



Consultation on corporate parenting: Part 6 code of practice on looked after and accommodated children

The Fostering Network's response

October 2025

As a membership body, The Fostering Network's views are shaped through our projects and programmes as well as our members' participation in advisory boards and forums. We have 2,852 foster carer members in Wales and all 22 local authorities and 9 IFAs in membership.

Our response to this consultation is based on our views as a corporate parent signed up to the charter, and we also gathered views from young people through meetings with our youth advisory board as part of our response.

Question 1: chapter 2 - placements

**Do you agree with the proposed additions and amendments to these sections of the code?
If no, please could you explain and what further amendments are needed?**

We welcome the approach to strengthening the voice of the child in this section of the code and feel strongly about the importance of ensuring the child is involved in discussions about moves to inform developments in the practice of transporting personal belongings.

We are pleased that the proposal includes the addition of guidance on the handling of personal belongings to this chapter as this is something that is currently missing from the code. All children and young people deserve to move safely and with respect, including the handling of personal belongings, to help make the moving experience as positive as possible. Our youth advisory board felt proud that the NYAS campaign, My Things Matter, has been included in the proposed additions as this is something children and young people have been campaigning for and feel it demonstrates their voice being heard to make positive change. The Fostering Network also supports this campaign.

The proposal also recognises that a number of local authorities in Wales have pre-purchased holdall bags to be used in periods of transition. Whilst this is positive, we would like to see it included in this chapter that all local authorities always have pre-purchased bags to avoid the use of bin bags. We recognise the acknowledgement of emergency occasions where appropriate bags have not been used, and we believe this chapter should include a section on how local authorities could avoid this e.g. through monitoring of stock, connections with

organisations such as Madlug to request holdalls and social workers always having access to holdalls in their vehicles for cases of emergencies. Including specifics of good practice in the code could help to monitor how the guidance is being used.

Whilst the proposed additions would be very helpful, we feel this proposal is missing important definitions on who would be accountable for ensuring the voice of the child is included in all aspects of the move, as the moving experience is dependent on more than the bag that is used. We would like to see measures for how these additions will improve the moving process, specifically for the occasions where appropriate bags have not been used, through clear monitoring and reporting guidelines. Currently we know that some moves are not handled the most appropriately due to emergencies, so we think there needs to be an addition that outlines clearly what is expected to happen post the move, how the child will be supported through the transition, and how it will inform future developments to avoid it.

The NYAS pledge also has a section that says it will ‘support you to make a complaint if any belongings are lost or damaged’, we would recommend this is included as it sets out a clear process for children and young people to be able to make a complaint to a named person with deadline for responding.

Question 2: what is corporate parenting?

What are your views on the term “community parenting”?

The Fostering Network signed up to the corporate parenting charter in September 2023 as we support the shared principles and promises set out in the charter. From discussions with our members, partner organisations and our young people’s advisory board, the term corporate parent has been received with some confusion across the sector, specifically as the same term is being used for local authorities with the statutory duty. For instance, the young people on the board mentioned that they are confused with what corporate parenting is and what the corporate parenting charter is. They expressed that the language being used is not clear and makes it difficult for them to understand the difference and there is no young person’s version. We believe an additional chapter clearly outlining the role of the local authority as the corporate parent would be useful but would need to clearly define the distinction between this and the role of wider organisations signed up to the corporate parent charter.

Our view is that the distinction could be made by using the term community parenting for wider organisations and introducing a community parenting charter that is specific to babies, children and young people with care experience. This could help to separate those with statutory duty and those without statutory duty, whilst encouraging all organisations to be good corporate/community parents. We asked our youth advisory board for their views, and they explained they prefer the term ‘community parenting’ as they felt corporate parenting sounds too business-like. We would agree that ‘community parenting’ perhaps better reflects how the shared responsibilities should be set out in a more child-centred and inclusive way.

Question 3: corporate parenting delivery including voice of the child

What are your views on the proposals in this section of the chapter on corporate parenting panels or groups?

We agree with the proposal of a chapter that explains the benefits of setting up corporate parenting panels. They are an important mechanism for children and young people to be able to have a say on the delivery of corporate parenting which directly affects them. Our youth advisory board particularly welcomes the proposal that both looked after children and care leavers should be included in the panel, as they expressed that it is important for both cohorts to be active in this, as they will represent different perspectives and experiences which can further improve developments of corporate parenting delivery.

Our view is that if this depends on the discretion of each local authority, the voice of the child in some areas may be limited where a corporate parenting panel has not been set up. We recognise that there will be an additional corporate parenting toolkit published separately which will include examples of good practice and how this can be delivered, but we think this should be mandated to ensure all local authorities prioritise the voice of the child. Without all local authorities setting up panels, not all children and young people will be represented across Wales, limiting the effectiveness of this chapter.

Question 4: corporate parent's role in providing information when leaving care

What are your views on the proposals for this section of the chapter? Is there anything missing?

We welcome the proposal to create an online information resource, as it is important for care leavers to have consistent access to information in addition to support from personal advisors. We would not want this online resource to replace the role of the personal advisors.

Our youth advisory board agreed with the proposal to create an online resource and think an app would be very helpful. Particularly for situations where there has been changes to personal advisors, or they have moved away for university. Having a resource with information on the current local authority offer or entitlements they should receive is important if the care leaver is unable to reach their personal advisor.

Whilst it is useful for this information resource to be for care leavers up until 25, we believe that what is really needed is for all support and entitlements to be extended until the age of 25.

Question 5: corporate parent's role in providing information when leaving care

Do you think this information would be better located on a national or local platform? Please explain.

A national resource would be more effective than a local platform as it would be a way to monitor the information more centrally. Our view is that support for care leavers should be provided on a national basis, so that the entitlements are the same across all local authorities. For instance, who would ensure the information is correct, and who would keep each resource

up to date on a local level? Standardising support would help to ensure all the information is accurate e.g. standardising temporary accommodation for care leavers would help all care leavers know what to expect from accommodation, anywhere in Wales.

We also think there should be a national offer of support for all care leavers as set for England in the Children's Wellbeing Bill currently finishing its passage in the House of Lords.

Alternatively, there was a suggestion from our youth advisory board that the resource could be a national platform and hold information that is available to all care leavers across Wales, such as mental health support but also have information per local authority within the larger platform for support that is specific to each area.

If the information is provided at a local level, this would need to include clarity on what would happen if the individual were to move local authorities e.g. would their app automatically update, or would they have to put into the app that they moved and who would monitor the app locally to ensure it is kept up to date?

Question 6: corporate parenting reporting

What are your views on the proposals for this section of the chapter? Is there anything missing?

It is important for there to be ways for children and young people to know if local authorities are being good corporate parents, as this is something that affects their daily lives. It is useful to include examples of how corporate parenting will be reported, although our views are that the methods should be mandatory to ensure there are certain processes all corporate parents are following.

The suggestion for a panel that holds regular 6 monthly meetings is useful and as mentioned previously, our youth advisory board feel strongly that both looked after children and care leavers should be included on this panel. Our question around this suggestion would be that if this is not mandatory, how will Welsh Government ensure they get enough information to identify good practice?

The second suggestion for corporate parents to share good examples with Welsh Government is also useful, but perhaps this should also include examples of where improvements could be made so that corporate parents are able to identify areas of improvement. We think this is missing details on if it would be mandatory for corporate parents to provide examples, and how often this would be required as this is currently just a suggestion.

Including methods of measuring progress such as national data and performance measures would be helpful and we feel there would need to be clear examples of this, so all local authorities know what is expected from them as a corporate parent.

Our view is that as the examples in this chapter are suggestions, it would be helpful to know what will be mandatory for corporate parents so children and young people will know there will be some methods used by each local authority for Welsh government to know they are being good corporate parents.

Question 7: corporate parenting reporting

What do you think would be the most effective way of measuring progress in relation to corporate parenting?

We think the most effective way of measuring progress in relation to corporate parenting would be to ensure all local authorities do this the same way by setting consistent standards and making these mandatory. For instance, we think panels which include looked after children and care leavers would be very beneficial so that that voice of the child is included, and if all local authorities do this, then there will be a better understanding of how corporate parents are working nationally. Additionally, collecting both evidence of good practice, and areas of improvement from corporate parents could be a useful way to recognise what works well and what doesn't work so well. This would be particularly helpful for transitional periods such as moves.

We would recommend that the code specifies that Welsh Government are required to lay a report before the Senedd every 1-2 years that shows how local authorities have complied with their corporate parenting requirements to strengthen accountability.

Question 8: chapter 4 - review of cases

Do you agree with the proposed additions and amendments to these sections of the code? If no, please could you explain what further amendments are needed.

We would agree with the proposed changes to strengthen the voice of the child in this chapter and we are pleased to see the addition to include "listen to and ensure that the child's wishes and feelings are taken into consideration" as the first point under the role of the IRO.

Our youth advisory board feel the proposed changes to this chapter are needed, as they mentioned experiences where they felt the IRO chaired meetings in a business-like manner, rather than being child-centred and focusing on the voice of the child. Some young people on the board shared that they often felt fear going into meetings because of the lack of emotional approach but rather they felt they were being spoken about whilst sitting there.

Suggestions for how this could be improved were that it is important for the IRO to get in contact with the child for support and to meet with them prior to these meetings so that they can build a relationship to better reflect the voice of the child, as some of our board mentioned that they never had meetings just with the IRO, or that the IRO did not listen to them.

Question 9

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

We welcome a dedicated chapter on corporate parenting to be added to the code. However we believe the corporate parenting charter should be mandatory for those with statutory

responsibilities and public bodies, but there is no mention in the proposed changes of making it mandatory.

There also needs to be clear monitoring measurements in place, to ensure corporate parents are aware of their roles and responsibilities. We recognise there has been suggestions for reporting, but this needs to include who would be accountable for reporting e.g. who would be accountable for reporting situations that have gone well / not so well and who would be accountable for ensuring the child's voice is being heard? As we mentioned in question 7, this could be in the form of a report to the Senedd on LAs or public bodies' responsibilities. Again this would ensure that all corporate parenting or community parenting responsibilities had to be adhered to, were consistent and measurable.

We also think there should be a duty introduced for all Welsh Government departments to be corporate or "community parents" as has currently been proposed for all government bodies in England in the Children's Wellbeing Bill in Westminster. In Scotland there is also a duty on Scottish Government to be corporate parents and report on this every three years in the Scottish parliament.

There is no indication of next steps, following Senedd elections in May 2026. We would like the guidance to include a structured process of when the guidance documents and toolkits will be published and rolled out.

There is no young people's version of this consultation, and as much of the proposed changes include strengthening of the child's voice, we feel asking for young people's views on this was important. We brought the questions to our youth advisory board, and they said the language being used in this consultation is difficult to understand and that there should be a young people's version.

This consultation does not mention an extension of support for care leavers up until the age of 25, just information where they can know about support offered by local authorities, we feel this is missing

Question 10

Do you think that any of the proposals outlined in this document will have any unintended consequences? If yes, please explain.

As discussed above, we are concerned that if there is only a website setting out local authorities responsibilities for care leavers without a greater focus on supporting personal advisors to support young people to get the support they are entitled to, the online resource may replace the role of the personal advisors.

Without greater clarity around the reporting requirements and stringent monitoring for both corporate and community parents, this chapter risks becoming tokenistic, meaningless and not adhered to. We think the code could go a lot further in setting out clearer duties for corporate parents, instead of purely suggestions.