

## Care Experienced as a Protected Characteristics Steering Group

### Action Plan

**2025/2026**

**Action:** Steering group to implement Care Experienced as a protected characteristic across SMBC and SCT services by reviewing and amending key policies to have a better impact on the outcome for care experienced young people.

Actions	Officer	Review by	Comments	RAG Rating
<b>Corporate Parenting Board</b>				
Secure Leadership and cabinet commitment to embed CEAAPC	Rosa Da Silva	By <b>Jan 2025</b>	Motion approved Jan 2025.	Green
Establish a steering group with key partners to review key policies	Rosa Da Silva	By <b>Jan 2025</b>	Steering group in place and bimonthly.	Green
Increase Corporate Parenting visibility across services DMT's to promote CEAAPC	Rosa Da Silva	By <b>June 2026</b>		Yellow
Produce a PC action plan for Steering group	Rosa Da Silva	By <b>Jan 2026</b>	To be reviewed by leads and SCPG to approve and finalise	Yellow
Support partnership DMTs to further understand Corporate Parenting and CEAAPC	Rosa Da Silva	By <b>June 2026</b>		Yellow
Actively work with external partners (Police, NHS, Local businesses etc) to embed CEAAPC	Rosa Da Silva	By <b>June 2026</b>		Red

<b>SMBC Directorate Leads</b>				
Promote the importance and the introduction of CEAAPC in management meetings	SMBC Services	By <b>June 2026</b>	To ensure that CEAAPC is a regular scheduled item on ASC Operational Heads meeting agenda. To request that this agenda is cascaded down to team meetings.	
Confirm the number of updated policies and the impact the change will have on CEYP	SMBC Services	By <b>June 2026</b>	To be raised with SD/AD and Operational heads	
Include CEAAPC in your business plans	SMBC Services	By <b>June 2026</b>	Discussion on the inclusion of CEAAPC in all ASC business plans.	
Include CEAAPC in the business planning workshops 2025-2026	SMBC Services	By <b>June 2026</b>	To be included when setting agendas.	
Complete CEAAPC training and Corporate Parenting E-Training	SMBC Services	By <b>June 2026</b>	To be raised at DMT and operational Heads meeting	
Promote the Corporate Parenting E-training across service area	SMBC Services	By <b>June 2026</b>	To be raised at DMT and operational Heads meeting	
Identify CEAAPC Service champion	SMBC Services	By <b>June 2026</b>	To seek champion(s) from across ASC. Raise at Operational Heads	
<b>SMBC/SCT EDI as follows:</b>				
Produce and deliver the CEAAPC training	Jacqueline Robinson & Sukhjinder Sahota	By <b>Sept 2025</b>	Completed: 12/06/2026 - in person session delivered by Rachel Kisley 17/09/2026 - virtual session delivered by Rachel Kisley and Jade Campbell	
Involve care experienced young people (CEYP) to produce the training	Jacqueline Robinson & Sukhjinder Sahota	By <b>Sept 2025</b>	Completed: Jade Campbell liaised with CEYP to produce the training and provide an interview	

Include CEAAPC in the EDI strategy	Jacqueline Robinson & Sukhjinder Sahota	By <b>Sept 2025</b>	Completed, Care Experience is included in the strategy that was presented to Cabinet and approved in November 25.	
Update Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and include care experienced young people as a protected characteristic with guidance.	Jacqueline Robinson & Sukhjinder Sahota	By <b>Sept 2025</b>	EIA forms amended to include Care Experience as one of the characteristics that needs to be assessed, and the feedback form that is completed during the quality assurance process has also been changed to reflect this.	
Confirm the number of employees who accessed the face to face and virtual training and who are accessing the E-Training	Jacqueline Robinson & Sukhjinder Sahota	By <b>Jan 2026</b>	So far, 43 members of staff have accessed the Corporate Parenting eLearning.	
<b>SMBC/SCT HR</b>				
Guarantee a Job interview at Sandwell Council providing CEYP meet the person specification	Nicki Gordon & Jacqueline Robinson	By <b>Sept 2025</b>		
Monitor and confirm the number of Care Experienced staff employed by both organisations	Nicki Gordon & Jacqueline Robinson	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Include CEAAPC in HR strategy	Nicki Gordon & Jacqueline Robinson	By <b>Jan 2026</b>		
Embed Wellbeing and trauma-informed practices across all teams.	Nicki Gordon & Jacqueline Robinson	By <b>Jan 2026</b>		
<b>SMBC Customer Service Help Desk</b>				

