

TAMESIDE COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2022-2025

3-YEAR
STRATEGY



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VOICE OF THE CHILD MISSION STATEMENT

"I am the expert in being me.
You are the expert in your field.
If we truly join forces and work
together as equals I can be a better me
And you would be able to help more
young people.
which would make you a better you."

Written by Tameside Young People

FOREWORD

Dear Cared for Children and Care Leavers,

In Tameside, we believe that corporate parenting is one of the most important responsibilities held by elected members, partner agencies, and individual staff working with children and young people in the care of the local authority. It is critical that we get this right. Their experiences in early childhood through to their teenage years will shape their future happiness and set the foundations for what they can achieve throughout their adult lives.

Being a good corporate parent means; working together to advocate and champion the needs of cared for children and care leavers in everything we do, having high aspirations for their future, keeping them safe, happy and healthy and supporting them into adulthood. It also means celebrating their successes and supporting them when things don't go so well.

In summary, doing what any good parent would do for their own child. Listening to children and young people is at the heart of our plans. This strategy has been co-produced with them. The 'Pledges' that we make to them as their corporate parents are based on the things that they have told us matter most to them.

The commitment to improving the lives of our cared for children and care leavers is more than a priority; it is the way in which we behave, think and feel about our young people in every aspect of our work. Through the implementation of this strategy, we intend to improve the experiences and outcomes for all our Tameside cared for children and care leavers.



Cllr Bill Fairfoull

Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families)

1. Introduction

The children we care for have asked us to change some of the terms we use to describe care and the services we provide for them. This strategy acknowledges the wishes of our children and young people and we will no longer use the term 'Looked after Children' instead replacing it with Cared for Children.

When a child becomes cared for, the council becomes her/his Corporate Parent.

A child cared for by the council looks to the council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every member and employee of the council has the statutory responsibility to act for that child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child.

Every good parent wants the best for their child, to see their child flourish with good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school and enjoy good relationships with their peers. To make the most of leisure opportunities, hobbies and interests, and to grow towards adulthood equipped to lead independent lives and make their way as adults in higher education, in good careers and jobs, and to be financially secure.

That's why Tameside council has the same goals for its Cared for Children and Care Leavers as those of every good parent, and takes seriously the moral as well as legal responsibility for enabling Cared for Children and Care Leavers to experience happy and fulfilling lives.

Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means:

"The collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are cared for by us".

This strategy describes our approach to improving the lives of Cared for Children & Care Leavers, outlining our vision and strategic priorities, and how we intend to achieve our goals. We will also outline the context in which the strategy sits, and the governance structure in place to ensure that our vision is achieved.

This strategy sits alongside our Pledge to Cared for Children and Local & Regional Care Leavers Offer which outlines to children and young people our commitments to them, and the support they can expect from us.

Legislative Framework

It is important to recognise that the vision for Cared for Children & Care Leavers Children in Tameside is driven by a range of legislation, policy and guidance that underpins Corporate Parenting.

Key Legislation and National Guidance include;

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004

- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- The Equality Act 2010
- Leaving Care Guidance 2010
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2015
- Independent Reviewing Officer Handbook 2010
- The Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Making not Breaking; Building Relationships Care Inquiry 2013
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Working Together 2015
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- NICE Quality Standard for Looked after Children (2013)

Local drivers include;

- Voice of Child Strategy
- Greater Manchester Children's & Young People's Plan
- Youth Council
- Pledges to Cared for Children
- Children's Social Care Improvement Plan
- Permanence Strategy
- Sufficiency Strategy
- Care Leavers Offer
- Integrated Safeguarding Partnership
- Friends & Family Policy
- Care Leavers Offer
- GM Regional Care Leavers Objectives
- The Independent Review Children's Social Care
- Poverty Truth Commission
- LISTENing In Tameside
- Early Help Strategy
- Corporate Plan
- Send Strategy
- National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum

2. Corporate Parenting Principles

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 Cared for 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.

