

Corporate Family Cooperative

Vision, Strategy, Principles and Outcomes

How we will meet our shared responsibilities to Manchester's Cared for Children and Care Leavers

"We all want to live in the place we call home with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us".



Policy information Sheet	
Service Area	Children and Families Services
Title	Corporate family cooperative values, principles and terms of reference
Purpose	To set out how Manchester City Council and Partners will conduct and meet its responsibilities toward the children and young people it cares for and care leavers.
Date effective from	August 2021
Reviewed	January 2024
Responsible Officer	Assistant Director Safeguarding and Practice Development.
Date for Review	December 2027
Status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory (all staff name must adhere to guidance) • Optional (Procedures and practice can vary between teams) 	Mandatory
Target Audience	All officers, partners and Members in Corporate Family Cooperative
Date of CPC Decision	Date to be added after Scrutiny
Related Document(s)	Performance reports
Superseded Documents	None
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Approved by	Cllr Gary Bridges – Lead Member for children and families Paul Marshall – Strategic Director Children and Education Directorate

Type of Document	Policy	X	Standard Operating Procedure		Guideline	
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Document control

Version no	Type of change	Date	Description of change
v.1.5	Final draft	08/01/2024	Incorporating priorities from children's consultation

Equality Statement

The people, places and organisations that form Manchester's Corporate Family Cooperative adheres to **Article 2 of the UNICEF Convention on the rights of the child**. That is, we will serve every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

This means that we will ensure that every individual child in our care, or previously in our care has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. No child should have poorer life chances because of the circumstances of their birth or their family, where they came from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. We recognise that in Manchester being a **care experienced young person is a protected characteristic**.

1. Introduction

The Corporate Parenting principles for Local Authorities and Partner agencies who contribute to providing services for Cared for Children and Care Leavers are established in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This document sets out how these are understood and applied in Manchester. Corporate Parenting is an important part of the Ofsted Inspection framework and the Corporate Parenting Principles are referenced in Ofsted's Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services and are intended to facilitate as far as possible secure, nurturing, and positive experiences for Manchester's Cared for Children and Care Leavers and enable positive outcomes for them.

This document has been written with, and has approval from, our Care Consultants who are our experts by experience and drive Manchester's Corporate Family Cooperative activity. The priorities for action have been developed with the cared for children of Manchester and our care leavers following a period of consultation in January 2024.

2. The Rights of Manchester Cared for Children and Care Leavers

Manchester's ambition to be a **Child Friendly City** underpins the approach, commitment and expectation of Corporate Parenting, that the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions.

The role that people, places and organisations play in looking after children is one of the most important things they do. We recognise that cared for children have the same needs – to be loved, cared for and feel safe, this includes how we promote and support recovery, resilience and well-being.

We have a unique responsibility to the children we care for and our care leavers. UNICEF rights of the child underpin all that we do as a corporate family. The relevant over-riding articles are set out as being:

- **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children

- **Article 9:** Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.
- **Article 12:** Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.
- **Article 20:** If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.
- **Article 25:** If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

The term 'corporate parent' is broadly understood in relation to **how** local authorities and partners should approach their responsibilities for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. In Manchester we approach this as a family where a strong ethos of a **corporate family** means a shared vision and responsibility towards the children we care for and our care leavers is a **priority for everyone**.

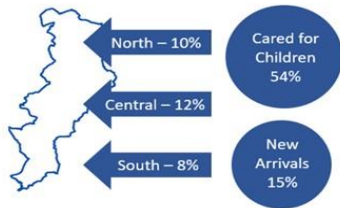
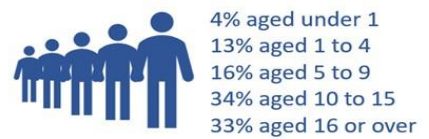
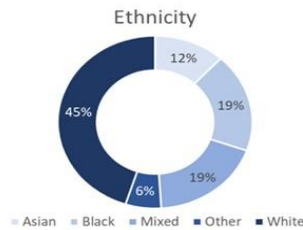
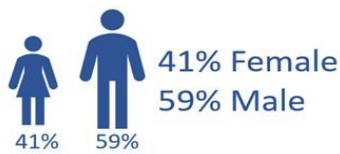
In Manchester we believe that everything we do with children needs to be informed by their experiences and views. For this reason we see our corporate family responsibilities delivered in cooperation and coproduction, with children, their families, and across all partners. The purpose of the **Corporate Family Cooperative** is to ensure the Council with its Partners discharges its responsibilities effectively to our children and young people.

