

# CORPORATE PARENTING

**“If this were my child....”**

# Corporate Parenting is....

**“the collective responsibility across services and across councils to safeguard and promote the life chances of children looked after”**

“If this were my child....” DfES 2003

# Overall Responsibilities

- Children in public care must be the *primary* focus for the resources and accountability of the local authority which has accepted a parenting responsibility for them.
- Children who have spent considerable time being looked after by the local authority must afterwards be given the kind of support that decent and responsible parents would give their own children.
- Children in public care should be provided with a fully rounded set of support and care services.

“If this were my child....” DfES 2003

# Key Responsibilities

- **Keeping our children and young people safe and healthy**
- **Making sure they live with people who care about them**
- **Giving them opportunities to grow and learn, as any good parent would**
- **Making sure they have decent homes as they become independent**
- **Helping them to get on in the world**

# Being 'Looked After'

Children are said to be looked after when they are 'in the care' of the local authority or when they are 'accommodated' by the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours.

This includes children looked after under a legal order and children looked after under voluntary arrangements with their parents or carers.

Children Act 1989

# Reasons for a Child Becoming Looked After

## Neglect

- result of parental life-style choices
- parents mental health or learning difficulties

## Emotional Abuse

- lack of consistent parenting
- parental disputes

## Physical Abuse/Sexual Abuse

**Some care leavers go on to be very successful....**

**...but reduced 'life chances' mean over-representation in:**

- Homelessness
- Unemployment
- Mental health services
- Prison

**...plus poor levels of educational achievement**

- Complex area related to placement stability and emotional well-being

# Governance

## Corporate Parenting Board (established Feb 2000)

- Ensuring that our children's needs are met
- Developing corporate responses
- Awareness-raising & advocacy
- Listening to children

## Rota Visits to local residential homes and respite care facility

- Asking whether the homes are acceptable **“if this were my child...”**
- Listening to children



**‘Services provided must be of the standard you would be happy for your own child to receive’**

**Frank Dobson MP**  
(Secretary of State, 1998)

# Corporate Parenting Policy & Strategy

# Key Elements

- **Policy Statement & Framework**
- **Values & Principles**
- **Children's Rights & Children's Involvement**
- **Assessment Care Planning & Review**
- **Placement**
- **Education & Personal Development**
- **Health**
- **Support into Adulthood**

# Children's Rights & Children's Involvement

- **UNCRC**
- **Information**
- **Advocacy**
- **Involvement in Decision-making**
- **Comments, Compliments & Complaints**
- **Involvement in Community Activities and Democratic Processes**

# Assessment, Care Planning & Review

- **Services appropriate to needs**
- **Assessments as necessary**
- **Up-to-date Care Plan**
- **Regular Statutory Reviews**
- **Listening to children, young people and their families - essential**

# Placement & Accommodation

- **Keep with family if possible**
- **Range of placements to meet needs**
- **Stability of placement a priority**
- **Independent Visitors**
- **Robust safeguarding in recruitment**
- **Safe, high quality care**
- **Whistleblowing system**
- **Rota Visits**

# Education & Personal Development

- **Secure educational placement**
- **Partnership with schools**
- **Personal Education Plans**
- **Preferential access to sport, leisure and cultural services**
- **Work experience & employment opportunities**
- **Promote use of IT to support education**

# Health

- **Promote good physical, emotional and mental health**
- **Partnership with Health Trusts**
- **Health Assessments, Health Plans**
- **Health Advice, Information & Care**
- **Special Needs**
- **Transitional Plans prior to age 18**



# Support into Adulthood

- **Preparation for Independence**
- **Practical, financial & emotional support**
- **Keeping in touch**
- **Personal Advisers**
- **Assessments & Pathway Plans**
- **Support to age 24 if in education or training**