The corporate parenting principles do not exist in a vacuum. They should shape the mind-set and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carries out all of its functions in relation to Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

As Tameside Council Corporate Parents we strongly believe:

- Children and young people in our care are entitled to the same care, support, stability, health and education as our own children.
- We need to ensure that services are flexible enough to support children and young people in our care to have high quality lives and have a happy childhoods and adolescence.
- In developing new practices and initiatives the Council considers the needs of children and young people in our care and care leavers.
- Children in our care are actively encouraged to participate in decisions made about their lives, so that their experiences influence policy and practice.
- Access for children in our care to universal services is actively promoted, encouraging young people's sense of community and belonging.
- Service provision, communication and policies meet the needs of children with additional needs, disabilities and children from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds.

- Transition to adult services should be timely and well planned with services working together.
- In challenging negative perceptions and stereotypes of children in our care and raise awareness at all levels across the council.
- Corporate parenting is about commitment and teamwork to bring about positive change.

3. The Role of Corporate Parents including Members, Officers and Partner Agencies

Corporate parenting is a whole-council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) endeavour and not the sole responsibility of Childrens Social Care. It requires services across the whole council and CCG to work together with partner agencies to achieve the best outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers.

The role of Corporate Parent is not a passive one.

Tameside's Corporate Parents work closely with their partners to ensure that the needs of our children are clearly identified and met at every level. This should encompass the strategic planning, commissioning and integrated delivery of services.

The Director of Children Services and the Deputy Executive Leader for Children and Families will take the lead on behalf of the Local Authority and CCG for services provided to our children and young people cared for and care leavers.

4. Our Vision & Pledges to Cared for Children

In Tameside we have a collective vision for our children, young people and families. This has been agreed by children, young people, workforce and partners:

The Children, Young People and Families of Tameside are confident and resilient individuals who are connected to their community and make an effective contribution as responsible citizens. They feel safe and care about their health, education and employment, and their community.

