

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 4
13 OCTOBER 2010	PUBLIC REPORT

CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE TO CHILDREN IN CARE

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S
Cabinet Member responsible: Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
<p>That Council:</p> <p>Approves the City Council’s Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children in Care (attached as Appendix 1)</p>

1. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

The purpose of this report is to share with Council the final version of the Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children in Care and to seek its endorsement and approval.

2. BACKGROUND

In a letter to Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Members in April 2009 Ed Balls described children in public care as being, “*the litmus test of how we are all delivering the ambitions set out in the Children’s Plan*”.

Central to the drive to improve the lives and outcomes of children in care is Care Matters; A time for Change.

Care Matters requires an integrated step change in custom and practice of all Local Authorities and their partners to address the huge waste of human potential caused by neglect and abuse of the most vulnerable of children and young people.

Care Matters requires all Local Authorities to make effective changes in the following general areas that impact directly on the quality of life of children in public care: ~

- Corporate Parenting
- Family & Parenting Support
- Care Placements
- Delivering a first Class Education
- Promoting Health & Wellbeing
- Transition to Adulthood
- The Role of the Practitioner

Fundamental in achieving these changes is a promise from corporate parents to children in care. This is normally referred to as “the pledge”.

In a letter to children in care in November 2009 Ed Balls told them that,

(1.) We are changing the law so that you must be asked for your views before any major change takes place in your life, for example, before you are moved from a foster carer or children's home, as well as on day to day issues like pocket money, bedtimes and food.

(2) We have asked all local authorities to set up Children in Care Councils to regularly ask children and young people in their care for their views on how support to you could be improved. Local authorities will also be writing down a set of promises to all children in their care (usually called their 'Pledge') about how they will improve the care and support you receive.

Over the past few months, some members of the Peterborough children in care council, Members of the Corporate Parenting Group and the Departments' Head of Learning & Opportunity for Children in Care (our virtual head teacher) have been developing the Peterborough Pledge to children in care. The final version is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications falling to the Council in respect of approving this pledge.

4. CONSULTATION

We have worked hard to attempt to include all key partners in drawing up the pledge. Extensive work has taken place between the CiC participation officer and children in care themselves. A wish list that the children developed was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel. Further work was undertaken that drew on best (and worst) practice from other Authorities. Options were considered at a workshop session in November 2009 involving Children in Care, Elected Members and Local Authority Officers in order to draw up a first draft of the pledge. Following the discussion and a post it exercise the first draft was drawn up. This is based on the five every child matters outcomes linking to the Children's Trust shared priorities, plus an additional area to represent other issues that the children in care raised. At the January Corporate Parenting meeting a final version of the Pledge was agreed and prepared for presentation to the full Council. Throughout the process Children in Care, Social Workers and Education Team for Children in Care (ETCiC) have been aware of the developments that have been made. Drafts of the pledge have also been presented to the Enjoy & Achieve Partnership group, Designated Teachers for CiC, selected Foster Carers and the Senior Leadership Team within Learning & Skills. The pledge was approved by the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee (meeting 16 March 2010).

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. Care Matters – A Time for Change (Cm7137): June 2007
2. Letter to DCS and Lead Member from Ed Balls: April 2009
3. Letter to Children in Care from Ed Balls: November 2009