

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Report Title:	Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report
Meeting / Date	Council 11 th December 2025
Directorate	Children's Services
Report author/ Contact details	Abigail Adieze -Assistant Director, Corporate Parenting Service Daniel Phleps- Corporate Director for Children Services Children Social Care Abigail.adieze@walthamforest.gov.uk , Daniel.phleps@walthamforest.gov.uk
Wards affected	All
Public access	Open
Appendices	A - Corporate Parenting Board annual report 2023/2024 B - Corporate Parenting Board Strategy 2023/2024

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents an overview of the work and outcomes of the Corporate Parenting Board during the 2024/2025 period. It highlights the Board's activity in discharging its core duties: championing the rights, welfare, and aspirations of children and young people in care, as well as care leavers. The Board's activities have been guided by the principles of participation, transparency, and continuous improvement. Key themes this year have included improved engagement, responsive services, and a focus on amplifying the voices of children and young people. This summary provides a concise account of achievements, challenges, and future directions.

2 Decision

- 2.1 Council is asked to:
- 2.1.1 agree the contents of this report and supports the continued strategic priorities of the Corporate Parenting Board.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is a dedicated body tasked with overseeing the welfare and progress of children and young people in the care of the local authority. Operating under the statutory framework

outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Board brings together councillors, officers, care-experienced individuals, and partner agencies. The Board meets regularly to discuss the quality of services, monitor performance, and ensure that the corporate parenting principles are being effectively implemented across all relevant services.

- 3.2 The 2024/2025 reporting period saw the Board focus on several key priorities:
- 3.3 Voice and Influence: Ensuring children and young people can meaningfully participate in decisions affecting them.
- 3.4 Health and Wellbeing: Promoting the physical, emotional, and mental health of those in care.
- 3.5 Education and Employment: Supporting educational attainment, skills development, and employment opportunities.
- 3.6 Placement Stability and Permanence: Facilitating stable living arrangements and positive transitions.
- 3.7 Preparation for Adulthood: Equipping care leavers with the skills and support needed for independent living.

4 Engagement and Participation

- 4.1 During the year, the Board prioritised listening to the experiences, views, and aspirations of children and young people. Multiple feedback sessions, surveys, and creative engagement activities were held. These initiatives informed policy development and service delivery, creating a culture where young people feel empowered.

5 Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

- 5.1 The Board worked closely with health partners to increase access to physical and mental health support. New pathways were introduced to improve timeliness of support, and awareness campaigns addressed issues such as emotional resilience, healthy relationships, and substance misuse.

6 Educational Outcomes

- 6.1 The Board celebrated improvements in school attendance and attainment among children in care. Targeted tutoring, mentoring, and extra-curricular opportunities were expanded, and barriers to digital learning were reduced through targeted investment.

7 Placement Stability

- 7.1 Efforts to reduce placement moves and increase permanence yielded positive results. Support for foster carers was strengthened, and more children experienced long-term placements, with a focus on sibling

groups remaining together where possible. However, recruitment and retention of foster carers continues to be not only a local and national problem.

8 Preparing for Independence

- 8.1 Care leavers benefited from bespoke support packages, including skills workshops, housing advice, and access to apprenticeships. Peer mentoring and alumni networks provided additional guidance and encouragement.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The Corporate Parenting Board's work during 2024/2025 demonstrates the ongoing commitment to the children and young people it serves. Progress has been made across all principal areas, particularly in amplifying young voices, improving health and educational outcomes, and supporting successful transitions to adulthood. However, challenges persist, particularly in relation to mental health, availability of alternative home options, providing opportunities for employment within the broader council and statutory partners and the ongoing impact of external economic pressures. The Board remains committed to continuous improvement and learning, with the views and needs of young people at the heart of all it does.

10 Implications

- 10.1 For Children and Young People: The Board's actions are directly increasing participation, improving outcomes, and supporting smoother transitions to independence which includes exploring opportunities for care experienced young people to have access to the 'family firm'
- 10.2 For Service Providers: Greater collaboration and communication are supporting more responsive and joined-up services.
- 10.3 For the Community: The report highlights the importance of whole-community responsibility in supporting children in care and care leavers, encouraging wider involvement and understanding.
- 10.4 For Policy and Practice: Continued focus on evidence-based approaches, alongside meaningful engagement, will underpin future improvements and innovation.
- 10.5 Finance
 - 10.5.1 The Board remains committed to ensuring the Corporate Parenting Service delivers robust financial stewardship, with careful allocation of resources to maximise impact for children and care leavers. Investments have been directed towards initiatives demonstrating measurable improvements in health, education, and care stability.

10.6 Value for Money and Risk

10.6.1 Programmes and interventions are regularly evaluated to ensure value for money and to identify both financial and operational risks. Through rigorous assessment and monitoring, the Board continues to provide appropriate level of scrutiny of relevant council officers decisions and expenditure. Risk registers are maintained and reviewed to respond proactively to emerging challenges, especially those stemming from economic pressures and service capacity.

10.7 Legal

10.7.1 All activities are conducted in accordance with statutory duties governing corporate parenting, safeguarding, and the support of care-experienced young people. The Board ensures compliance with relevant legislation and acts promptly to incorporate new legal requirements. Advocacy for the rights and entitlements of children in care and care leavers remains a legal and moral cornerstone of its work.

10.8 Equality and Diversity

10.8.1 A strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion underpins every area of the Board's work. Particular emphasis is placed on addressing the unique challenges faced by care leavers from underrepresented or marginalised backgrounds. The Board actively seeks to remove barriers, promote fair access to opportunities, and foster a culture of respect, ensuring every young person is valued and supported, regardless of their background or circumstances.

10.8.2 This draft report is submitted to the Children's Scrutiny Committee as a transparent and accessible overview of the year, intended to inform, engage, and inspire ongoing commitment to the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in our care.

10.9 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder).

10.9.1 There are no specific new legal implications relating to the contents of this report.

10.10 Council Infrastructure (e.g. human resources, accommodation or IT issues)

10.10.1 There are no specific new legal implications relating to the contents of this report.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None