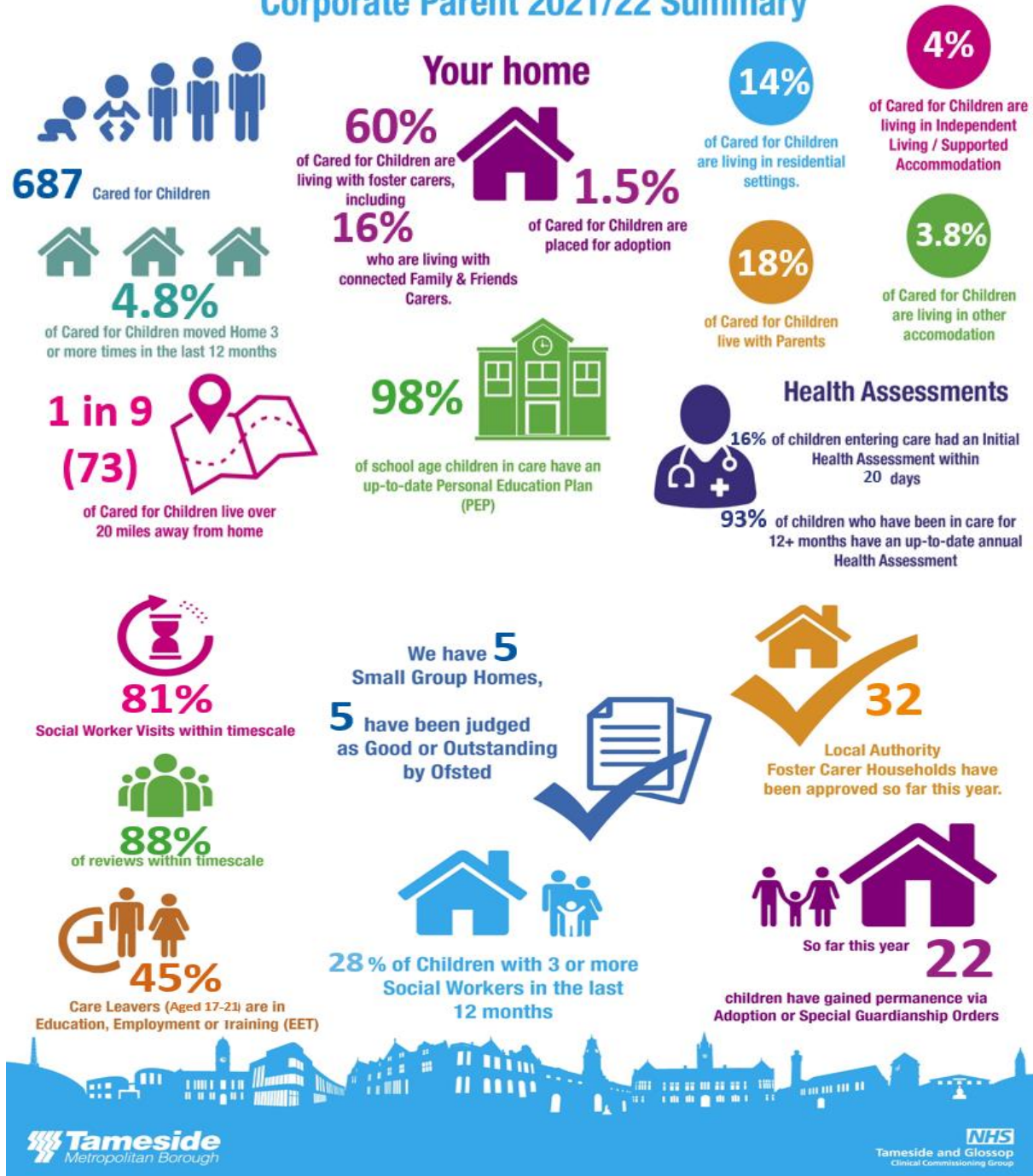
As corporate parents we recognise our vital role to ensure that our Cared for Children & Care Leavers have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential. Tameside Council, along with our partners will act as ambitious and aspirational parents for our Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

This is why in consultation with our Cared for Children Tameside Council pledge we will:

1. Prioritise your health & wellbeing
2. Listen to what you say & take your views seriously
3. Help you understand your journey & what is happening in your life
4. Provide a place for you to live that makes you feel safe
5. Make a plan with you that will explain how we will look after you
6. Ask you what you think you need
7. Act on what you have told us & get back to you quickly
8. Help you participate in having your voice heard & in doing so help us make our services better for you
9. Provide opportunities to meet other young people
10. Recruit Permanent Staff with you so that we are choosing the best workforce for our young people
11. Expect all professionals who work with you such as Social Workers, Support Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers to give you the time you need to build relationships with them

5. Context - Corporate Parent Summary 2021/2022

Corporate Parent 2021/22 Summary



6. Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is a group of children and young people in care and care leavers who meet to work to ensure that our children have their voices heard. The CiCC actively promote the voice of the young person and promote this to ensure that our children have a right to be part of the decision making process that affect all aspects of their lives. The CiCC work collaboratively with the corporate parents to share children and young people's experiences, ideas and suggestions on how to improve local practice. The CiCC are members of the Corporate Parenting Board and attend meetings to give updates, share information and discussion decisions affecting their future.

7. Tameside Childrens Rights

Tameside Childrens Rights service undertakes a role of promoting the right of children and young people in care to be part of the decision making processes that affect their lives. They also undertake visits to children and young people age 8 plus in the period after they first come into care. The visit is to inform young people about how Childrens Rights can support them in terms of advocacy, the Independent Visiting Service (mentoring) and other services available to them as children in care.

Tameside Childrens Rights also provide a confidential and independent Advocacy service for children and young people in care who may not feel heard or who wish to make a complaint about the service they have received.

8. Tameside Care Leavers Forum & Local Offer

Tameside Care Leavers Forum meet once a month and is a chance for care leavers to socialise, find out more about what is going on and share their experiences and news with both officers and other care leavers.

The meetings are an opportunity to ensure that their voices are heard within decision making processes and provides an opportunity to influence the development and review of policy and procedures. The meetings are attended by officers who wish to get the views and ideas of young people and let them know about events, support, opportunities currently on offer [LocalOfferForCareLeaversStrategy2019.pdf \(tameside.gov.uk\)](#)

Regional strategic leads group also meets on a regular basis to develop and promote GM Care Leavers Covenant. Tameside are signed up to regional key objectives which include Care Leavers aged 16-21 being able to access free bus travel, free prescriptions up to the age of 21, discount council tax up to age of 25. In addition to these and in partnership with our housing colleagues we aim to establish a policy and approach that would apply additional scrutiny to Care Leavers when being categorised as 'intentionally homeless' in the hope to prevent this from happening. We are

also committed to working with wide range of agencies especially third sector organisations to establish mentoring programmes that focus solely on the needs of Care Leavers.

9. Corporate Parenting Week

Tameside has a commitment to host Corporate Parenting Week in 2022 and each year thereafter to highlight the importance and impact of good corporate parenting to the employees of Tameside Council, The CCG and wider partners.

The week includes daily emails with information to all Corporate Parents, events, information sessions, training and information on how to get involved. The week will continue to be held and will develop over time.

10. The Voice of Children & Young People

The Corporate Parenting Board takes every opportunity to actively engage with our cared for children and care leavers whether directly or indirectly in partnership with the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum.

Other examples of participation and engagement are:

Care Leavers Forum

Children in Care Council

Childrens Rights

View Point Module/App

Personal Advisors and Independent Visitors

LISTENing In Tameside

11. Corporate Parenting Board Strategic Priorities / Action Plan 2022-2025

Below are Tameside's Corporate Parenting Board's 6 key strategic priorities, these priorities are underpinned by the seven corporate parenting principles laid out within The Children & Social Work Act 2017 and linked to Tameside's pledges made to Cared for Children. Together these form the basis of Tameside's Corporate Parenting Action Plan.

1. **Being a Good Corporate Parent**
2. **Engagement & Participation of Cared for Children & Care Leavers**
3. **Achieving Permanence**
4. **Education, Training & Employment**
5. **Health & Well-being**
6. **Transition to Adulthood**

12. Corporate Parenting Governance – Meeting Our Responsibilities

The Corporate Parenting Board has responsibility to ensure that the Council fulfils its Corporate Parenting duties in partnership with other statutory agencies. The Board ensures the strategic Corporate Parenting objectives are delivered and Pledges and Care Leavers Offer is adhered to.

Both qualitative and quantitative data is analysed by the Board in order to ensure that strategic objectives are met. The Corporate Parenting Board consists of a cross party group of elected members supported by the Director Children's Social Care, officers and partners. We expect all corporate parents to have the knowledge and understanding of the diverse needs of our children in care and care leavers.

The Director of Childrens Social Care along with key officers from Childrens Social Care and relevant partner agencies also attend Corporate Parenting Board meetings. These officers include representatives from Health, Education, Housing, Childrens Rights and Independent Reviewing Services, and other services and agencies as required by the Corporate Parenting Board. The Children in Care Council, Care Leavers Forum are also active members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Corporate Parenting Board ensure that we are meeting our corporate parenting responsibility in the following ways:

- By providing support, guidance and challenge. The Corporate Parenting Board will examine all aspects of the provisions made to our children in care and care leavers.
- Ensure there is transparent communication between children in care and care leavers, their carers/parents and the corporate parent.
- Actively promote best practice and have high ambitions for children in care and care leavers

- Support the development of strong partnerships with other internal Corporate Parents including education, health, police, housing and youth offending services.
- Ensure there are regular training opportunities for all those with Corporate Parenting responsibilities and those on the Corporate Parenting Board.
- Promote our moral and legal responsibilities as Corporate Parents and ensure that this is continually owned by the whole council and its partners.
- Have a clear framework at all levels for responsibility and accountability.