The implementation of the new Telephony system in include fostering campaign	Helen Green and Tracy Causer	By <b>Sept 2026</b>	This will be active when the new main 1 number and SCT goes live, this will be end of March 2026 for SCT and end of May 2026 possibly for the 1 number (this is tbc)	
Successfully hiring CEYP apprentices	Helen Green and Tracy Causer	By <b>Sept 2026</b>	Corporate Customer has taken on x1 CEYP F/T apprentice from December 2025.	
Ongoing facilitating work experience for CEYP	Helen Green and Tracy Causer	By <b>Sept 2026</b>	This is on a continuous basis as & when requested we will attempt to facilitate any required placements.	
Confirm the number of CEYP accessing the work experience opportunities	Helen Green and Tracy Causer	By <b>Jan 2026</b>	TBC – KB has requested if we can support in February 2026 we will offer placements for this time period. We have previously provided a number of work experience placements over the last 3 years.	
<b>SMBC Service Improvement</b>				
CEAAPC and CEYP included on the budget planning/development of Medium-term financial strategy	Kate Ashley	By <b>Oct 2025</b>		
CEAAPC and CEYP involved in residents survey	Kate Ashley	By <b>Oct 2025</b>		
Support the initiative to appoint care experienced champions across the council service areas	Kate Ashley	By <b>June 2026</b>		
<b>SMBC - Democratic Services</b>				
Embedding Corporate Parenting / care experience prompts in report templates	Suky Suthi-Nagra	By <b>Sept 2025</b>	All report templates have been revised to require authors to explicitly consider Corporate Parenting, including potential impacts on care-experienced children	

			and young people, within the implications section. This ensures that care-experience considerations are routinely integrated into decision-making papers. Extensive report-writing training has been delivered to authors, reinforcing the importance of addressing the needs of care-experienced young people and ensuring their voices are reflected in decisions that affect them.	
Supporting Corporate Parenting Board meetings	Suky Suthi-Nagra	By <b>Sept 2025</b>	A Democratic Services Officer provides dedicated support to the Corporate Parenting Board, helping to strengthen governance arrangements, improve meeting effectiveness, and ensure appropriate oversight. Work has also been undertaken to raise the profile of the Corporate Parenting Board, promoting parity of esteem with other strategic boards across the authority.	
Supporting reporting, EIAs and business planning integration	Suky Suthi-Nagra	By <b>Sept 2025</b>	Democratic Services has supported the integration of corporate parenting priorities into the Council's corporate business planning, with a particular emphasis on increasing engagement with care-experienced children and young people. Report authors are required to assess and articulate the impact of proposals on children in care	

			<p>and care-experienced individuals where relevant.</p> <p>In collaboration with the EDI team, Democratic Services identified the need to refresh report templates and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) prompts to ensure that care experience is consistently captured and considered where applicable, strengthening the quality and robustness of decision-making.</p>	
Monitor impact so far (documented / measurable)	Suky Suthi-Nagra	By <b>Jan 2026</b>	<p>Enhancements to the report template have embedded care-experienced considerations as a mandatory element of report drafting, strengthening consistency and visibility of impact across decision-making.</p> <p>Children We Care For have been engaged by departmental colleagues to contribute ideas for scrutiny topics, increasing their involvement in democratic processes and influencing areas of focus for elected members.</p> <p>The team has recently recruited two apprentices, supporting a more representative workforce and ensuring that younger perspectives are reflected within Democratic Services.</p>	

			<p>Proposals have been developed, in partnership with the Corporate Parenting Project Officer, for all newly elected members in 2026 to receive dedicated training on their role and responsibilities as Corporate Parents. Broader engagement activity has taken place through UK Parliament Week and budget consultation exercises involving children and young people. Further work is planned to strengthen engagement with schools and colleges, raising awareness of democratic processes and amplifying young people's voices.</p>	
<p>Monitor Gaps and risks (where Democratic Services may need to focus next)</p>	<p>Suky Suthi-Nagra</p>	<p><b>By Sept 2026</b></p>	<p>Democratic Services reviews all reports submitted for decision-making and undertakes quality assurance checks to ensure that the impact on care-experienced children and young people is explicitly considered, with appropriate mitigations identified where risks or gaps are identified.</p> <p>The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board routinely examines issues within its terms of reference, providing assurance to elected members and holding senior officers to account for progress and performance.</p>	

			<p>Training for officers and members has been refreshed and will be delivered to newly elected members following the May 2026 election. The training content will be reviewed to ensure it remains current and clearly reflects councillors' statutory responsibilities as Corporate Parents.</p> <p>Democratic Services officers meet regularly with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to monitor progress against agreed outcomes and identify any emerging risks or areas requiring further action.</p> <p>An area for further development has been identified around strengthening feedback to care-experienced young people, ensuring they are informed about how their views have influenced decision-making and are provided with appropriate follow-up after consultations.</p>	
<b>SMBC Adult Social Care</b>				
Embed CEAAPC across Adult social policies	Colin Marsh	<b>By June 2026</b>	To discuss with SD/AD in ASC to ensure existing and new policies are reviewed and included as part of the standard expectation.	
Display relationship with SCT care experienced team	Colin Marsh	<b>By June 2026</b>	To support champions to attend and promote CEAAPC at events, workshops and CP board. To include as a	



