



YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO GOOD 'CORPORATE PARENTS'



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YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO GOOD 'CORPORATE PARENTS'

What is a 'corporate parent'?

You may have heard the term 'corporate parent' before, but what does it mean?

When you are in care **the local authority acts in place of your parents**. They care for you and do all of the things for you that your parents normally would. However, it is not one person who is responsible for this, but the whole of the local authority. The Government has said:

"... every councillor, every Director of Children's Services, every social worker or teacher should demand no less for children in care than they would for their own children".

This is what is meant by 'corporate parent'.

There are Corporate Parenting Boards in most areas, and many have children and young people helping them.



YOUR TEN-POINT CHECKLIST TO GOOD CORPORATE PARENTS

A young person once told us:

“(Children’s) social services take you into care. They should look after you as your parents normally would”

You can tell if your local authority is acting as a good parent **if it is doing the following things.**

1 STABILITY

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when **you have stability in your life**, and you;

- know where you belong
- feel settled where you live ... including at school and in the local community
- are treated like other children
- are able to make friends
- have lasting relationships with the people caring for you

No child or young person can be happy or achieve their best when they are being moved all the time.

2 CHOICE

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when **you are given a real choice** about the important decisions in your life ... on such things like where you are living, which school or college you go to and the friends and family you see.



3 PLANNING

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when there is a **clear plan for your care** now ... and for the big changes that you may sometimes need to make in the future (like if you change placements or school, or when leaving care).

4 A POSITIVE CARE CULTURE

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when:

- there is a commitment to **stick with you**; even through the difficult times
- you have good shared experiences
- there is a **sense of belonging** ... "Being treated as one of the family"
- you have someone **taking an active role** in your life ... "making things happen for you"
- you get good support for your education and learning, with help from your carers when you need it and quiet areas to study in
- you have someone you know will **always be there for you**
- you feel that **someone actually cares** what happens to you

5 LISTENING TO CHILDREN

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when **you feel that you are being listened to** and your views are taken seriously.

6 ENSURING SAFE CARE

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when **you feel safe**.

When asked by the Children's Rights Director, **young people made their own list** of what helps towards making children and young people feel safer:

- Give us a **real choice** of people to go to with our worries and problems (incl. young people and adults with similar experiences)



- Make sure every child is able to make **a private call** to ... someone they trust
- **Mean it** when you tell children they can always come to you with a problem
- Give us the choice of someone we trust coming in from **outside** ...

As one young person told us:

“Getting inside help risked someone breaking your confidences”

- Tell us whether or not you have to tell other people what was said.
- Where safe to do so, let children report **confidentially** ... many do so already, to ChildLine, to other confidential helpline services and, most often, to their friends.
- Make sure that young people **have their own say in keeping themselves safe.**

7 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when:

- you are confident in using the complaints procedure
- you know how to get hold of an advocate when you need one, to help you have your say
- you are able to see information about you
- your views help to shape the care you get
- you are involved with your own family (if this is safe and is what you wish), your friends and in the local community

8 DISCRIMINATION

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when it makes sure that **you are not treated differently or unfairly** because of being in, or from, care. They should help you to challenge any discrimination or bullying you might get on this.



9 SUPPORTING CARE LEAVERS

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when it shows that it has the same aspirations, hopes and ambitions for your needs as a care leaver that 'good parents' up and down the country have, and deliver, for their own children when leaving home.

Local Councils are amongst the single biggest providers of employment, accommodation and learning opportunities in their area. The council should therefore try its best to make sure that no young person ever leaves care without a job, and it should always make sure that they have somewhere safe to live and opportunities to continue their education or training if they are not going straight into a job.

10 AMBITION

Your local authority is being a good corporate parent when it is ambitious for you to do well.

To achieve your very best, you need corporate parents who are ambitious for you and committed to making sure that you enjoy all the opportunities you need to realise your potential. That means, like with all other good parents, they need to invest in your future, celebrate your achievements and be a real champion of your cause.