



CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY (2009-2011)

**“Improving the experience of children in care
and promoting their outcomes”**

Foreword

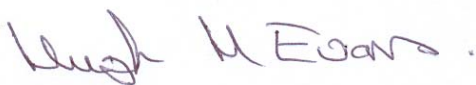
We are pleased to welcome this Corporate Parenting Strategy to help develop and support the future for our children and young people in care and care leavers. We are confident that this strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to taking corporate responsibility for improving the life chances and outcomes of every child and young person looked after by Denbighshire County Council.

Young people who are looked after and care leavers face a number of challenges as they make their move to independence. In order to make their transition to independence as smooth as possible and to ensure they go on to fulfil their potential in the future it is important that these young people receive help and support. This strategy therefore outlines our key aspirations for these children and young people and clearly sets out the actions we intend to take to achieve these aspirations.

This strategy provides the framework for all Denbighshire County Council officers, managers and Councillors to make a real difference to the lives of these children and young people.

In order to cement our commitment to corporate parenting Denbighshire has adopted the following Corporate Parenting Statement

In Denbighshire, we believe that ensuring the effective care and protection for children who are looked after by the local authority is one of the most important responsibilities held by Councillors, officers and professional agencies working with children and young people. In order to provide high quality services, we must all work together to meet their needs.



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Leader of Denbighshire County Council



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Section 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Corporate Parenting

Corporate Parenting - is the term used to refer to the collective responsibility of the Council to provide the best possible care and protection for children and young people who are “looked after”, that is, those who are in public care.

Once a child is in care, all Members and officers of the Council, as their corporate parents, need to be concerned about the child as if they were their own. This concern should encompass their education, health and welfare, what they do in their leisure time, how they celebrate their culture and how they receive praise and encouragement for their achievements.

The central principle of corporate parenting is that all Councillors and staff employed by the Council strive to achieve and provide for looked after children and young people, so that they take full advantage of opportunities available and reach their full potential, as they would their own child(ren). This can be at a practical level for individuals working directly with children, or at a strategic level for individuals making decisions which may affect looked after children and young people.

1.2 Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Looked After Children – are children who are looked after by the local authority through a care order made by a court or by agreement with their parent(s), whether in a residential home, with other members of their extended family or with foster carers. These are the children for whom the council is the corporate parent and are the children about whom this publication is primarily concerned.

Care leavers – are young people who have been looked after by the local authority and who the authority has a duty to keep in touch with and to support when they leave care. The responsibility lasts up to the age of 21 or beyond if they are still in education or training.

Children and young people can come into the care of the local authority for a number of reasons including:

- physical and sexual abuse or neglect;
- parenting difficulties and pressures which mean the birth parent(s) of the child(ren) cannot provide the care and accommodation appropriate to meet their needs;
- the illness or death of a parent(s);
- family hardship;
- family upheaval or breakdown

Children and young people can be looked after for a short period, either returning to their families or moving to permanent arrangements such as adoption; but for others, they will remain looked after for a long period of time usually in the care of foster carers.

The position in Denbighshire

The table below provides an overview of the looked after children population (excluding those in respite care) as at 31 April 2009

Statistic	April 2009
Total number of looked after children	139
Gender	
Male	88
Female	51
Age Groups	
Under 5	34
5 to u12	41
12 to u16	36
16 plus	28
Placement Type	
Number of children in a foster placement within Denbighshire	64
Number of children in a foster placement outside Denbighshire	19
Number of children placed with parents	26
Number of children placed for adoption	4
Number of children in residential care in Denbighshire	10
Number of children in residential care outside Denbighshire	11

Whilst Wales has broadly experienced an increase in the number of looked after children in recent years the trend in Denbighshire has been otherwise with a notable reduction in the number of looked after children over the last 5 years. We have been successful in reducing the numbers of looked after children through a number of initiatives which include the provision of improved community based packages of social care, family support and educational support. Between 31st March 2005 and 31st March 2009 the number of looked after children fell in Denbighshire from 145 to 139 with a fluctuation above and below 139 during this period.

1.3 Legal and Policy Framework

The responsibility for corporate parenting was placed on local authorities in the Children Act 1989 and was reiterated in the 2005 Welsh Assembly Government guidance for Councillors "If this were my child" which emphasised the role of Councillors in ensuring their Council acts as a good corporate parent for every child in care.

Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on the NHS as well as each local authority's housing and education services to assist social services in carrying out their functions under the Act with regards to the provision of help, support and services – this includes assisting in their corporate parenting function. However, it is important to recognise the holistic and wider needs of children and young people and stress that in order for them to fulfil their potential and lead healthy, prosperous and successful lives they require the support of all available services. The Council's leisure, library and youth services each have key roles to play in supporting looked after children and care leavers by providing opportunities to participate, learn, improve their esteem and well-being. Integrated transport policies should also have regard to the needs of these children and young people to enable them to access the

opportunities made available to them. In addition it is vital that Council departments work in partnership with external agencies to provide as wide a range of services and support within the community as possible.

The Welsh Assembly Government has used its powers under the Children Act 2004 to make the existing Children and Young People's Framework Partnerships in each local authority area responsible for co-ordinating the planning and prioritisation of services for children and young people. In addition, the Children Act 2004 emphasised the role of collaborative service agreements in achieving the right services for children and young people.

