



Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf

Links to Corporate Parenting Charter-
A Promise from Wales

What is Corporate Parenting?

When a child or young person comes into care, the Council becomes the Corporate Parent. The role of a 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the Council. This means that elected members (Councillors), employees and partner organisations have a responsibility to provide the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by us. For example, Health, Education and Children's Services to name a few would take joint responsibility for care-experienced young people.

- A child or young person that is aged 0 to 16 and has been in the care of the local authority such as a Residential Home or in Foster Care is known as 'care-experienced.'
- A young person aged 16 to 25 who is or has been in the care of the local authority is known as 'leaving care/have left care', a 'care leaver' or 'care experienced.'

Our Corporate Parenting Board in Rhondda Cynon Taf...

The Council's Corporate Parenting Board consists of a dedicated group of Councillors, supported by Senior Officers from across the Council and other organisations who take the lead in ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as Corporate Parents. The Board meet to discuss how we can work together to ensure that care-experienced children and young people in care and leaving care have all the things they need to live happy, healthy and confident lives.

The Council's Corporate Well-being Plan '**Working with our communities 2024-2030**', is guided by the Vision of Rhondda Cynon Taf where:

'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future.'

Our Well-being Objectives:

1. **PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES** - Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
2. **WORK AND BUSINESS** - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
3. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
4. **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND WELSH LANGUAGE** - Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

Why a Corporate Parenting Pledge in Rhondda Cynon Taf? What's it for?

Corporate Parenting is about the collective responsibility for any public sector body or individual who engages with or is responsible for care-experienced children and young people and young people to adopt.


Welsh Government held a 'Care-experienced summit' in December 2022 and young people from each of the 22 local authorities across Wales came together to voice their experiences of being care-experienced and this led to the development of a set of Principles and Promises that can be adopted by any public sector body when engaging with care-experienced children and young people (Welsh Government, 2023).

The Principles and Promises to care-experienced children and young people builds on the signing of the declaration that was held by Ministers and care-experienced young people across Wales in December 2022 (see Appendix). This led to a charter that sets out the promises that Corporate Parenting Board members should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people.

Shared Principles for Corporate Parents (National, Welsh Government)

- **Equality** – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC)
- **Eradicate Stigma** – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)
- **Togetherness** – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).

- **Support** – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information and training.
- **Ambition** – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
- **Nurture** – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
- **Good Health** – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
- **A Stable Home** – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).
- **A Good Education** – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).
- **Thrive** – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
- **Lifelong** – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children’s best interests (Article 3).



Corporate Parents in Rhondda Cynon Taf will deliver on the 'All Wales Pledge' through a localised pledge that is based on what the collective voice of care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are telling us for service development and improvements (see Appendix).

The Promises to Care-experienced Young People (National, Welsh Government)

- We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all care-experienced young people with respect.
- We will involve all care-experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will keep all care-experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
- We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.

The collective voice of Care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Our consultations with children and young people provide the following recommendations for service development and improvements. This includes the 7 priorities as a localised pledge that builds on the collective voice of children and young people.

Recommendations

- **Make sure that all trusted adults explain who they are.** Consider leaving child friendly information such as 'All about me' profiles or a child friendly letter to the young person before meeting them or with a change of Social Worker/ key member of staff.
- **Access to information.** To develop information in a range of formats that can be easily accessed and shared. Young people **16+** have told us they want easy access to information for benefits, housing, tenancy support and funding entitlements.
- **Children and young people have told us how they want to get involved.** They would like more in person meet up events, activities with nature, sports, arts and crafts and music and drama.
- **To look at different ways to keep in touch with family.** Young people have told us they would like more contact with their families.
- **Mental Health and wellbeing support.** Young people would like further support with their mental health and wellbeing activities.


Our 7 Priorities that link to the Shared Principles and Promises...

1. Ensuring that children and young people feel well **cared for and supported.**
2. Having a **voice** to develop and improve services as part of our 'You said, we will, we did...' feedback loop and let you know how we have made improvements for your care and support.
3. Access to **Mental health and well-being support.**
4. A **stable home** that is comfortable and safe whilst being in care and when leaving care.
5. **Accessible information and support for independent living.**
6. Improving outcomes for education, training and employment.
7. **Celebrating children and young people's achievements** to develop current and future **aspirations.**

How will we achieve these priorities?

We will develop an implementation plan which will be developed and agreed upon to action the 7 priorities outlined within the Pledge,

The Corporate Parenting Board will agree an implementation plan, with achievable outcomes to action these **7 priorities.**



We will look at each priority and put in place targets and achievable milestones to reach these. It is important to hear children and young people's voice through their ideas and opinions to improve services in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We will also write a report every 12 months to provide progress updates on meeting these priorities and provide children and young people with a newsletter and infographics to support our **'You said, we will, we did...'** feedback loop.

Our Pledge/Plan for Children and Young People...

Our pledge/plan has been written for Children and Young People based on their collective voice.

Children and Young People, through the Corporate Parenting Board, can hold the Cabinet to account to ensure we deliver on these key priorities.

