



SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Parenting Strategy

2014-16

“We want every child in the care of Slough to reach their full potential”

www.slough.gov.uk
Slough
Borough Council

Slough
Children and Young People's
Partnership Board
Getting it right for children



1. Introduction and Purpose

Children and young people who are looked after by the Council, rather than their own parents, are amongst the most vulnerable in Slough. As corporate parents, it is our responsibility to keep them safe, make sure their experiences in care are positive and that they reach their full potential. As corporate parents, we will approach our parenting role with the passion and commitment that we would bring to parenting our own children.

In Slough, we have a well-established Corporate Parenting Panel chaired by our Lead member, which takes its responsibilities for corporate parenting seriously. Because it takes its responsibilities seriously, it wants to strengthen our corporate parenting approach in Slough.

Our Children in Care Council has recently reviewed the Slough Pledge for Looked After Children and this has been endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Pledge sets out the commitments that our young people tell us will help them reach their potential and to thrive. We are determined to deliver on these commitments.

Corporate parenting is a responsibility of the whole Council, not just children's services. All councillors must fully understand their own and the Council's responsibilities.

All services within the Council must understand their own role in ensuring that the Council is a good corporate parent to our looked after children.

Senior leaders, both members and officers, must also ensure that all partners with responsibilities for planning and delivering services to children and families in Slough also have looked after children at the heart of their strategies and plans.

This strategy, will underpin our corporate parenting responsibilities, help us meet the commitments set out in our Pledge and ensure that all our looked after children (both whilst they are in care and once they leave care) reach their full potential.

2. Our Approach to Corporate Parenting in Slough: Key Principles

Our approach to Corporate Parenting will be driven by what children and young people tell us is important to them. They tell us that they want to be helped to live 'ordinary' lives; to live with people who will keep them safe and care for them; to be healthy; to do well at school or college and helped to get the skills to be successful in work and relationships as young adults. Importantly, they tell us that positive relationships with the adults in their lives are important and that they want to be involved in making decisions about their lives.

The following **key principles** will help us measure up to what young people have told us and underpin this strategy:

- Children and young people, their wishes and feelings, their needs and their safety are at the centre of everything we do. We will always listen to what they tell us and ensure that they are involved in the decisions that are made about them

- The needs of looked after children are best met if all areas within the council work collectively and in a coordinated way with key partner agencies.
- Wherever possible, we should work collectively to help children and young people be cared for within their own families and provide help at an early point to make this possible
- If parents are unable to care for their children safely, then we will see if there are other people in their family network who could care for them and if there are, we will help them to do this.
- Most looked after children thrive best if they are cared for in foster families who live in Slough or nearby. Some will thrive better if they live in children's homes or other more specialist settings. We will match the placement to the needs of the child.
- Maintaining relationships, continuity of practitioners and stability of placement are key to helping children reach their potential
- Continuity of school placement, attending school regularly, attending a good school and being helped appropriately to succeed at school underpin looked after children reaching their potential
- In order to reach their potential, looked after children must have their physical and emotional health needs met

3. Objectives of the Corporate Parenting Strategy

Objectives
1 Elected members have a clear understanding of their corporate parenting role and responsibilities and the needs and circumstances of looked after children and care leavers in Slough
2. Corporate parenting responsibilities are reflected in all aspects of the work of the council, its policies and decisions
3. All Directorates will reflect the council's corporate parenting responsibilities in their plans and identify key actions which will help them deliver improved outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. This will include raising employee awareness; HR policies that support employees to become foster or adoptive parents; employment and work experience opportunities; policies and service delivery that promotes access to services for looked after children, care leavers and their carers; working collaboratively with children's services to improve outcomes and deliver care plans.
4. To ensure good outcomes through effective multi-agency partnership working which is led by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership through the priorities and actions set out in the Children and Young People's Plan
5. Improve communication and engagement between looked after children and care leavers, officers and elected members and ensure participation and inclusion so that young people are influential and have a say in decisions that affect their lives
6. Monitor and scrutinise progress in meeting the commitments set out in the Pledge

The scope of this strategy covers these objectives which will drive our work in Slough to help every looked after child and care leaver in Slough achieve their full potential; to ensure that we deliver on the commitments we have made on the Pledge for Children in Care and ensure that we meet and where possible exceed our statutory duties.