Other key programmes governing the provision of children's services include:

Legislation	Aims/ Requirements
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989	Provides the overarching framework.
The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000	Extends the local authority's responsibilities to care leavers to those aged up to 21 years, and in some circumstances to 25 years. It also requires local authorities to draw up a pathway plan, and provide support, to support care leavers into independence.
The Care Standards Act 2000	Established national minimum standards for care in residential homes, fostering and adoptive placements and introduced the requirement for these placement providers to be inspected by the now Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales.
The Adoption and Children Act 2002	Reformed existing adoption law to ensure that the welfare of children is central to all decision making. The Act also extended the responsibility of adoption services to provide support for adoptive parents and birth parents.
The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services 2004	A 10 year programme aimed at achieving long term improvements in children's health

Section 2: Strategy Aims and Objectives

2.1 Corporate Parenting Statement

In Denbighshire, we believe that ensuring the effective care and protection for children who are looked after by the local authority is one of the most important responsibilities held by Councillors, officers and professional agencies working with children and young people. In order to provide high quality services, we must all work together to meet the needs of the most vulnerable group.

We know that research has demonstrated that children who are looked after are more likely than others to be disadvantaged, especially in the areas of health, housing and education.

As “corporate parents” we must improve the situation for children who are looked after. All Departments are expected to work in partnership with those people who have key roles in the life of the child or young person. Similarly, we expect to work with the Local Health Board and Trust to ensure that looked after children have access to the universal and specialist health care services available to other children.

Our principle is to raise the quality of care and to improve the life chances of children looked after by local authorities, so that they may expect to do at least as well as their peers who are able to remain at home with caring and loving parents. We will praise them when they do well and advocate for them if in trouble.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this strategy is to improve the life chances of looked after children and care leavers through the development and delivery a holistic range of services.

The strategy aims to drive forward, support and strengthen a whole Council approach to corporate parenting. Developing a shared understanding of what corporate parenting really means to the lives of children and young people will enable the authority to create a culture whereby all staff think instinctively about the difference they can make and drive forward real change to improve and promote positive outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers.

The strategy also aims to achieve and support improvements in quality and performance relating to looked after children and care leavers in line with their peers.

2.3 What our Corporate Parenting Strategy will strive to deliver to our children and young people in care.



2.4 Principles

In order to achieve the aims and aspirations set out above Denbighshire County Council must work to the following principles when carrying out its responsibility as corporate parent:

- all aspects of children's lives are considered, not only those parts which have led to a period of separation from home;
- looked after children are provided with care and support, access to good health care and education according to their needs;
- looked after children are encouraged to participate in decision making and contribute to appropriate plans about their lives, and that these plans are rigorously recorded and acted upon;
- mechanisms for consultation and participation are positively promoted for looked after children and care leavers and that the Council actively listens and responds to the views and experiences of these children and young people;
- the achievements and successes of looked after children and care leavers are positively recognised and celebrated;
- continuity in the lives of children who are being looked after are promoted so as to reduce or where possible eliminate, disruption;
- young people are provided with help to leave care and support into independence, recognising that most young people do not leave home until they are in their 20s and continue to return frequently.

Section 3: Improving Outcomes

The work of both the Elected Members Forum and the Working Group focuses on four key areas, three of which are about directly improving specific outcomes and life chances for looked after children and care leavers. This section identifies the key issues that impact on achieving positive outcomes in relation to: education, employment, housing, health and social integration. The work programmes that are included in Section 5 outline the work to be undertaken within Denbighshire to help address the issues detailed in this Section.

3.1 Promoting Education and Employment Opportunities

Education

It is widely evidenced that looked after children do not achieve the educational attainments of their peers and are less likely to achieve their full educational potential. There are a number of factors that can contribute to this lower educational performance including:

- disruption to schooling before being taken into care;
- frequent changes of school once in care;
- concerns about events at home;
- poor school attendance – as school has not been seen as being of sole importance during their move out of the family home into the care of the local authority;
- negative or discouraging attitudes of peers, care staff and teachers;
- exclusion because of their behaviour - which could be a response by the young person to disruptions and uncertainties in their home and family life;
- bullying - especially if they appear different, shy, new or isolated;
- lack of support at home with schoolwork;
- lack of motivation and confidence arising out of low achievement.

Particular care must therefore be taken to keep children's lives and placements stable so they can continue to go to school and can include:

- training and supporting foster carers to encourage children to learn;
- working with schools to develop personal education plans that ensure that looked after children receive the help and support they need to do well in their learning;
- take particular steps to ensure bullying is dealt with effectively;
- provide support networks to ensure looked after children are carefully inducted into the school;
- for children with disabilities who may not be able to achieve well in formal examination opportunities must be sought that allow these children to succeed in other ways.

Employment of care leavers

It is well evidenced that there are a number of factors that can affect the career options and success after the age of 16. Limited educational qualifications and training, substance and/or alcohol abuse, relationship breakdowns (personal or family), moving home, living in a rural area with limited public transport and support networks can all contribute to whether or not a young person will be successful in securing employment. Young people who have a stable care history or who are able

to achieve some stability in their personal circumstances on leaving care are more likely to enter and remain in employment, training or study.

A 2005 Welsh Assembly Government Care Leavers Survey highlighted the following issues that young people face when trying to secure employment:

- the need for guidance, advice and help identifying the options open to them, and help in finding the right job or course. The right job or course was seen as very important to young people, as they were more likely to remain interested and motivated;
- childcare - many young mothers stay at home to look after their children, and feel that they can't think about furthering their education or going out to work because childcare is too expensive, and they are unaware of any options available to help them with this;
- limited job opportunities in the area leading to a reliance on benefits;
- limited help with health related problems;
- lack of money for: transport, clothes, books and other support materials – all of which can affect the choices they can make.

