



**Title of meeting:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 6 February 2024

**Subject:** Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023 - 2026

**Report by:** Mark Jowett, Head of Children We Care For

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** Yes/No

**Full Council decision:** Yes/No

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**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To officially launch and provide information about the Portsmouth's Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2023 - 2026 (see Appendix A).
- 1.2 It is an important document that sets out our priorities, recognising the collective responsibility of all elected members, Portsmouth City Council, and partner agencies of the council as corporate parents, and our commitment to ensuring that we are continually striving to improve the outcomes for all the children we care for <sup>1</sup>and our care experienced young adults<sup>2</sup>.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 For the strategy to be adopted by Portsmouth City Council.

**3. Background**

**The role of a corporate parent**

- 3.1 The Director of Children's Services and lead member have a shared responsibility with all officers and members of the local authority to act as effective and caring corporate parents for children we care for, with key roles in improving their educational attainment, providing stable and high-quality placements, and proper planning for care experienced young adults.
- 3.2 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure as far as possible, that children we care for have secure, nurturing, and positive experiences. Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities

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<sup>1</sup> Statutorily known as Looked After Children, and also referred to as Children Looked After

<sup>2</sup> Statutorily known as care leavers



have a duty to promote cooperation between 'relevant partners', including the Police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate with the local authority in turn.

- 3.2 The lead member and those on the corporate parenting board and scrutiny committees will have additional responsibilities, but the role is important for all members and officers. Every member and officer within a council has a responsibility to act as they would do as a parent for their own child. This is known as being a corporate parent and it is one of the most important roles that Portsmouth City Council has.
- 3.3 As being a corporate parent is a core responsibility of council members, annual corporate parent training is available to support members to fully understand what this means, responsibilities and how to do this effectively and champion our children.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

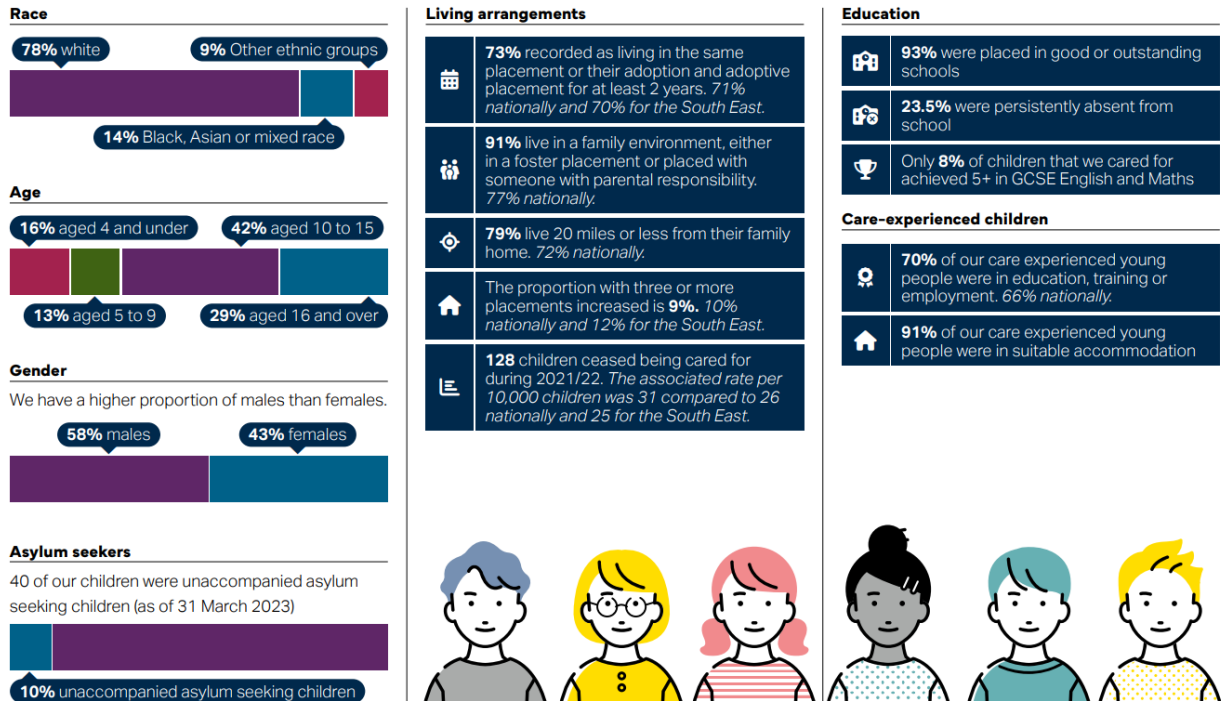
##### **The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023 - 2026**

##### **Co-production**

- 4.1 Our approach to developing the strategy reflected our core values and relational approach in Portsmouth. It was co-produced between Portsmouth City Council staff, partner agencies, carers, and most important of all, children we care for and care experienced young adults. Two large co-production events were held with children we care for, care experienced young adults, foster carers, children's homes workers, frontline practitioners, and corporate parenting decision makers. The February 2023 annual survey also provided some key messages that were incorporated. Once the strategy was drafted, we then further consulted with our children to ensure that we had heard their messages correctly and fully incorporated these. We worked to ensure our priorities were shared and owned.

## The children we care for

4.2 As at 31/03/23 there were 386 children in our care.



## Priorities

4.3 There are six overarching priorities which list our commitments to ensure the children who are coming into our care, who we already care for, and who are care experienced, get the right services and support:

### Hearing your voice

4.4 We will ensure that children and young people are central to all decisions about their lives and that we understand their needs and feelings. We will make sure this is embedded across all services so that all children we care for know who to speak to ensure they have every opportunity to have their say. This will include seeking feedback to continually improve the services we offer.

### To promote and develop relationships with the people that are important to you

4.5 We will ensure children and young people have the right level of time with their family, friends and anyone else important. We will support children and young people to repair and restore these relationships when it is needed and possible to do so.

### To promote learning and employment opportunities

4.6 We will ensure our children and young people have the right support and opportunities at the right time to support them to do well in school, further and higher education, training and employment.

Provide a trusted, safe and stable home for you

- 4.7 We will ensure that children and young people have a safe, comfortable and caring home to live in and grow up in a community where they feel they belong and feel loved. We will ensure there is good support for those who provide care, including their own children.

To support your emotional and physical health and wellbeing

- 4.8 We will ensure we identify and appropriately treat the health needs of our children and young people. This will include their physical and mental health. We will make sure we have a good understanding of past experiences, how these may have impacted our children and young people at various times in their lives.

Develop skills for your life ahead

- 4.9 We will provide support and guidance to our children and young people from the day we start to care for them to equip them for the next chapter of their lives.

**Development and feedback**

- 4.10 The responsibility for achieving the commitments we have made to the children we care for and care experienced young adults is shared by the whole council and our broader partnership. Children and care experienced young adults have told us that they would like to receive feedback on a regular basis to see how well we are using the strategy to improve outcomes, and with this our commitment is to work together as a partnership alongside our children, to ensure that we achieve what we have set out. To enable this, we have identified leads for each of the six strategic priorities and subsequent actions, and progress will be monitored through the Corporate Parenting Operational Group, which feeds into the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 4.11 The Corporate Parenting Board is chaired by the lead member and membership includes officers of the Children, Families and Education Directorate, colleagues from Housing, Adults, Health and most importantly, children and young people from the Children in Care Council and Care Experienced Group. The meetings start with hearing our children's voices, and they are supported by our Participation Officer to provide challenge to the Board.
- 4.12 At cabinet you will have the privilege of hearing directly from some of our children, their carers, and care experienced young adults, who have worked with us through the process of completing the strategy, and they will explain why this piece of work has been so important and what makes a good corporate parent.

**5. Integrated impact assessment**

- 5.1 See Appendix B.

**6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 The legal framework around the report is embodied in the report itself. This strategy underpins the overriding principles of the Children Act 1989 and 2004 that all people



and organisations that work with children and have responsibility for children have a duty to help safeguard them and protect their welfare.

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

7.1 The recommendations within this report regarding the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-2026 are included in the Council's financial resources. Should any policy change be required in future years, this would have to be met within the cash limit budget.

Signed by: .....

**Sarah Daly, Director – Children, Families and Education**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A



corporate-parenting-  
strategy-2023-2026-z

Appendix B



Integrated Impact  
AssessmentIA58014E

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: