Introduction

I am really pleased to endorse the Corporate Parenting Strategy as a statement of our intention to deliver the best possible outcomes for children who are in the care of the City Council.

We have endeavoured to meet the pledges set in the original Corporate Parenting Strategy, which were developed in consultation with looked after children, their carers and colleagues, and will continue to build on the progress made through our commitment to the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015 – 2018.

The responsibilities of local authorities to act as a corporate parent require the full engagement of all members of the City Council, as well as members of staff. We are keen that looked after children have the same kind of life chances that we would wish for our own children.

As a Corporate Parent we would want to endorse and support the implementation of the Charter for Looked After Children And Young People And Care Leavers, developed by the Care Forum Wales Looked After Children Network, which places the child or young person at the centre of everything we do.

Whilst Aneurin Bevan Health Board does not have the statutory responsibility of a corporate parent, I am delighted that our colleagues in the NHS have agreed to share responsibility for ensuring that children in care achieve the best possible health outcomes.

We have high aspirations for children in our care and we will consistently listen to their wishes and feelings and work with them to achieve our goals and their hopes for themselves.

Bob Bright
Leader of the Council
Our Pledge to Children in Care

This is our pledge as corporate parents. We make this pledge to every child in our care, regardless of age, ability, background or whether placed in or outside our City. We acknowledge and endorse the principles of the Charter for looked after children and young people and care leavers alongside our pledges.
Home:
To provide looked after children with good quality, stable placements where they feel safe, valued and cared for by excellent carers.

Ensure that all looked after children are supported to develop their understanding of why they are where they are and make sense of their world and the adults in their world.

Where it is safe and possible to do so, strive to keep looked after children within their local area and in touch with the people who are important to them.

Make every effort to avoid unnecessary changes of placements and reduce the percentage of children looked after who have had three or more placement moves.

Involvle looked after children in decisions affecting them, listen to them and their wishes and assist them in making their voice heard through reviews of looked after children, which will be 100% completed in line with the statutory timetable.

Provide statutory visits to looked after children in accordance with the regulations and develop and support carers so that they encourage looked after children to fulfil their potential.
Education:
To ensure that looked after children achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

Provide support to looked after children that meets their needs and enables them to achieve in line with their peers and targets as set out in their Personal Education Plan.

Ensure that looked after children do not miss out on their educational opportunities and that 100% attendance is promoted at all times.

Strengthen joint working and understanding between social workers, schools, colleges and other professionals in order to facilitate the sharing of information and maintain looked after children in their educational placements.

Enable looked after children to have a voice in educational planning at the individual and the strategic level.

Ensure that carers are equipped to support their children in learning and development.
Health:

To improve the health outcomes of looked after children and to provide them with appropriate health care and advice.

Achieve timely completion of health assessments for looked after children in line with statutory requirements.

Improve the physical & emotional well-being of looked after children

Promote a healthy lifestyle for looked after children and their carers.

Support all looked after children to have a voice in how their health needs are to be met.

Support foster carers where necessary to help them to better understand the physical and emotional health needs of their foster children.
Leisure:

To support and encourage looked after children to enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activity to enable them to fulfil their potential.

Encourage looked after children to access a variety of leisure opportunities and work to remove obstacles that prevent them from taking part.

Encourage looked after children to make a positive contribution to their local community.

Ask looked after children about what leisure opportunities they would like to take part in, to enable them to influence the way that services are delivered.

Provide information to looked after children and their carers in a range of appropriate media so that they know what opportunities are available and how to access them.
Leaving care: To support looked after children and care leavers to prepare for the future and make positive choices for independent living, in order to become successful, fulfilled members of society.

Increase the percentage of young people formerly looked after, receiving safe and appropriate accommodation and provide sufficient support that enables them to move gradually into independent living.

Increase the percentage of young people formerly looked after who are known to be engaged in education, training or employment and enable care leavers to access education and employment opportunities and to make a contribution to society.

Listen to the wishes of care leavers, ensuring that they understand the decisions being made and can have an influence on service planning.

Support care leavers to look after their emotional well-being and recognise how this can impact on other areas of their life.

Support care leavers to develop independent living skills from as early an age as possible, including both practical skills and understanding of appropriate boundaries and the responsibilities and expectations of adulthood.
Why do we need a Corporate Parenting Strategy?

For members, employees and partners of the City Council, there can be no more important role than looking after the children and young people in our care. We believe that children are best brought up within their families. However, where this is not possible, we as corporate parents aim to ensure that children in care achieve the best possible outcomes and life chances.

This Corporate Parenting Strategy is our collective commitment to our looked after children and young people. It sets out the high standards we aim to achieve as corporate parents along with our key partners and the actions we will take to do this.

As Corporate Parents we welcome the publication of a Charter For Looked After Children And Young People And Care Leavers promoting the rights of the child, which underpins our principle of placing the child at the centre of everything we do.

Together we will ensure that looked after children are safe, well cared for, encouraged and supported so that they can achieve their full potential in life.
The history & future of our Corporate Parenting Strategy

In 2011 our Corporate Parenting Strategy clarified our pledges to looked after children and set out an action plan to work towards raising the aspirations for our children. Following on from the work undertaken and building on the success of 2011 - 2014 we have reviewed the Corporate Parenting Strategy looking forward towards 2015 - 2018.

We have maintained the aspirational pledges from 2011 - 2014 and taken the opportunity of incorporating the Charter for looked after children and young people and care leavers our corporate parenting strategy recognising and promoting children’s rights.
**How the strategy will be delivered, monitored and evaluated**

The aims of the strategy will be delivered through the action plan.

A lead officer has been identified for each outcome area: they are responsible for implementing their part of the action plan and for reporting on progress to the Corporate Parenting Forum.

The Corporate Parenting Forum has been established to monitor and evaluate progress against the action plan and to ensure continued engagement and ownership at the political level.

In addition, a ‘Children in Care’ Council, led by children and young people in care and care leavers, will hold us to account as corporate parents.

The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and again evaluated at the end of the three year period.

Our action plan for the 2015 - 2018 strategy will be informed by the outcomes of the Corporate Parenting Event to be held in February and attended by looked after children, care leavers, councillors, foster carers and children services staff.