Comments from care leavers who responded to the survey included:

"I can't get a job because of my anxiety and depression and suicidal attempts. I would like to go to college. I did a chef's course. I don't think my health will get better and can't think about the future"

"I stay at home to look after my baby. I would like to go to college or work but need someone to look after my baby"

In order to promote the employment opportunities of care leavers the following must be inherent in practice and service delivery:

- placement stability (at home and/or a care placement and in school), positive encouragement and high aspirations, effective school and education service links;
- the assessment of current skills and career planning being a central part of the leaving care planning and review process;
- signposting to future entitlements to support and financial assistance should they wish to return to further or higher education some time after leaving care and how to access them;
- continuing support and contact to help young people maintain motivation and to respond to those wishing to return to learn or earn;
- inter-agency links to provide access to opportunities and to plan service developments in this area – including: careers, training agencies, further/higher education colleges, employers, Benefits Agency and youth services.

3.2 Encouraging Participation, Social and Leisure Interests in order to promote health and wellbeing

Looked after children tend to have more health problems compared to their peers and can result from a range of factors including:

- missed health checks such as dental visits;
- early life experiences leading to a legacy of health problems;
- limited education and support to both parents and young people so that they understand how health matters are important;
- poor diet, smoking, alcohol or drug misuse within their household;

- mental health or emotional needs.

It is therefore important that looked after children are provided with a full health check and that children and young people, parents and carers are educated, trained and supported to lead to healthy lifestyles and help identify and address areas of concern. In planning for the child/ young person's future, and their move to independence, an individual health plan that sets out their health needs and how they will be met must be completed.

In addition, it is important that opportunities to pursue social and leisure interests are provided to these children and young people to help improve their emotional, psychological and physical health and wellbeing.

3.3 Providing a Safe and Secure Home

Young people leaving care are a diverse group whose accommodation needs will vary according to their care experience, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, contact with their families, degree of preparedness for leaving and any disability they may have. It follows that their accommodation needs will be equally diverse.

Although amendments to legislation have made some difference the fact remains that there continues to be a large number of care leavers who do not have appropriate accommodation. A number of factors can be seen to contribute to this including:

- a lack of safe, secure and affordable accommodation for care leavers - there are a number of supported housing projects but they are in the main transitional and so very often young people have to move on from them quite quickly;
- low incomes and unemployment;
- restrictions in levels of Income Support and Housing Benefit for under 25 year olds, and lack of entitlement to Income Support for most 16 and 17 year olds, have contributed to increased homelessness amongst young people.

Many of the problems young care leavers face are not just about finding accommodation but sustaining it. Firstly, many care leavers will have limited life skills, such as cooking and cleaning, along with limited experiences and poor skills in managing finances and will thus be unable to manage their budget to cover all the associated costs with living independently e.g. bills, food, rent. In some cases, this problem is further compounded by the reality that a large number of care leavers are reliant on state benefits as their limited educational qualifications prevent them from securing suitable employment.

The provision of an appropriate range of accommodation options to meet the diverse range of needs requires (formal) agreements with statutory and voluntary housing providers to plan services, ensure access to a range of tenancies and partnerships or joint ventures to establish a range of good quality supported accommodation options.

When planning accommodation to meet the varying needs of young people and to promote and assist positive outcomes it is important to:

- involve young people in planning and decision making;
- assess the needs of the young person and help prepare them for independent living;
- offer a choice in the type and location of accommodation;

- ensure there has been effective planning and preparation for the move;
- have a contingency plan in case the planned accommodation falls through;
- set up a package of housing support;
- have a clear financial plan to help manage the accommodation.

For those children and young people who are looked after it is essential that the authority continues to ensure that they are able to live in a safe and secure home. For those children living at home Denbighshire must work with parents to ensure that they are accessing the support and services they need to help them address any problems they or their children may have so that the children can be appropriately cared for. For those children and young people in foster care and residential care Denbighshire must continue to follow its robust assessment, approval and review procedures to ensure it has appropriately skilled and experienced people and staff to look after our children.

Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Role of the Corporate Parent

Once a child is in care, all Members and officers of the Council, as their corporate parents, need to be concerned about the child as if they were their own. This concern should encompass their education, health and welfare, what they do in their leisure time, how they celebrate their culture and how they receive praise and encouragement for their achievements.

[‘If this were my child: a councillor’s guide to being a good corporate parent’;
WAG; February 2005]

The role of the corporate parent is to seek for the children in public care the outcomes that every good parent would want for their own children.

4.2 The role of the Elected Member as Corporate Parent

As a Councillor there is a responsibility for ensuring that the council acts as the “corporate parent” for all the children in its care.

As corporate parents, Councillors should:

- be satisfied that there is a joined up, effective and holistic approach to meeting looked after children’s needs through the local planning arrangements;
- seek to ensure that provision of other public services used or needed by looked after children and young people is high quality, “joined up” and take account of the needs;
- challenge practice, ways of working and the delivery of services – scrutiny and executive functions being the key avenues to do this;
- find out about Denbighshire’s looked after children, for example:-
 - how many children in need, children whose names are on the child protection register, looked after children and care leavers there are in Denbighshire;
 - how well the local authority is looking after them;
 - how well looked after children are doing at school, college or university and what needs to be done to improve educational outcomes;
 - what the health needs of the looked after children are and how these are being met;
 - what advocacy or children’s rights services are available;
 - what the housing needs of looked after children are and how these are being met;
 - what support is available for young people leaving care;
- undertake appropriate training that will help them to understand their role as corporate parent and the needs of looked after children and care leavers;
- commit to listen to the views of looked after children and care leavers and actively respond to requests where possible;
- ensure looked after children and care leavers are considered in the development of all policy and service provision in relation to children;
- attend all events that recognise and celebrate the achievements and successes of looked after children and care leavers.