4. Context

The context which forms the starting point for the Strategy is set out in this section of the document.

4.1. Children in Care: the National Picture

There were 68,110 looked after children in England at 31st March 2013. Overall, the main reason why Children's Social Care first engaged with these looked after children was because they suffered abuse or neglect. The majority of looked after children were of white British origin. At March 31st 2013 59% of children in care were looked after under the terms of a care order, 74.7% were looked after within a foster placement and 3,980 looked after children were adopted.

The number of care leavers who ceased to be looked after and are now aged 19 years old (who were looked after on 1 April 2010 then aged 16 years old) was 6,980 and of these 58% were in Employment, Education or Training.

The outcomes for children in care and care leavers are poor, with research indicating that this group are:

- Over represented amongst the homeless population and prison population

- Are more likely to become involved in offending behaviour
- Experience drug and alcohol misuse
- Have poor mental health
- Disabled children from ethnic minorities experience further disadvantage

However, despite the complex needs and challenges which these children face many can and do, with the right support, achieve great success in their individual lives. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is focused on a whole system approach to ensuring the right policies are in place and that the individual support that is provided to children in care and care leavers is strengthened in order to enhance their capacity to achieve success.

4.2 Children in Care in Slough

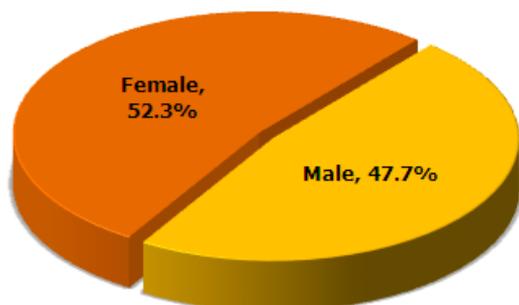
The number of children in care in Slough is currently 197 (as at March 1st 2014) and there are 51 children in care who are aged sixteen years or older. Nearly 50% of children in care are of white British origin. There is an approximate 50/50 split in terms of the gender of children in care and there are 24 children in care with a recorded disability. The looked after population in Slough is increasing and there has been a rise in the number of children received into care over the last year. However, our rate of looked after children per 10,000 children, whilst increasing, remains below the national and statistical neighbour average. The number of Slough children who were in care but who have now left and who qualify for help as care leavers is 95 and 83 of these young people are currently engaged in training education and employment.

Whilst many of our looked after children do well and thrive, outcomes for others mirror the national picture so they are more likely than other children in Slough to

become involved in offending behaviour, experience drug and alcohol misuse and have poor mental health.

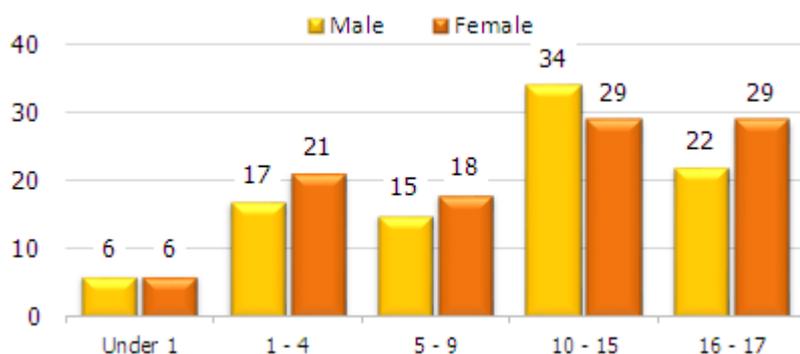
4.3 Children in Care: Statistical Data – January 2014

Gender



Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	94	47.7%
Female	103	52.3%
Total	197	

Age



Age	Male	Female	Total
Under 1	6	6	12
1 - 4	17	21	38
5 - 9	15	18	33
10 - 15	34	29	63
16 - 17	22	29	51
Total	94	103	197