Outside of the Board the Corporate Parenting Steering Group meet monthly to monitor and review progress of the Corporate Parenting Action Plan. This group will be made up of key officers including the leads of the 5 identified work streams;

- Work Stream 1 – **Participation & Engagement**
- Work Stream 2 – **Permanence, Stability & Security**
- Work Stream 3 – **Education, Employment, Training & Opportunity**
- Work Stream 4 – **Health & Well-being**
- Work Stream 5 – **Independence**

Each work stream is linked to a strategic priority with the exception of strategic priority no. 1 'Being a Good Corporate Parent' which theme cuts across each work stream.

13. Measuring Our Success

The Board will seek to ensure that current and future priorities and decisions and deployment of resources will reflect the needs of cared for children and care leavers. Performance data will be provided to support and evidence progress on the six priorities of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The first question the Board will ask of themselves, is, "would this be good enough for my child?" The Corporate Parenting Strategy will be monitored and evaluated by the successful delivery of the corporate parenting action plan through:

Children and young people feel valued and able to shape and influence services

- Our audits telling us about the lived experience of children and young people
- Delivery of an exciting and appropriate local offer for care leavers
- Ofsted judgement of good or outstanding for cared for children and achieving permanence
- Assessments and Care plans in line with Signs of Safety
- Improved placement stability and reduction in unplanned endings
- Foster carer recruitment and retention
- Increased number of care leavers entering education, training or employment

Appendix 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TAMESIDE'S CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

INTRODUCTION

The role and responsibilities of a Corporate Parent has been embedded in legislation since 2008 when 'Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care' received royal assent.

Corporate parenting was further strengthened in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 by setting out seven clear principles that all local authorities should adopt. These are:

- Act in the best interests of and promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- Take account of children and young people's wishes.
- Help children and young people gain access to the best use of services provided by the local authority and partners.
- Promote high aspirations and help secure the best outcomes.
- Children and young people to be safe and stable in their home lives, relationships, education or work.
- Children and young people should be prepared for adulthood and independent living.

The duties and responsibilities of corporate parents are best articulated as follows:

"As the corporate parent of children in care, the State has a special responsibility for their wellbeing. Like any good parent, it should put its own children first. That means being a powerful advocate for them to receive the best of everything and helping children to make a success of their lives" (Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care).

Subsequently, being a corporate parent is not an option, rather a statutory obligation that is placed on the public sector, Elected Members, officers' agencies delivering services to children and young people on behalf of the state.

These Terms of Reference set out how Tameside's Corporate Parenting Board members will demonstrate leadership and provide an effective support and challenge to improve the life chances of 'our' children and young people and support them to achieve their aspirations.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board is to ensure that the Council and its partner agencies have and fulfil a joint commitment to:

- Improve the outcomes for Tameside's Cared for Children and Care Leavers.
- Develop and monitor the implementation of Tameside's Corporate Parenting Strategy and associated Action Plan.
- Promote a co-ordinated and partnership approach to the delivery of services as they affect 'Cared for Children/Care Leavers'; supporting stakeholders to carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively and consistently.
- To provide effective challenge where services to Cared for Children and Care Leavers fall below our high aspirations and desired outcomes for all children and young people.

In addition, the Corporate Parenting Board will:

- Monitor and review progress of policies and strategies as they affect Cared for Children and Care Leavers.
- Ensure clear and accessible information is readily available to Cared for Children and Care Leavers as to the support and assistance they can expect to receive from the Council.
- To act as an advisory board to the Council, its Committees and partner agencies on issues relevant to Cared for Children and Care Leavers to ensure that policies implemented by the Council which affect these children and young people are effective and appropriate.
- Ensure that systems are in place that actively promote the views of Cared for Children and Care Leavers, ensuring our children and young people are represented in the development of services that affect them.
- Ensure arrangements are made for the training and development of Elected Members (and others as appropriate) with regard to their Corporate Parenting role and responsibilities.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Corporate Parenting members will receive regular thematic, performance data and feedback from Service leads, partner agencies and our children and young people. This will include case studies to promote improved understanding of the lived experience of our children.