The Lead Member for Children and Families will ensure that the local authority is meeting its statutory responsibilities, in particular the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children and care leavers.

4.3 Corporate Parenting Elected Members Forum

The Elected Members Forum was established in May 2007 with its overarching aim to effect real changes to policy and service delivery that improves outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. The Forum is chaired by the Lead Member for Social Services and its membership includes: Corporate Director of Social Services and Housing, Corporate Director of Lifelong Learning, Head of Children and Families, Head of Education Services and elected member representatives from all four Scrutiny Committees.

4.4 Expectations of County Council Officers and Partner Agencies

In order to deliver the 'corporate parenting' strategy we need to make explicit the individual functions, including roles and responsibilities of the relevant council departments and partner agencies so as to ensure that the development and delivery of their services take into account, and where possible meet, the needs of looked after children and are leavers.

In addition, Council officers should ensure that elected members are provided with appropriate information in relation to their corporate parenting responsibilities, including service developments and key messages that contribute towards achieving positive outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

The following highlights the key roles that Denbighshire County Council departments can play in fulfilling their responsibility as corporate parent.

Children and Family Services

The design and direction of the Children and Family Service recognises the importance of families, seeking to engage parents and the extended family in the care and planning process. We will ensure that if a child has to enter the care system that our first consideration is to a family placement. As a council we are committed to reducing the number of 'looked after children and young people whilst maintaining best practice. We aim to do this by developing and delivering support that promote and enable children to live at home or within the family network.

Recognising a positive and joined up approach with partners is essential to ensure children have a positive experience of being looked after. A framework of robust gate keeping, high quality assessment and planning, and the monitoring of outcomes for looked after children and young people will enable improved responses to need and deliver effective early intervention and preventative services. In addition to this there will be close monitoring and promotion of placement stability, and the recruitment and retention of both foster carers and staff.

The Leaving Care team in particular will provide ongoing support and advice to those young people leaving the care system to live independently which will include: devising multi-agency pathway plans, assessments and reviews; support with the practicalities of transition, training and employment, accommodation, finance, and emotional support, in line with the normal experiences of their peers.

Lifelong Learning

The Lifelong Learning Department will maintain an overview of all looked after children and young people to ensure that they can maintain a school place with support designed to meet their individual needs. The Department is well placed to have a positive influence on the education and career pathway of a child or young person by raising aspirations and providing effective and targeted support and guidance for individual pupils.

Personal Education Plans will ensure that all needs are planned for during important times such as transition between placements, transition to a new school, during exam periods and on the transition from school based education to employment or training. We are committed to working with the relevant partner agencies and services so that school moves are limited and that placement moves, if necessary, do not occur during exam times.

Leisure, Library and Youth Services

These Departments can provide networking opportunities for children and young people to help develop their social skills in community based learning and leisure activities.

Denbighshire County Council will develop a network of schemes that will provide supported opportunities for looked after children and young people to access Council library and leisure facilities, such as free leisure passes, library visits, read sessions, sports days. This will contribute to increased levels of achievement, esteem and good health through participation in productive and healthy leisure activities. Staff will work in partnership with lifelong learning and social work staff to ensure that looked after children and young people can belong to, and participate in, community and school-based activities which will help enable these children and young people to make friendships within their community.

It is also intended that, wherever possible, looked after children and care leavers will receive accreditation for their participation and involvement in key activities such as volunteering, participation in the corporate licensing scheme, involvement in the delivery of training and consulting with other young people

Housing

The lack of supported tenancies and or alternative supported accommodation remain a major concern within Denbighshire and so it is imperative that the Housing Department, in partnership with other housing providers, is committed to working to increase the number of properties available for care leavers.

In addition, it is important that housing providers work with the Social Services Department and other partners to ensure there are robust and varied packages of support to enable young people to maintain their accommodation provision.

Tourism, Heritage, Culture and Countryside

These Services can provide networking opportunities for children and young people to help develop their social skills in community based activities.

Denbighshire County Council will develop a network of schemes that will provide supported opportunities for looked after children and young people to access Council library and leisure facilities, such as tickets to shows, tours of museums, access to

countryside activities and programmes. This will contribute to increased levels of achievement, esteem and good health through participation in meaningful activities. Staff will work in partnership with social work staff to ensure that looked after children and young people can belong to, and participate in, community and school-based activities which will help enable these children and young people to make friendships within their community.

Strategic Policy Unit

As all Council departments have a responsibility as a corporate parent it is essential that their policies, strategies and plans identify what they can do to promote outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. The involvement of the strategic policy unit is vital for ensuring that Council wide initiatives, strategies and documents address the needs of these children and young people where appropriate as well as raising awareness of the corporate parenting agenda.

In addition, elected members have a key role as elected members and so it is essential that they are supported to fulfil their role. Support must include regular information about our looked after children and what the Council is doing to meet their needs, as well as opportunities to meet with them and here first hand about their experiences and the issues affecting them.