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Under 1	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 15	16 - 17	Total	%
A1 - White British	47	50	6	21	12	35	23	97	49.2%
A2 - White Irish	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.5%
A3 - White - Any other White background	5	10	0	4	6	2	3	15	7.6%
A5 - Gypsy / Roma	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	3	1.5%
B1 - White and Black Caribbean	7	5	0	2	3	5	2	12	6.1%
B2 - White and Black African	4	6	0	4	4	2	0	10	5.1%
B3 - White and Asian	3	3	2	0	1	2	1	6	3.0%
B4 - Any other mixed background	5	8	2	3	3	2	3	13	6.6%
C1 - Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	4	0	2	0	2	4	8	4.1%
C2 - Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	3	1.5%
C3 - Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.5%
C4 - Asian - Any other Asian background	7	0	0	1	0	3	3	7	3.6%
C5 - Asian Or Asian British - Sikh	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.5%
D1 - Black or Black British - Caribbean	3	3	1	0	0	3	2	6	3.0%
D2 - Black or Black British - African	4	5	0	0	1	2	6	9	4.6%
D3 - Black - Any other Black background	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.5%
E2 - Any Other Ethnic Group	1	3	0	0	1	2	1	4	2.0%
Total	94	103	12	38	33	63	51	197	

Disability

Disability	Number	Percentage
Yes	17	8.6%
No	180	91.4%
Total	197	

Nature of Disability	Number
Behaviour	6
Communication	1
Learning	5
Mobility	3
Diagnosed with autism or Asperger's syndrome	6
Total	21

5. Slough's Corporate Parenting Framework and Governance

5.1 Slough's Corporate Parenting Panel

Slough's Corporate Parenting Panel is well established and currently consists of elected members (the Lead Member is the chair) and managers from children's services. It is proposed to strengthen the membership to include senior officers from across the Council and partner representatives alongside senior managers from Children's Services. The Panel will also be strengthened by the inclusion of representatives from the Children in Care Council.

5.1.1 The aims of the Corporate Parenting Panel are:

- To ensure that the council and its partner agencies have a joint commitment to effective corporate parenting.
- To lead and support the delivery of the vision so that continuing improvements in outcomes for children and young people in care and for care leavers are achieved.

5.1.2 Key Tasks:

1. To agree and monitor the Corporate Parenting Strategy and associated plans, to ensure outcomes fulfil the council's responsibilities towards children in care and care leavers.
2. To monitor the development of, and the adherence to, the Pledge to Slough Children in Care and to establish an effective partnership with the Children in Care Council.
3. To receive information about comments, compliments and complaints made by children in care. In respect of complaints to monitor the nature, number and how complaints were resolved.
4. To ensure children in care are able to participate in plans for their care and developments for service planning and delivery, with progress being reported on a quarterly basis.
5. To receive reports from and monitor and scrutinise the work of the following groups:
 - Berkshire (East) Healthy Care Partnership
 - The Slough 'Virtual School' Body (not yet established)

- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Relevant services within the Council

Other groups as relevant

6. To ensure that Members and officers undertake a programme of visits to front line services and children's homes (in accordance with Children's Home Regulations) and receive reports on the findings of the visits.

7. To receive regular reports on relevant key performance areas showing trends, performance against targets and comparisons with other local authorities.

8. To consult with children in care, young people and their carers and celebrate their achievements.

9. To celebrate the achievement of the Council, partner agencies and their staff in the provision of quality services and challenge when this is not the case.

5.1.3 Reporting Mechanisms

The Corporate Parenting Panel will report on the progress of its work annually to Education & Children's Services Scrutiny, Cabinet and full Council.

5.1.4 Frequency of Meetings

The group will meet four times annually

5.1.5 Membership

1. 7 elected members; to be chaired by the Lead Member. Members will be appointed on an annual basis but efforts will be made to ensure continuity

2. The Strategic Director of Wellbeing (Director of Children's Services) and the Assistant Director, Children, Young People and Families.