The experiences of Cared for Children and Care Leavers, particularly in respect of the trusting relationships they form and whether they feel cared for, have a voice and are listened to, will be important measures of how successfully Manchester embed these principles.

2. The context for Our Manchester Children*:

*as at 01.01.2024

1,314 Children In Care



58% Full Care Order
21% Section 20
15% Interim Care Order
4% Placement Order
1% Other



62% Foster Care



15% Independent Living

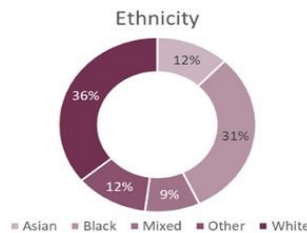
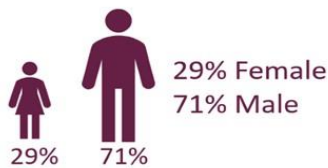


10% with Parents



8% Residential

713 Care Leavers Aged under 21



88% In Touch



86% In Suitable Accommodation



58% In Education, Employment or Training

3. Corporate Family Vision and Principles:

Vision:

In Manchester we have high aspirations for what our children and young people can achieve and how we can support this together.

‘Our children have the right to expect everything from a corporate family that would be expected from a responsible and good family’.

We will support our children to be Safe, Happy, Healthy and Successful.

This drives us to ensure that our children and young people who are cared for, have fun growing up, do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life, and are active citizens who feel they have voice and influence.

We will drive change by using relationship-based practice, cluster and locality working so we are rooted in **our children’s communities** and by extending the voice and influence of children and young people. The child is at the centre of everything we do, and we have a relentless focus on improved outcomes for them.

Key principles:

In February 2019, the DfE publication ‘Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked-After Children and Care Leavers’ – Statutory Guidance (Feb 2018). This guidance sets out seven principles, these do not replace or change existing legal duties; they are intended to encourage local authorities to be ambitious and aspirational for their Cared for Children and Care Leavers. These align with the UNICEF Rights of the Child and are:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people; (Articles 5 and 8)
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings; (Articles 13 and 14)
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people; (Article 12)
- 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; (Articles 18, 24 and 26)
- To promote and support high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people; (Articles 27, 28, 29 and 31)
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; (Article 9, 19, 20)
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living; (Articles 6, 26, 27).

In Manchester, the Council and its partners have said they will act as a responsible and good parent would act. In coproduction with the Care Consultants and following consultation with Our Cared for Children and Care Leavers, Manchester has agreed the following:

1.	We will respect and promote your rights as a child
2.	We will do nothing about you without you and we will explain why so you understand
3.	We will make sure we know the people that are important to you and that they stay in your life and we will create the opportunities for those relationships to get better.
4.	We will make sure you live in a safe home and you have choice when you're older.
5.	We will understand your culture and identity, what it means for you and make sure we celebrate and promote this with you.
6.	We will make sure you have the skills and support to be part of your community. and know your rights as a citizen.
7.	We will make sure there is someone there for you when you need them.
8.	We will help to keep you healthy and well, and teach you how to make healthy choices.
9.	We will believe in you, give you the skills to cope with challenges, and make sure you know where to ask for help and have the confidence to ask.
10.	We will know what you are good at, will celebrate what you achieve, help you learn when things could go even better and how you can do that.
11.	We will make sure you have the technology you need and teach you to use it safely.
12.	We will give you opportunities to try new things and to continue to do what you enjoy.

4.Partnership Agreed Strategy and Outcomes for Our Children:

Each outcome for children has a strategic lead who is responsible for developing an action plan to ensure that we deliver the improvements agreed in line with the Corporate Family Vision, Strategy and Principles. The leads are as follows:

Outcome	Lead
Happy	Assistant Director of Provider Services
Healthy	Designated Nurse Cared for Children
Safe	Service Lead Children's Safeguarding and Review Service
Successful	Virtual Head

For Manchester's Corporate Family we consulted with our Cared for Children and Care Leavers on what they wanted us to do even better to ensure they were Happy, Healthy, Safe and Successful, the objectives we have set in coproduction for 2024/6 are:

Happy - To make sure all Manchester's cared for children and care leavers are **HAPPY**

Our children gave their priorities for us as being:

- Having a trusted person to talk to when you need it
- Feeling included in decisions about your life
- Carers understanding how best to support you as an individual
- Having the chance and choice to try different activities, have a wide range of experiences and meet new people
- Knowing that the adults around you know what makes you happy and celebrate your success.
- Your carers knowing where to go to get support for you, including specialist support if you need it
- Having an opportunity to share your voice and be heard
- Knowing how to get support for your wellbeing



Healthy - To make sure all Manchester's cared for children and care leavers are **HEALTHY**

Our children gave their priorities for us as being:

Buy Bikes!

- Having access to sports and leisure activities
- Being able to get support for your mental health at the right time
- Your carer supporting your health and wellbeing
- Knowing how to access support for your wellbeing
- Being supported to make healthy choices (eat well, stay active and believe in yourself)
- Knowing how to make appointments or contact places like to GP

Dentist and opticians

- Making sure you have say in what is written in your health records.
- Knowing where to go to get professional advice and support about sexual health

Safe - To make sure all Manchester's cared for children and care leavers are **SAFE**

Our children gave their priorities for us as being:

- Feeling safe at home
- Having good relationships with your family
- Having good friendships
- Feeling safe in your community
- Being able to travel round the city safely
- When you're old enough, having a choice where you live

*Mummy makes me feel safe in the snow.
Mrs xxxx helps me feel safe in school.
Martin helps me feel safe at home. And xxxx as well. And Mummy.*

Having friends that I can talk to at school and online and also friends out of school. Also someone who I can always talk to but won't make me talk

- People who work with you understanding your experiences and identity
- Having someone advocating for your rights and wishes
- Being supported to use social media safely
- Uncertainty about the future can lead young people to feel unsafe

Successful - To make sure all Manchester's cared for children and care leavers are **SUCCESSFUL**

Our children gave their priorities for us as being:

- Getting a good education and having the support you need to go to school or college.
- Being able to stay in the same school even if you have to move home.
- Being supported to participate in your hobbies and interests.
- Being supported to achieve your goals in education, employment or training.
- Being encouraged to share your views and wishes.
- Being able to explore different education, job and training opportunities.
- Being supported to access work or training opportunities.
- Being supported to contribute to your community.

I have to follow my dream so I need someone to help me, someone who can do anything he could

- Recognise achievements.

5. Core Membership

Executive Lead Member (Chair)

Representative from our Care Consultants, children and young people engagement groups

Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Elected Members representing all political parties who hold CP responsibility

Strategic Director Children and Education Services

Deputy Director Children's Services

Assistant Director Safeguarding and Practice development

Assistant Director for Cared for Children and Care Leavers

Assistant Director from Locality

Youth Offending Service

Service lead Child Safeguarding and Review Service

Head teacher - Virtual School

Designated Doctor – Cared for Children

Designated Nurse – Cared for Children

Strategic Police Representative - GMP

Assistant Director Provider Services

Strategic lead for children's commissioning

Care Leaver Services

Independent Visiting and Advocacy Service

Housing Representative

Work and Skills Directorate?

Corporate HR rep?

Additional members as identified required to contribute to specific issues.

6. Meeting Schedule

The Corporate Family Cooperative will meet quarterly and will have a thematic focus on one of the outcomes; Happy, Healthy, Safe, Successful. The expected achievements against the core objectives in the workplan for this outcome will be coproduced with the Care Consultants and the workstream lead, and will reflect what is important for cared for children and care leavers in Manchester, what we do well and the impact of this, the challenges and what the Cooperative can do even better. Each session will start with an update on progress and each session will produce an impact report that sets out where we have agreed to improve and how far we have achieved it.

The work stream for each of the four outcomes will have a lead and work plan which will be informed and coproduced with Cared for Children and Care Leavers so it reflects their priorities as well as the agencies driving the work. The Care Consultants will scrutinise the progress and achievements against the workplan.

The Cooperative will take responsibility as lead officers in their organisations for recognising and celebrating achievements, removing obstacles to success, and supporting ambitious goals for Manchester's Cared for Children and Care Leavers that will make a positive difference to their lives.

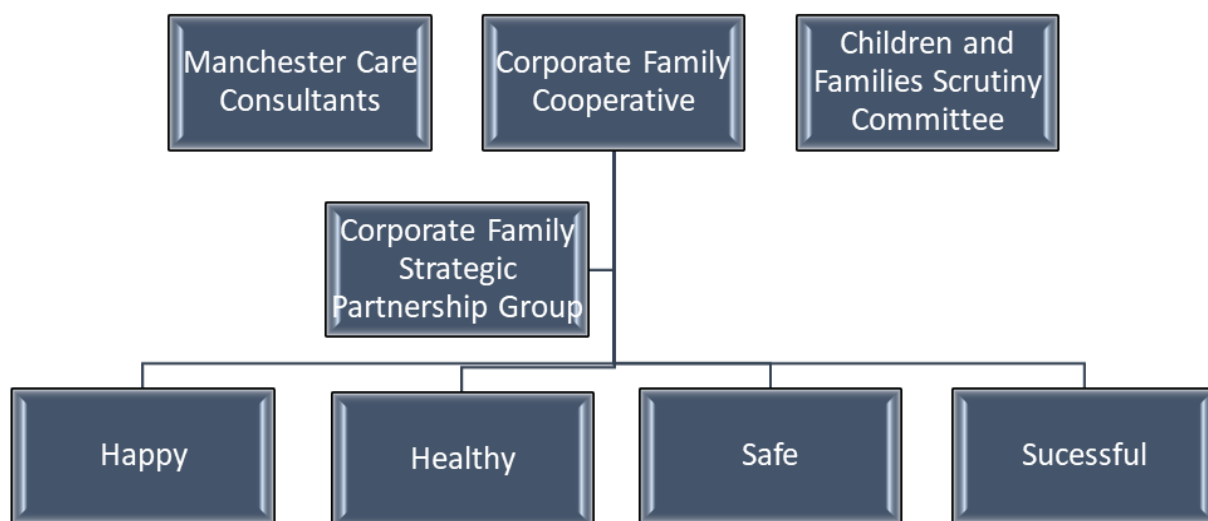
7. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Corporate Family Cooperative are as follows:

- The Corporate Family Cooperative will seek the views and promote the influence of Cared for Children and Care Leavers in relation to all decisions, which are likely to affect their daily life and their future and the quality of care and outcomes for all Children in Manchester's Care.
- To review the progress of the workplans against the four outcomes for children based on the priorities identified through analysis of data and impact and issues that are important to cared for children care leavers.
- To examine, promote and support ways in which the Council as a whole and partner agencies can work together effectively to improve the life chances of all children and young people Cared for and Care Leavers and deliver an impact in Manchester for Care Leavers having protected status.
- To offer child and young person and peer scrutiny and challenge holding council officers and their partners to account in relation to the way in which responsibilities are being discharged via services to cared for children and care leavers.
- To advise the Council's Executive of key issues and actions that need to be taken.
- To bring to the attention of the Council's Scrutiny Committee any areas which may warrant consideration.
- To acknowledge and celebrate in the achievements of children and young people in care in areas of education, drama, sport and employment, and participate in annual celebration events.
- To take account of the experiences of children and young people when leaving care and other key stakeholders and to ensure they influence the improvement of services and policy development.
- To maintain a strategic overview of new developments, initiatives, plans, policies and strategies that impact on services for cared for children and care leavers.
- To drive and promote the progression and achievements of the Corporate Family Strategy.

8. Structure, relationship and governance of outcomes workstreams.

The governance structure is represented as below:



9. Corporate Family Strategic Partnership

The Assistant Director for Cared for Children and Leaving Care, Chairs the Corporate Family Strategic Partnership Group.

The Strategic Partnership group understands that each child or young person in care is an individual and our approach supports this. The group tracks our children and young peoples progress through school, looking after their health and well-being and strive to make sure they have the same opportunities as their friends and peers in Manchester. We will be ambitious for every child or young person in our care and will encourage them to meet their full potential. The group will do this by working with cared for children and young people and professional partners to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people.

The group will meet each quarter and review activity and achievements against the workplans for children's outcomes: Happy, Healthy Safe and Successful and have oversight and continue to meet our responsibilities as a partnership.

This group has responsibility for:

- Setting the priorities against each outcome in coproduction with cared for children, care leavers and partners and in line with the actions identified through the Corporate Family Cooperative meeting.
- Scrutinising and supporting the action plans to ensure those priorities are progressed
- Ensuring that the delivery of the action plans reflect the principles for Corporate Family Cooperative
- Collating the impact of those actions for the children and young people of Manchester
- Raising any obstacles to achieving success with the Corporate Family Cooperative
- Reporting on success to the Corporate Family Cooperative and defining any obstacles that need support.

10. Relevant legislation and guidance:

The following legislation and statutory guidance provides the national framework for the functioning of Manchester's Corporate Family Cooperative:

- Children and Social work Act 2017
- Children Act 1989 s.22(3)
- Manchester [Care Leaver Strategy](#)
- DfE Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers - 2018
- Children Act 2004 s.10 – relevant partners
- Children Act 2002 s.10(5) – duty on relevant partners to cooperate
- Department for Education [Children's Social Care National Framework](#)
- Manchester UNICEF status: [Child Friendly City](#)
- Our Manchester [Children and Young Peoples Plan](#)