Central Personnel and Training

We want all looked after children and young people to achieve their aspirations and goals along their career pathway and so need to ensure that young people are aware of all the training and employment opportunities available to them. Denbighshire Council as a major employer is well placed to provide work experience placements and or apprenticeships, within the various departments of the council. Enabling young people to access relevant work experience and or apprenticeships is essential for maintaining their sense of inclusion during the transition from adolescent to adulthood.

In addition, these young people are well placed to raise awareness to staff, managers and elected members about the experiences of being looked after and leaving care and the issues that are important to them and so their involvement in the delivery of training and awareness raising will be encouraged and promoted. Training and skills development for those involved in such activities will be provided and where possible appropriate accreditation given.

There are a number of other Council departments within Denbighshire, all of whom will have some part to play in fulfilling the Council's responsibility as corporate parents, for example work experience and volunteering opportunities.

Health

Improving the health of looked after children and young people is a high priority. Specialist Nurses for looked after children and young people play an important role in ensuring that Personal Health Plans are developed with the child and young person and that these are fully implemented. Developing effective communication channels between agencies is fundamental, to ensure that there are robust monitoring and referral processes.

Addressing and meeting the health needs of looked after children and young people will include their mental health needs as well as emotional and physical health needs. Work with partner agencies to ensure access to a wide range of services alongside a

good education and training programme for looked after children and young people and their carers is essential in achieving positive health outcomes.

4.5 Corporate Parenting Working Group

The Working Group was established in July 2007 with its prime focus of supporting the work of the Elected Members Forum as well as turning strategy and policy into service delivery. The group is overseen by Children and Family Services and comprises of key officers, including policy and strategy makers and operational and front-line staff, from across the whole Council.

The objectives of the group are:

- to develop and promote a range of resources and opportunities available from our wealth of community networks to promote and develop our looked after children and care leavers;
- to develop and monitor a comprehensive work programme to develop practice and take forward service development to promote the outcomes and opportunities for our looked after children and care leavers;
- to develop a Corporate Parenting training programme for elected members to understand and develop their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents;
- to collate emerging issues and feedback to relevant management teams to support service development.

The work of the Corporate Parenting Working Group is set out in the work programme detailed in Section 5 below.

Section 5: Planning and Future Developments (Corporate Parenting Work Programme)

PROMOTING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES			
Activity	Outcomes (Measures)	Action	Progress C: Completed O: On Schedule D: Delayed
<i>Education</i>			
Develop tracking scheme linked to post-16 plans to monitor and ensure young people progress with their plans	Improved educational achievement and long term education/ career opportunities for Children Looked After Social Inclusion	a) Identify work completed to date b) Work with colleges, schools, parents, carers, young people and education colleagues to identify tracking options c) Produce clear protocol/ guidance for all involved outlining the tracking system (to include development of documentation to be completed) d) Develop agreement with colleges to support and monitor post 16 plans	
Develop 'Education Champions' scheme in conjunction with Corporate Executive team (CET) – for year 11 pupils who are looked after	Improved educational achievement and long term education/ career opportunities for Children Looked After	a) Identify year 10 looked after children who will go on to year 11 in 2009/010 and match up with CET member b) Produce guidance documents for all staff to be involved in the	

		<p>scheme</p> <p>c) Training and briefing sessions for scheme</p> <p>d) Roll-out pilot for final term of Year 10</p> <p>e) Evaluate pilot and revise scheme as appropriate for following year 11</p>	
Explore feasibility of IT maintenance and support packages for foster care households with computers	Children and young people have the tools to help achieve their potential	<p>a) Identify support and maintenance requirements of looked after children and carers (review of queries and difficulties experienced to date by those with computers)</p> <p>b) Work with corporate IT to identify who and how the maintenance package can be provided (this could include guidance and instructions or training courses for young people and carers) – develop an SLA for this provision</p> <p>c) Explore possibilities of foster carers accessing DCC IT courses</p>	
Improve school attendance rates of looked after children	Improved educational achievement and long term education/ career opportunities for Children Looked After	<p>a) Identify practice within other local authorities which aims to ensure attendance at school</p> <p>b) Establish links with Attendance</p>	

	Social Inclusion	Support Assistants in Education and identify their role in achieving this action c) Options appraisal of processes/ working practices that could be adopted within Denbighshire (including resource implications) d) Present options to Education and Social Service management team for consideration and approval	
Identify and develop funding packages for care leavers going on to higher education	Young people have access to a range of support options to provide them with the skills and experiences to promote their future development and career success Social Inclusion	a) Identify funding packages that are required for care leavers going on to higher education b) Present business case to Scrutiny/ management groups for additional funding required c) Develop protocol for the provision of financial support to care leavers in higher education	Agreement at SSEMT on March 17th for 50% funding spilt to commence April 1st
Identify and develop information resource packages for care leavers going on to higher education	Young people have access to a range of support options to provide them with the skills and experiences to promote their future development and career success Social Inclusion	a) Work with care leavers currently in university/ preparing to go to university to identify their information resource needs both preparing to go to university and whilst in university b) Identify best practice in other local authority areas for the	

		provision of support c) Develop and implement resource package – in co-operation with care leavers	
Explore feasibility of providing free music lessons	Improved educational achievement Social Inclusion	a) Identify existing schemes within England (where it is a requirement) b) Consult with children and young people to establish potential level of demand c) Work with education and youth services to identify options for the provision of music lessons (to include what types of lesson; where they would be provided and by whom). d) identify costs for providing the lessons and present the business case to the relevant management teams/ committees	
Increase Looked After Children and Care Leavers' access to libraries	Improved educational achievement Social Inclusion Improved self esteem	a) Explore opportunities for developing Summer Read Scheme events for looked after children aged 5-11 b) Identify options for increasing access to the library by looked after children and care leavers e.g. library visits	
Employment			

