survey to gather the views of the wider cared for population. The survey is split into two age groups (5-9yrs and 10yrs plus). The results of the survey are used to inform the action planning of the 5 Key Priority working groups and are integral to the continued development of our services for children and young people.

Sefton Corporate Parenting Board - Terms of Reference

Objectives:

To provide holistic, member driven engagement with the key areas of the corporate parenting function. These include:

- Hearing the views of cared for and care experienced children and young people, about the services they receive from the Council.
- Methods to raise the aspiration, ambitions, and life chances of children in care and care leavers, narrowing the gap of achievement and outcomes between cared for children (CfC) and their peers.
- Ensuring that all elected members are fully aware of their corporate parenting duties and responsibilities by providing relevant information and encouraging access to training opportunities.
- Ensuring that all Council services are mindful of the needs of cared for and care experienced children and young people and respond accordingly within their remit.
- Development and support of strong partnerships with the public, private, voluntary and faith sectors to promote and enhance opportunities for cared for and care experienced children and young people.
- The outcomes of Ofsted inspections as they may arise and any actions that are required to improve services to.
- The promotion of excellent and innovative practice in relation to the Corporate Parent role from which others can learn. To pro-actively engage with forums that include and represent cared for and care experienced children and young people, in particular the Sefton Children's Services Youth Ambassadors and the Making A Difference Care Experienced Forum, and with other relevant partners and stakeholders in pursuance of achieving positive outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board may also extend an invitation to relevant partners and stakeholders, to attend meetings of the Board to seek their view on appropriate agenda items.

Frequency of meetings: Every 2 months



Work Programme: Yearly

Senior Advisor to the Board: Executive Director for Children’s Social Care and Education. Sefton Council.

Support to the Board: will be provided by the Corporate Parenting Officer. Sefton Council.

Accountability: Chair to report to the Leader of the Council. Annual Report to Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Membership:

Cllr Diane Roscoe – Chair. Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families

Cllr Paulette Lappin – Vice Chair

Cllr Marion Atkinson – Leader of Sefton Council.

Cllr Lynne Thompson – Elected Member

Cllr John Pugh – Elected Member

Cllr Mike Prendergast – Elected Member

Phil Porter – Chief Executive. Sefton Council.

Sasha Thompson – Sefton Care Experienced Young Person

Ania Wojcik - Sefton Care Experienced Young Person

Kathryn Johnson – Foster Carer. Sefton Council

Helen Case – Designated Nurse. Cared for Children. Merseyside and Cheshire NHS (Sefton Borough)

Dr Natalie Daniels – Designated Doctor Children in Care. Merseyside and Cheshire NHS (Sefton Borough)

Kerrie France – Assistant Director of Quality & Safety Improvement. Merseyside and Cheshire NHS (Sefton Borough)

Risthardh Hare – Executive Director. Children’s Social Care & Education. Sefton Council

Jo Cross – Assistant Director. Corporate Parenting & Care Experienced Services. Sefton Council.

Mandy Williams – Assistant Director. Help and Protection. Sefton Council

Helen Hawkins – Service Manager. Corporate Parenting Services. Sefton Council

Simon Fisher – Service Manager. Fostering and Adoption Services. Sefton Council

Laura Doyle – Service Manager. Adolescent and Care Experienced Services. Sefton Council

Mary Palin – Head Teacher. Sefton Virtual School

Cheryl Yates – Participation Officer. Sefton Council.

Deborah Butcher – Executive Director. Adult Social Care and Health. Sefton Council.

Nadine Carroll – Assistant Director. Education. Sefton Council.

Natalie Perischine – Chief Superintendent. Merseyside Police.

Tracey Overs. Service Manager. Safeguarding Unit.

Dr Lisa Marsland. Consultant Clinical Psychologist. Mersey Care.

Sharon Cotterall. Strategic Lead. Children and Families. Sefton CVS

Sarah Vaughan – Service Manager. Sefton Career Connect.

Roy Williams. Chief Executive. One Vision Housing.

Lauren Newall. Partnership Manager. DWP.

Reporting Officers: Attendance as requested.

- Children’s Complaints Officer. Sefton Council.
- Independent Visiting and Advocacy Service. NYAS



- Clinical Lead. Sefton CAMHS. Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.
- Service Manager. Sefton Youth Offending Team.
- Departmental Leads. Sefton Council.
- AiMs (Adoption in Merseyside). Chief Executive Officer
- Strategic Housing Lead. Sefton Council.