			standardised item at coproduction events.	
Recognise care experience in adult social care assessments and support planning.	Colin Marsh	By <b>June 2026</b>	Need to discuss with Elaine Oxley: AD for Social Work to explore inclusion in SW assessments. To include all age and services. To ensure information asked and collected at enquiry includes CEAAPC.	
Support the initiative to appoint care experienced champions across the council service areas	Colin Marsh	By <b>June 2026</b>	To identify and support champions in promoting this area of work from SW, DS and Commissioning.	
<b>SMBC Procurement Contracts</b>				
Support the initiative to appoint care experienced champions across the council service areas	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Embed CEAAPC across Adult social policies the number of updated polices and the impact this will have on CEYP	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Update procurement policies and contract templates to include care experienced	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Embed requirements into the councils Social value framework	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Leadership to champion care experienced inclusion in commissioning decision	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Include care experienced in tender specifications	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By <b>June 2026</b>		

Identify suppliers to demonstrate how they will support care leavers (e.g., training, apprenticeships, mentoring and donation of tech equipment).	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By June 2026		
Add scoring for bidders who commit to supporting care-experienced people.	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By June 2026		
Prioritise suppliers with inclusive recruitment and workforce development policies.	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By June 2026		
Track business partners commitments and outcomes for care experienced young people through contract management	Sharon Wright and Richard Arms	By June 2026		
<b>SMBC Secondary and Primary Schools/ Special provisions</b>				
Promote the CEAAPC Training across school headteachers	Julie Andrews	By June 2026		
Establish Secondary and primary, special and SEND provision to include representatives for each area	Julie Andrews	By June 2026		
Committee to review existing policies and include CEAAPC policies (e.g., behaviour, safeguarding, inclusion, extra curriculum activities) to identify inclusive gaps	Julie Andrews	By June 2026		
Update staff training and development to include CPD on trauma-informed practices, Stigma awareness and inclusive language about the children we care for and care experienced young people	Julie Andrews	By June 2026		
Create safe ways for children and young people to voice their views to enhance pastoral support	Julie Andrews	By June 2026		
Increase community and multi-agency partnership Engagement to better collaborate	Julie Andrews	By June 2026		

with social workers, virtual school head, and carers.				
<b>SMBC Communications team</b>				
Update SMBC communications policies and guidelines to reference care experienced	Harpreet Dhillon	By June 2026		
Ensure all council messages reflect care experienced inclusion	Harpreet Dhillon	By June 2026		
SMBC communications service to champion corporate parenting and care experienced such as feature care experienced achievements in council communications and create campaigns that highlight opportunities available to care leavers.	Harpreet Dhillon	By June 2026		
Launch public awareness campaigns highlighting care experience as a protected characteristic.	Harpreet Dhillon	By June 2026		
<b>SMBC Public health</b>				
Update public health policies to recognise CEYP as a protected characteristic.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
The percentage of public health policies updated to include care experience.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Include CEYP to collect feedback from CEYP on health services.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Embed trauma-informed and stigma-aware practice in all health services	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		

Work with local NHS trusts, GPs, and Integrated Care Systems to embed CEAAPC recognition.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Collaborate with charities and community organisations to provide wraparound health support.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Encourage SMBC to support CEYP wellbeing through workplace health initiatives.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Expand counselling/mentoring and peer support programmes for CEYP	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Provide free or subsidised access to leisure centres, gyms, travel, cinemas, Theatre and wellbeing activities.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Offer workshops on nutrition, budgeting for healthy food, and managing stress.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
Promote CEYP health champions and role models in Public Health campaigns.	Anna Blennerhassett / Lina Martino	By June 2026		
<b>SMBC Housing Services</b>				
Update housing allocation policies to recognise CEAAPC	Louis Bebb	By June 2026		
Ensure care leavers are prioritised in housing strategies and homelessness prevention plans.	Louis Bebb	By June 2026		
Train housing officers on care experience as a protected characteristic.	Louis Bebb	By June 2026		
Embed trauma-informed practice in housing services	Louis Bebb	By June 2026		
Recognise care experience positively in recruitment policies.	Louis Bebb	By June 2026		

Encourage care-experienced staff representation in housing services	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Work with registered social landlords and private landlords to embed care-experienced recognition in tenancy agreements.	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Include clauses in housing contracts requiring providers to support care experienced young people (e.g., mentoring, tenancy support).	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Collaborate with voluntary organisations to provide wraparound support for care leavers	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Encourage housing contractors to offer apprenticeships and jobs for care leavers.	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		
Build mentoring schemes into housing contracts to support CEYP in independent living.	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		
The percentage of housing policies updated to include CEYP	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		
The number of CEYP to be supported into secure housing.	Louis Bebb	By <b>June 2026</b>		