<p>Develop work experience programme within the County Council (e.g. 2 week holiday time placements) for 15-18 year old</p>	<p>Young people have access to a range of support options to provide them with the skills and experiences to support their move to independence and promote their future development and career success</p> <p>Social Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establish current practice and activity and identify options for developing a more formalised scheme across the Council b) Identify vocational courses being undertaken as part of post-16 plans and identify the business and operations within the Council that match with the identified vocational courses c) Identify teams within the Council who could host young people on the programme d) Develop promotional materials to advertise scheme to young people e) Develop guidance for teams hosting 'work experience programme' f) Implement the programme g) Develop evaluation tool to measure outcomes and benefits of the scheme h) Evaluate the scheme (to involve young people) 	<p>Work experience placement taken place in Leaders Office (July 2009)</p>
<p>Increase number of care leavers on Council wide modern apprenticeship opportunities</p>	<p>Young people have access to a range of support options to provide them with the skills and experiences to support their move to independence and promote</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with corporate HR to revise protocol for modern apprenticeship scheme to ensure the scheme is accessible to care leavers 	

	<p>their future development and career success</p> <p>Social Inclusion</p>	<p>b) identify options for foundation apprenticeships for those care leavers unable to access the modern apprenticeship scheme</p>	
<p>Increase number of looked after children and care leavers undertaking volunteering opportunities</p>	<p>Improved communication and interpersonal skills</p>	<p>a) Work with DVSC to increase number of looked after children and care leavers accessing the Millenium Volunteering scheme</p> <p>b) Identify options for developing volunteering opportunities for care leavers within Council led projects (e.g. Popty'r Garn/ Meifod/ Aberwheeler Nurseries/ youth clubs/ Night Rider) (<i>use elected members knowledge of local groups/ orgs</i>). Action would need to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what support would be needed to enable care leavers to take part (e.g. transport; lunch) - identify whether young people would be subject to criminal records checks etc 	
<p>Accredited test purchase/ licensing scheme</p>	<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>Reduced potential for offending both during youth and adult years</p>	<p>a) Confirm the 2009 licensing activity programme and identify looked after young people to participate in the scheme (providing appropriate training to</p>	

	Development of experience and qualifications to support successful employment in the future	young people new to the scheme) b) Liaise with Youth Services to identify options for accrediting the licensing scheme and implement as appropriate (e.g. Children University/ Youth University/ OCN)	
Develop an accredited rolling programme for young people taking part in activities detailed in this work programme	Development of experience and qualifications to support successful employment in the future	a) Liaise with Youth Services to identify which activities in the work programme can be accredited through the Children/ Youth University b) Develop Youth University modules for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participation in interviewing • developing newsletters and information • developing Children in Care Council • involvement in training • involvement in delivering key events • becoming a peer advocate and/or consultant • work experience opportunities 	Meeting held with Rhian Jones in Youth Services who has agreed that modules from this work programme can be developed
ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL AND LEISURE INTERESTS			
Activity	Outcomes (Measures)	Action	Progress
Extend leisure pass scheme	Improved health and wellbeing	a) Identify if agreement can be	Swimming passes

	<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p>	<p>made with NOVA Centre to allow LAC in Prestatyn to access facilities there</p>	<p>issued to all young people, including family passes for foster care households with children under 8. Free gym passes to young people aged 16 above</p>
<p>Develop a personal health portfolio for young people so that they can have a booklet which contains their health information and additional information on local services etc.</p>	<p>Improved health and wellbeing</p>	<p>a) Identify young people to be involved in developing the portfolio b) Identify the level/ type of information that needs to be included in the portfolio and the best medium for presenting the portfolio c) Identify funding for the development of the portfolio d) Produce the portfolio</p>	
<p>Explore opportunities for the provision of free transport for looked after children with Denbighshire</p>	<p>Social integration and inclusion</p>	<p>a) Conduct analysis of transport needs of looked after children (to include: what children and young people require transport; expectations on carers to assist with transportation; modes of transport required) b) Work with Denbighshire transport department to identify</p>	

		options for the provision of free (or subsidised transport) such as bus passes c) Identify schemes that provide bike hire/ bike repair and maintenance schemes that can be accessed by young people	
Explore options for free tickets to events and performances	Social integration and inclusion	a) identify opportunities for the provision of free family tickets to county events/ e.g. allocated number of tickets for shows and/or tickets to undersold performances at Pavilion and other Denbighshire theatres b) Develop process for notifying carers of events and issuing tickets	
Tours of heritage attractions e.g. museums	Social integration and inclusion	Develop scheme for looked after children and their families (i.e. foster families) to have guided visits/ free tickets to Denbighshire's heritage attractions	
Explore opportunities for Countryside educational programme	Social integration and inclusion Improved educational achievement	Identify options for the delivery of a 'Learning in Your Countryside' event or programme for looked after children	
Young people involved in interviewing	Services are delivered in accordance with the views and	a) Identify the number of young people already trained to	3 looked after children involved in