In addition, the board will receive updates and progress reports related to specific policy development, projects and strategies relating to Tameside Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

The effectiveness of the Corporate Parenting Board will be measured through:

- A core data set/scorecard that relates to Tameside's Cared for Children and Care Leavers; which reflects local and national performance indicators and priorities.
- Progression of the Corporate Parenting Action Plan and its six strategic priorities.
- Feedback from children and young people, Corporate Complaints and the Safeguarding Children's Unit.

MEMBERSHIP

Tameside's Corporate Parenting Board will be chaired by the Executive Member for Children and Families; additional membership comprises:

- Assistant Executive Member for Children and Families
- Chair of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel
- Chief Executive/Accountable Officer
- Director, Children's Services
- Assistant Director, Children's Services
- Assistant Director, Education
- Assistant Director, People and Workforce Development
- Director of Health and Social Outcomes, Active Tameside
- Members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC)
- Participation and Engagement Lead Officer
- Head of Service, Cared for Children
- Head of Commissioning, Children's Services
- Head of Service, Safeguarding Children's Unit (IRO's)
- Named Nurse Cared for Children
- Designated Doctor, Cared for Children
- Children's Commissioner (CCG)
- Virtual School and College Headteacher
- Head of Employment and Skills
- Adult Services Representative
- Head of Strategic Operations, Adult Services
- Head of Community Safety and Homelessness
- Housing Services Representative
- Service Unit Manager, Cared for Children
- Service Unit Manager, Leaving Care
- Service Unit Manager, Fostering & Adoption
- Service Unit Manager, Residential
- Clinical Commissioning Group Representative
- Representatives from Charitable Organisations

Attendance is mandatory for members who should, via the chair, identify a nominated deputy.

Attendance will be monitored and reported periodically.

GOVERNANCE

The Corporate Parenting Board will provide scrutiny and challenge from across the partnership in the delivery of the six strategic priorities as outlined in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The Corporate Parenting Board will receive progress reports on the delivery of the key elements of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and delivery of the Action Plan.