3. Managers of (at least) Assistant Director level able to represent key services or functions from across the Council, to include: Young People's Services; Skills and Employment; Housing. Education improvement to be represented by a senior manager from Cambridge Education

4. Senior management representation from key partner agencies, including the CCG, schools and FE providers.

5. 2 representatives from the Children in Care Council, supported by the Participation and Engagement Officer to represent the views of looked after children and care leavers

The work of the panel will be supported by the attendance of relevant officers as required but it is expected that the Head of Service with responsibility for looked after children and care leavers, the Head of Service for Placements and Resources, the Virtual Head Teacher and the IRO Manager will be in attendance.

5.2 The Slough Pledge to Children in Care

All children's service authorities should have a 'Pledge' to children in care upon which they should be consulted and, and which should be reflected in the local children and young people plan. In Slough this pledge has been reviewed recently and approved by the Corporate Parenting Panel. Its sets out the following commitments:

- We will help you to stay safe
- We will encourage you and help you to be as healthy as you can
- We will help you enjoy life and achieve the best that you can
- We will help you to enjoy life and achieve the best that you can
- We will give you opportunities to make a positive contribution and get involved.

For each commitment there are a number of statements setting out how Slough will honour these commitments.

The commitments and the 'how' we will honour the commitments have been developed by the Children in Care Council and set out the things that they think will make a difference

5.3 Performance Management

The Corporate Parenting Strategy aims to contribute to the achievement of improvements across all key performance areas relating to children in care and care leavers.

The effectiveness of the Corporate Parenting Strategy will be measured against a framework of nationally identified and local agreed performance indicators.

These indicators relate to:

- Placement stability
- Educational attainment
- Emotional and behavioural health of Children in Care

- Care leavers in suitable accommodation and EET
- Timelines for adoption

5.4. Corporate Parenting Priorities and Action Plan

The strategy will be delivered through an annual action plan with clear responsibilities and timescales for completion. The priorities for 2014/15 are:

- Placement choice and stability
- Education of looked after children
- The voice of young people
- Outcomes for care leavers

An action plan will be developed to take forward the priorities, with clear outcome measures and targets.

6. Reviewing the Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis with a view to assessing progress against the priorities. Other priorities will be considered and added as necessary, dependant upon local circumstances and national policy. Young people will be involved in the annual review.

The first review will take place in June 2015.

APPENDICES:

1. Slough Pledge to Children in Care
2. Relevant local plans and strategies:
 - a. Slough Children and Young People's Plan
 - b. Slough Children and Young People's Partnership Board Children and Young People's Engagement Plan 2013/15
 - c. Slough Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Needs Assessment 2014/16
 - d. Slough Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2014/14

Website Links to Legislation and Guidance

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:
(<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/strategyandgovernance/uncrc/unitnationsconventionontherightsofthechild/>)
- The Children Act 1989: (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>)
- Quality Protects (1998 – 2004):
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4007153
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000: <http://www.leavingcare.org/data/tmp/1528-3901.pdf>
- The Care Standards Act 2000
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Healthserviceirculars/DH_4016513
- Guidance on Education of Children and Young People in Care 2000
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/LocalAuthorityCirculars/AllLocalAuthority/DH_4003981
- Education Protects
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4002820 .
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/childrenincare/adoption/childrenact2002/act2002/>
- 32 33 Guidance on Promoting the Health of Looked After Children
- http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_108501
- A Better Education for Children in Care
- http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_taskforce/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/abefcic_summary_2.pdf
- Every Child Matters 2003:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/EveryChildMatters.pdf>
- If This Were My Child: A Councillor's Guide to Being a Good Corporate Parent'
- The Children Act 2004: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
- The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services 2004

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4089100

- DfES Statutory Guidance 2005 :
<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=conResults&consultationId=1332&external=no&menu=3>
- The Children and Young People's Act 2008
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/childrenyoungpersonsact2008>
- *Care Matters: Time to deliver for looked after children 2008.*
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/ig0500/>

Appendix 3

NCB Model structure for Corporate Parenting. From National Children’s Bureau - 2013

Model of effective corporate parenting