	<p>experiences of those receiving them</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Young people are enabled to develop skills, confidence, knowledge and experience (when applying for future jobs)</p>	<p>participate in recruitment and interview processes and establish if more young people could be trained using Barnardo's training materials (both in terms of capacity and interest)</p> <p>b) Identify forthcoming posts (within Social Services and across the County) for which young people could be involved</p>	<p>the recruitment of Barnardo's PA (March 2009)</p>
Peer Care Trainers Scheme	<p>Services are delivered in accordance with the views and experiences of those receiving them</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Young people are enabled to develop skills, confidence, knowledge and experience (when applying for future jobs)</p>	<p>a) Explore options for developing a 'communicating with young people' course for Council staff, managers and members</p> <p>b) Identify training schemes/programmes that young people could attend to develop the skills to deliver training – to include explore with youth services the potential for accreditation for their involvement</p> <p>c) Identify young people who would be interested in delivering training</p> <p>d) Develop the scheme</p>	
Peer Care Consultants (young people who are trained to consult/interview other young people	<p>Services are delivered in accordance with the views and experiences of those receiving</p>	<p>a) Identify training schemes/programmes that young people could attend to develop the skills</p>	

<p>about their experiences and views about the quality of services)</p>	<p>them</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Young people are enabled to develop skills, confidence, knowledge and experience (when applying for future jobs)</p>	<p>to interview and consult with young people – to include explore with youth services the potential for accreditation for their involvement</p> <p>b) Identify areas of service that could be evaluated (as per the QA Framework; Inspection timetable)</p> <p>c) Identify young people who would be interested in becoming a peer care consultant</p> <p>Identify options for expanding the scheme so that young people are involved in assessing the quality of care being received across other departments (e.g. leisure/libraries)</p>	
<p>Peer advocates</p>	<p>Services are delivered in accordance with the views and experiences of those receiving them</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Young people are enabled to develop skills, confidence, knowledge and experience (when applying for future jobs)</p>	<p>a) Identify good practice in other local authorities that have 'peer advocate' schemes</p> <p>b) Identify young people to work alongside the Working Group to develop a peer advocates scheme in Denbighshire (and become peer advocates)</p> <p>c) Explore options for developing a peer advocates scheme within Denbighshire</p>	

<p>Children in Care Council</p>	<p>Services are delivered in accordance with the views and experiences of those receiving them</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Young people are enabled to develop skills, confidence, knowledge and experience (when applying for future jobs)</p>	<p>a) Identify good practice in other local authorities that have Children in Care Councils along with existing practice around school councils in Denbighshire</p> <p>b) Identify young people to work alongside the Working Group to develop a Council in Denbighshire (and become members of the Council)</p> <p>c) Explore options for developing a Council within Denbighshire (to include which managers, directors and Council members would be involved)</p> <p>d) Present proposals to relevant management groups/ committees</p>	
<p>Speed chatting programme between members and care looked after children/ care leavers</p>	<p>Services are delivered in accordance with the views and experiences of those receiving them</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Young people are enabled to develop skills, confidence, knowledge and experience (when applying for future jobs)</p>	<p>a) Develop a speed chatting scheme for young people to be able to meet with members and discuss issues/ find out information etc</p> <p>b) Produce guidance for members and young people on how the scheme works</p> <p>c) Establish programme of speed chatting events</p>	

<p>Young people producing information (e.g. newsletters) for looked after children and young people</p>	<p>Services are delivered in accordance with the views and experiences of those receiving them</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p>Young people are enabled to develop skills, confidence, knowledge and experience (when applying for future jobs)</p>	<p>a) Identify young people to work with NYAS in developing newsletters and in identifying information needs of looked after children/ young people and carers</p> <p>b) Identify 2 care leavers to work with the Youthden team on managing and developing Youthden (training and skills development to be provided to enable this)</p> <p>c) Support Brynhyfyrd school pupils with their work producing information for looked after children</p>	
<p>Drama workshops to promote self esteem, confidence etc</p>	<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>Improved self esteem and confidence</p> <p>Interpersonal skills</p>	<p>a) Identify groups/ theatres that provide workshops for young people on self esteem/ confidence/ experiences/ aspirations etc and obtain detail about content of programmes and costs</p> <p>b) Identify funding for the provision for drama workshops</p>	
<p>Sports Day</p>	<p>Improved health and wellbeing</p> <p>Social Inclusion</p>	<p>a) Identify options, to include venue and costs, for delivering a sports day for looked after</p>	

	Improved self esteem	<p>children (5 – 11 year old events and 11+ events) (to include prizes for achievements)</p> <p>b) Identify funding for the event (NYAS contract?)</p> <p>c) Seek agreement on the prizes to be awarded</p> <p>d) Consult with local businesses to seek sponsorship for awards/prizes</p> <p>e) Identify invitees for the event</p> <p>f) Produce key public/ promotional materials to be sent to all parents/ carers/ key staff/ partners</p> <p>j) Deliver event</p>	
Awards/ Celebration Ceremony	Improved self esteem	Deliver awards/ celebration event for looked after children	
Care Leavers Event	Improved self esteem Social Inclusion	Explore options for delivering a care leavers event to coincide with care leavers week	
Ensure there is good and fair access to quality early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds	Social Inclusion	Work with the Early Entitlement group to map existing provision and identify gaps	
Ensure there is fair access to quality play opportunities for pre-school age children	Social Inclusion	Work with the Early Entitlement group to map existing provision and identify gaps	