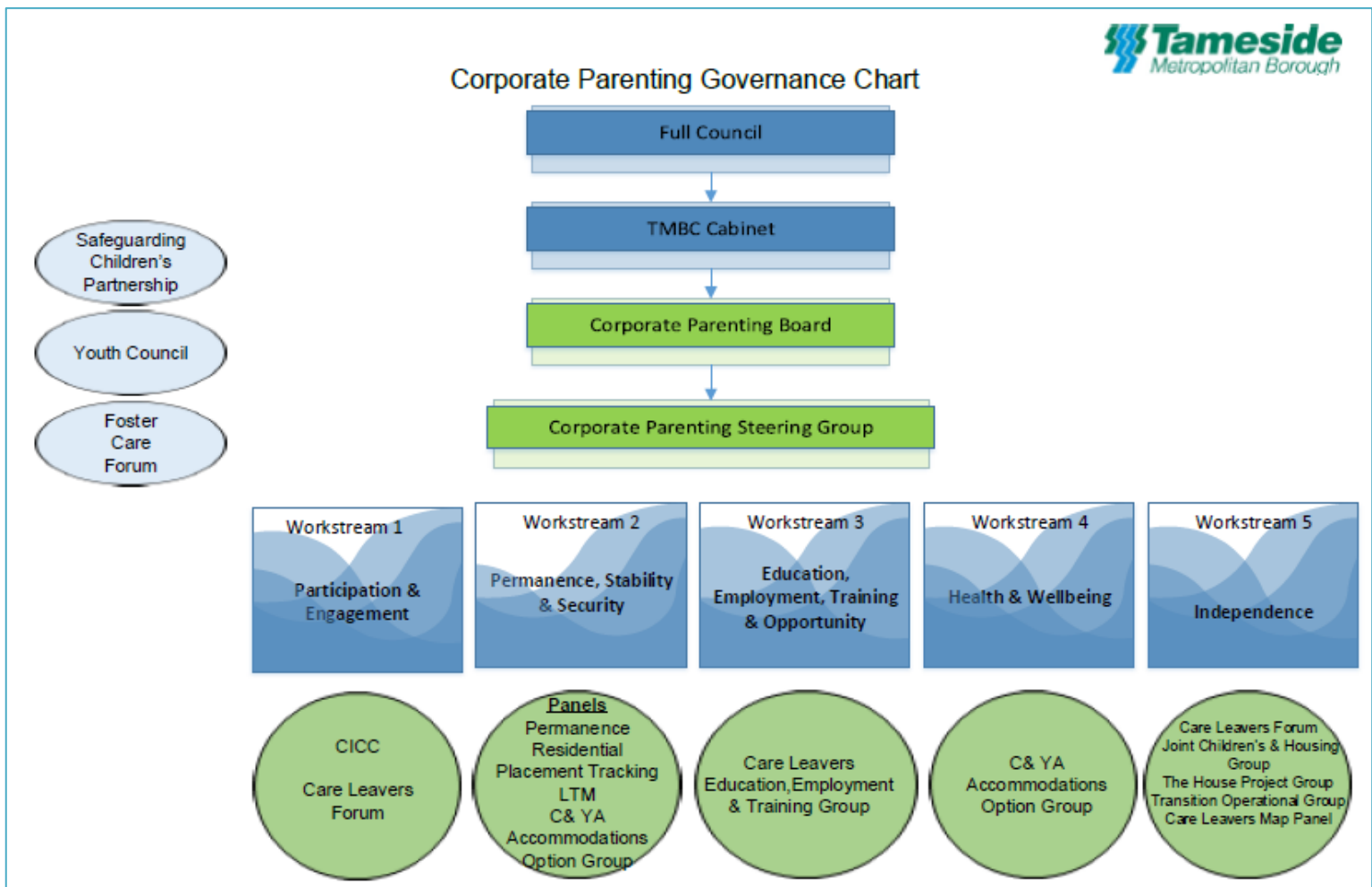
The routine reporting arrangements will include a six monthly interim and annual report to Tameside Council's Children's Services Improvement Board that will outline progress, challenges and make recommendations to the Council Cabinet where relevant; this will also require the attendance of Board members.

FREQUENCY

The Corporate Parenting Board will meet on a bi-monthly basis.

Appendix 2

Corporate Parenting Governance Chart





The Tameside pledge was co-produced with young people who are equal partners in designing our pledge for Cared for young people. We strongly believe that those who use our services are best placed to design it.

While you are in care we are your corporate parents. In Tameside we take this responsibility seriously and we will only promise you things we believe we can do

Our Pledge to all our Cared for Children is that we will:

- Prioritise your health and wellbeing
- Listen to what you say and take your views seriously
- Help you understand your journey and what's happening in your life
 - Provide a place for you to live that make you feel safe
 - Make a plan with you that will explain how we will look after you
 - Ask you what you think you need
 - Act on what you have told us and get back to you quickly
- Help you to participate in having your voice heard and in doing so help us make our services better for you
 - Provide opportunities to meet other young people
- Recruit permanent staff with you so that we are choosing the best workforce for our young people
- Expect all professionals who work with you such as social workers, support workers and Independent reviewing officers to give you the time you need to build relationships with them

Janet Cooper Cllr Chd Coonoy
 Brenda [unclear] E. Willis
 Billy Jolly Daniel McVerry [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] P.H. Smith [unclear] [unclear] J.A. Ward
 [unclear] [unclear] J.C. Owen P.M. Skypat [unclear] [unclear] G. Jones George Newton
 Banne Miller [unclear] [unclear] S.A. Lewis David Mills S.P. [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] Betty Affleck
 [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]

