

# What is a Corporate Parent?

Cllr Ivan Jewell

Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel

*Altogether better*



# All elected members are corporate parents, but what does this mean?

“Elected councillors have a crucial role.

Only you can carry it out.

You can make sure that the interests of the children come first.

You bring a fresh look and common sense.

For children who are looked after, your council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children.

You should do your utmost to make sure that children in public care get a good start in life”

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“The council is the corporate parent,  
so there are responsibilities for  
**all councillors.**”

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We have corporate parenting responsibilities for:

- Children and young people in foster care
- Young people in residential care;
- Children placed for adoption;
- Young people who are care leavers.

Councillors also have corporate parenting responsibilities for:

- Children and young people who are in need, including those in need of safeguarding;
- Young people in custody.

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- A good corporate parent offers at least the same standard of care as would a reasonable parent.
- This means that our looked after children should be cared about, not just cared for, and that all aspects of their development should be nurtured, requiring a corporate approach from a range of council departments and partner agencies.
- Broadly speaking there are three levels of responsibility for corporate parenting, which are reflected in the induction and training programme that is provided for elected members.

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# Level 1 – Universal responsibility

As corporate parents, all councillors have a responsibility to:

- Have a basic level of knowledge about issues for vulnerable children in their area;
- Know how to ask the key questions for members about their looked after children, such as health, education and what happens after they leave care.

<sup>1</sup>Local Authority Client Caseload Information System

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# Level 2 – Targeted responsibility

Local authorities can improve their role as corporate parents, through a higher focus on the needs of individual children and more effective co-operation across services and schools.

We exercise our level two responsibilities through the **Corporate Parenting Panel**, which includes:

- Providing regular information;
- Training and development;
- Two-way dialogue between councillors and looked after children and care leavers;
- Celebrating success and achievements.

Level two responsibilities also include a small number of members being part of the council's adoption and fostering panels.

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# Level 3 – Specialist responsibility

This is the level of lead member for Children’s Services and chair of our Corporate Parenting Panel.

“As the corporate parent of children in care the state has a special responsibility for their wellbeing. Like any good parent, it should put its own children first. That means being a powerful advocate for them to receive the best of everything and helping children to make a success of their lives.”

DfES Care Matters, 2006

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