PROVIDING A SAFE AND SECURE HOME			
Activity	Outcomes (Measures)	Action	Progress
Improve access to good quality affordable accommodation for care leavers		Maintain links with Housing Support Panel re. accommodation provision within Denbighshire	
Accommodation support resource for care leavers	Young people have access to a range of support options to provide them with the skills and experiences to support their move to independence and promote their future development and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify support/ information needs of care leavers in their own accommodation (in consultation with young people who have left care and young people preparing to leave care) b) Identify good practice in other local authorities c) Identify options for the delivery of support packages (to include what organisations can provide what services/ support) suitable to meet the needs of all care leavers d) Identify funding for support packages e) Produce accommodation resource pack for care leavers (in partnership with young people who have left care and young people preparing to leave care) 	
Term time accommodation (see also action above re. funding packages)	Stability during university which in turn enables young people to complete their studies and	a) Identify accommodation needs of young people studying at university during term time (in	

	increase/ improve opportunities for future employment Social Inclusion	conjunction with care leavers currently at university) b) Identify practice in other local authorities c) Identify accommodation options for Denbighshire care leavers (accommodation could be back in Denbighshire or at university location)	
DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING CORPORATE PARENTING IN DENBIGHSHIRE			
Activity	Outcomes (Measures)	Action	Progress
Working Group – extend membership	Proactive corporate parenting	Seek representation from the following services to be involved in the Working Group to help deliver the work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leisure - Libraries - Tourism, Heritage and Culture - Corporate HR (Pauline Warren)/ - Corporate Training Team - Social Services Training and Development and Personnel - IT - Lifelong Learning - Committees Section - Strategic Policy Unit 	Completed (March 2009)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership Participation Officer - Licensing <p>Representation is also needed from Barnardos (PA Service) and NYAS</p>	
Reporting framework to Elected Members	Proactive corporate parenting	<p>a) Nominated elected member (and possibly a peer care trainer) to give annual presentation on corporate parenting (progress; future plans etc) at Full Council - An annual debate at full council, with presentations from groups of looked after children, foster carers and care-leavers on their experiences during the year</p> <p>b) Produce corporate parenting bulletin (twice per year) for members (to address key questions/ data requirements listed in 'If This Were My Child')</p> <p>c) Develop 1 page bulletin for members to be published every 3 months on key developments; requests for help (personally or via their community group contacts); links to further info</p>	Reporting framework (templates etc) for elected members forum established
Elected Members Training	Proactive corporate parenting	Deliver 2 further training events	Training delivered

			in October 2008 to small number of members
Corporate Parenting Resource Pack for elected members	Proactive corporate parenting	Issue Corporate Parenting Resource Pack for elected members who have not attended training which includes: - RiP Children's Champions Briefing Series - If This Were My Child WAG Guidance - Corporate Parenting Strategy - Corporate Parenting Training Presentation	
Corporate Parenting Strategy	Proactive corporate parenting	a) Present corporate parenting strategy to each Scrutiny Committee and MMC to identify how they can contribute to achieving the strategy b) Present strategy to Full Council c) Launch and promote new strategy to all Council staff and cares d) Establish if the strategy can be included in the Council's policy framework	Approval of Corporate Parenting Strategy and agreement for its inclusion in Council's policy framework at Cabinet on 23/6/09
Elected Member interaction with looked after children and care leavers	Proactive corporate parenting	Explore options for developing newsletter from children and young people care for councillors	

		and other individuals and agencies	
Promotion and Publicity Strategy	Proactive corporate parenting	<p>a) Develop series of short, focused campaigns to raise the profile and awareness of corporate parenting across the Council</p> <p>b) Review and finalise the Corporate Parenting Promotion and Publicity strategy to ensure it includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contact details for Directorate/ Service representatives on the Working Group so that staff across the Council can put forward their views, experiences, suggestions etc; examples of staff - schedule for: press releases; newsletters (every 6 months); presentations at key groups/ meetings etc 	
Member to Member Corporate Parenting Sessions	Proactive corporate parenting	a) Explore Rotherham model of 'Member to Member Corporate Parenting Sessions' – clinic type events to encourage Councillors to discuss and share their knowledge and practical experiences	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Develop proposal (and model) for taking forward this model within Denbighshire and present to Corporate Parenting Elected Members Forum c) Carry out pilot (if agreement reached) 	
Development of the role of school governors as corporate parents	Proactive corporate parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify which elected members are also school governors b) Develop briefing paper and hold training session with these members to ensure that they play a key role in ensuring schools have high expectations of and raise attainment standards for looked after children (see If This Were My Child) 	
Development of the role of Scrutiny in corporate parenting	Proactive corporate parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Present Corporate Parenting strategy to all Scrutiny committees and identify what contribution they can make to its implementation b) Work with all scrutiny committees to identify their information needs with regards to looked after children and young people to ensure they can effectively scrutinise services for these children 	Presentations given to all four Scrutiny Committees

		c) Establish robust mechanisms to ensure that corporate parenting matters do not become the responsibility of Social Services scrutiny alone	
Council plans/ strategies/ policies address the needs of looked after children/ care leavers		<p>a) Identify key strategies/ plans/ policies (e.g. business plans) across the Council that include an element/ responsibility for the provision of services and support to children and young people</p> <p>b) Establish if the needs of looked after children/ care leavers are addressed in these documents and if not whether they should be</p> <p>c) Establish mechanism for ensuring corporate parenting responsibilities and the needs of looked after children and care leavers are incorporated and addressed in all key future Council plans/ policies/ strategies etc (where appropriate)</p> <p>d) Explore possibility of Corporate Parenting Strategy being a key document on the Council's policy framework</p>	

