

## Bury Corporate Parenting Strategy 2017 - 2020 Summary

*Dear Corporate Parents,*



### Young People's Message

Everyone who works within Bury Council is our corporate parent and should take seriously the following that we wish to highlight.

We only get one chance at life and so we need guidance, support and an extra boost to help us achieve the aspirations we all aim for individually. We need all professionals to be consistent and reliable when building a trustworthy relationship with us.

We want a safe, fun and co-operative place to live with people who really care about us. However, it is important to emphasise that we do not get to live with our own families, they are still a part of us and are loved dearly. Therefore, we tend to worry and wonder what they are doing but also what may happen to them.

We are all unique so when it comes to school or college sometimes it may be difficult to concentrate, motivate and progress. This may be due to multiple factors such as not being academically strong, we have a lot of things happening in our lives compared to other kids and we may just simply not want to go.

So we need this to be understood and we need help dealing with this. It is vital that you look from our perspectives as much as your own and place yourself in the positions we have been placed into, sometimes unwillingly. This will help you to understand that yes we do not want to be treated differently and want to be considered "normal" but under certain circumstances our behaviour may be due to reasons why we aren't like other kids.

We worry about what may happen in our futures and fear that we may not be as successful as those around us. We need support in finding jobs, finding accommodation and the ability to become completely independent if need be. More than anything we need to be cared for, respected and appreciated no matter what. If you don't, then who else will?

We are not just stats on a piece of paper, we aren't lacking in opportunities and we aren't considered as much as we should be. Every complaint, every promise and every aspiration should be taken seriously because it is what we deserve and what we should be getting from every corporate parent.

Thank you,

Claudia (age 17)

Harley (age 17)

Bury Care Leavers



#### Who are Corporate Parents?

The Council and relevant partners as set out in the Children Act 2004 have corporate parenting responsibility. This extends beyond those working in children's services. All Councillors and Officers have responsibility "... to improve outcomes and actively promote the life chances of children they look after is referred to as "corporate parenting" in recognition that the task must be shared by the whole authority in partnership with partner agencies along with parents."

#### Who are our children?

- As of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 there were a total of **350** Children in Our Care from Bury (0 – 18 years).
- The largest cohort by age of our children (at 31 March 2017) was between 10 to 15 years at 35% of Children in Care, there are more males than females.
- Our children come from a range of backgrounds with the largest ethnicity cohort being White/British.
- The predominant reason of need resulting in our children being in care is determined as abuse and neglect.

#### Principles and Values

In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The Children & Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven corporate parenting principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

#### Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting Board consists of a cross party group of elected members, supported by key officers and partners. The Board has responsibility to ensure that the local authority meets its corporate parenting responsibilities and holds regular meetings which are attended by representatives from a range of services and agencies, including young people from the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum.

#### Corporate Parenting - Strategic Objectives

The Corporate Parenting Board has set 4 strategic objectives

- **Ensure Children and Young People in Care receive a good education and achieve the best educational outcomes.**
- **Provide good opportunities to maintain and improve emotional health and well-being for Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers.**
- **Improve Education, Employment and Training for Care Leavers**
- **Ensure that the role of Corporate Parent is promoted across the Council and amongst partners.**

# Our Promise to Children and Young People in Care

This is the Promise that Bury Council and Team Bury Partners make to children and young people in their Care.

The Promise was reviewed and updated at the Promise Consultation event on 24 February 2017 and confirmed at the Children in Care Council meetings on 10 March and 9 June. It was agreed at Corporate Parenting Board on behalf of the Council and Partner agencies on 27 June 2017.

These Promises are:

- We will tell you why you are in care and help you to understand these reasons.
- We will ensure that you have a safe place to live with people who care about you until you are 21 if that is what you wish.
- We will care for you as we would our own children.
- We will listen to you and involve you in all decisions that affect you.
- We will support you in your education for as long as you want to continue learning.
- We will support you to take part in hobbies and clubs outside of school.
- We will make you aware of your rights as children and young people in care, and support you to make a complaint if required.
- We will treat you as individuals and not assume that all Children and Young People in Care have the same needs and wishes.
- We will support you with health concerns.
- We will ensure that all members of Bury Council understand their roles as Corporate Parents.
- We will enable you to live with your siblings where possible and explain the reasons why if this is not possible.
- We promise to keep changes in Social Worker to a minimum. If changes are necessary we will do our best to ensure your old social worker introduces you to your new social worker.
- We will involve you in plans about placement moves, including when possible, meeting foster carers / residential staff.
- We will not share personal information about you with other professionals without your consent, unless absolutely necessary

# Care Leavers Charter

## **We Promise:**

### **To support you to be who you are**

- We will support you to be who you are and honour your identity.
- We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage.
- We will value and support relationships that are important to you.

### **To believe in you**

- We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations.
- We will help, encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can.
- We will support you to make positive decisions about your future.

### **To listen to you**

- We will take time to listen to you and respect what you are telling us.
- We will ensure you know how to complain and appeal and we will make sure that you know how to access independent advocacy when necessary and encourage you to use it.

### **To inform you**

- We will give you the information you need and present it in a way that you understand. This will include advice on your legal entitlements and the level of service you can expect to receive from us.

### **To support you**

- We will support you to develop the skills you will need to be independent in the future.

### **To find you a home**

- We will help you think about the choices available to you and to find accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent accommodation.

### **To be a lifelong champion**

- We will do our best to help you break down barriers encountered when dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges and universities, employment providers and health services to help you yourself as an independent individual.
- We will treat you with respect and humanity, whatever your age.
- We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.