1. How we will care for you and support you.

(Links to the 'Support, Togetherness and Eradicate Stigma 'Principles' and taking the time to listen and using straightforward language 'Promises' (including UNCRC Article 2 and 12)

- We will ensure that you feel well cared for, safe and have a comfortable place to live.
- We will make sure that the adults that work with you are well trained, understand your individual needs and know what your rights are and support you to know your children's rights through straight forward language.

2. How we will support you to have a voice.

Having your voice heard to improve services as part of our 'You said, we will, we did...' feedback loop **(Links to Equality and Togetherness Principles and hearing young people's voice and UNCRC Article 12).**

- We will listen to your wishes, views and feelings and support and work with you to make decisions that are about you or impact you.
- Our participation events are a chance to hear your voice on how you would like to improve services and for your voice to be heard by our Corporate Parenting Board members to improve services for children and young people.
- We will provide you with an update every year on the progress we have made through a report/ newsletter and engagement, via, an annual question-and-answer session in person with our Corporate Parenting Board.

If you are not happy with the care and support that we offer

(Links to the Promises- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not following (adhering) to this charter).

- You have the right to have your views, feelings and opinions listened to. You can speak to the following people to support you.
 - ✚ **Your Carer(s)**
 - ✚ **Teacher**
 - ✚ **Social Worker**
 - ✚ **Youth Worker**
 - ✚ **Key Worker or Personal advisor**
 - ✚ **Your Nurse or Doctor**
 - ✚ **You can make a complaint via our RCT website via the ‘Compliments and Complaints’ section or ask a trusted adult to support you to do this.**
- If you want to speak to someone who is independent from the above people and will only work to your views, wishes and feelings, you can ask to have an independent advocate from **TGP Cymru**.
- You can ask any of the above people to arrange for you to have an **independent advocate**, or you can contact TGP Cymru directly yourself:
- Freephone number: 0800 4703930
- Website: www.tgpcymru.org.uk
- Telephone: **01443 805940** /Email: cwmtafmorgannwg@tgpcymru.org.uk



3. How we can support you to access mental health and well-being support.

(Links to the Nurture and Good Health principles, the promise for ‘Compassion’ and UNCRC Article 24 and 39)

- We will make sure all trusted adults explain who they are by providing children and young people with friendly information or a child friendly letter.
- Young people told us that they would like accessible information in a range of formats that can be easily accessed and shared for their mental health and well-being.
- We will make sure that you know how to access information for your health, fitness and wellbeing in your community through our websites for children and young people.
- We will ensure that the adults that support you know what you need to have a healthy lifestyle.

4. How we can support you to feel safe and have a stable place to live.

(Links to our Principles/Promise for a 'Stable home', UNCRC Article 20 and 21)

- Our vision is to provide children and young people with a stable home and for young people leaving care with a continuum of accommodation and support to meet the needs of care leavers in Rhondda Cynon Taf, whilst developing a clear accommodation pathway for care leavers.
- We will provide you with a comfortable home/place to live so that you feel safe and cared for properly.
- Young people told us that they would like a range of ways to keep in touch with family.
- Young people also told us about how staying 'local' matters to them (through videos).

5. How we can support you to access the information that you would like or need and support for independent living.

(This links to the 'Thrive' Principle for positive changes for independent living. Also, the 'lifelong' Principle to support young people as part of a continuum for adulthood and a right for young people to reach their potential (UNCRC Article 3 and 29)

- We are currently developing our public facing information (website) and other resources for children and young people.
- Young people 16+ told us that they want easy access to information for benefits, housing, tenancy support and funding entitlements.
- Young people from the 16+ drop in told us that they would like the drop-in times extended from 1 day per week to either 2 or 3 days per week.
- Body language can be difficult for young people trying to access advocacy when they have a disability and parent/carer self-reporting is used. How can we further support young people with a disability to access advocacy services?
- How can we support young people with neurodiversity to access the information that they need?

6. How we can support you to have improved outcomes for education, training and employment.

(Links to the Principles for 'A Good Education' and providing opportunities as part of the rights to a good education (Article 28 and 29) and listening to the wishes, views and feelings of children and young people and that they



are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about their lives (Article 12).

- Young people 16+ told us that Care2Work is really helping them and relations with key staff is important to maintain.
- We will support you to engage in your education, training and employment and to have high aspirations for your future.
- We will provide you with information about alternative education opportunities (if you need them) and support you to succeed.
- We will support you to access all the information that is available for education, training, apprenticeships, volunteering, and employment.

7. How we can support you to celebrate your achievements and to develop your current and future aspirations.

(Links to Principles for ‘Ambition’ and Promises to support you to reach your achievements (UNCRC Article, 3, 29 and 31))

- We held a Celebration event in November 2023 and over 100 people including young people, parents/carers and staff attended along with our Corporate Parenting Board to celebrate children and young people’s achievements in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- We will continue to hold annual events to celebrate your achievements and aspirations.
- We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities.