

## YOUNG PEOPLE



## Manchester City Council

### Creating the environment of a corporate family for children



Manchester City Council is underpinned by a children's rights approach in how we shape and deliver services for the children and families we serve. This has been reflected in practice is the move from a traditional Corporate Parenting Committee to a more radical child led Corporate Family Cooperative, named as such by Our Children and Care leavers to reflect their expectations and desires.

To make this a success we have created the opportunity to be a Care Consultant paid on a sessional basis, by the hour at living wage.

The Cooperative meets quarterly, with a thematic focus on one of the four outcomes we want to achieve for Our Children; Happy, Healthy, Safe and Successful. Care Consultants plan and lead the sessions and hold us to account for our impact against the priorities set by Our Children. They use a workshop style, challenging Members and Professionals to unpick the way services support (or otherwise), best outcomes on this theme. There are no observers everyone is expected to operate cooperatively to debate, agree and action the challenges to improve their experience based on what is important to them.

There are no 'minutes' from the sessions, we produce an impact report and a shorter on-a-page impact summary co-written with a Care Consultant that describes; why we met, what we have achieved since last time and what we need to do next – what will success look like. This is shared with all Our Children, Care Leavers and practitioners across the Corporate Family.

The Care Consultants have coproduced the most recent Corporate Family Cooperative strategy, which led to the adoption of the twelve expectations all children in care and care leavers have from anyone involved with them.

Impact:

There has been impact for the individuals who are Care Consultants in terms of their confidence, skills and experience and the opportunity to drive change.

Impact:

There has been the impact on the individuals who are Care Consultants in terms of their confidence, skills and experience and the opportunity to be at least equal partners in a shared enterprise to do even better for Manchester's Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

The impact on the effectiveness in Manchester of meeting our corporate parent responsibilities has been similarly significant.

In the last year Manchester's Corporate Family Cooperative has:

- Increased the leaving care grant by 50%
- Better access and take up of free gym Membership
- Created the opportunity to experience a residential outdoor activity holiday
- Coproducing and delivering Member training on corporate parenting responsibilities
- New free clothes from local retail businesses for Care Leavers including for interviews
- Co-producing and delivering children with a disability training for practitioners on how to be even better
- Secured being a Care Leaver as a protected characteristic.
- Identified the Corporate Family Cooperative as the 'family firm', including ring fencing six apprenticeships for care experienced children.
- Linked 100 children to clubs and activities they have been interested in trying.
- Coproducing a 'handbook' for foster cares on how to recognise, and respond with children in their care who may have mental health problems and self harm.
- Led a session at our social work team managers conference challenging them to understand how they can do even better in delivering services across Manchester.

The impact on the elected Members, officers, partners has also been relevant. There is a stronger understanding of what is important to children who experience our care to make it better. The corporate parenting role is active and present and embedded in upholding the rights of Our Children and the benefits of being equal partners in directing change.

In the words of a Care Consultant, Aliyah:

"The best things for me is being able to make a change for the future of children and young people in care. The biggest thing is that plans moving forward, are part of what young people themselves feel like need putting in place, it shows real meaning behind Manchester as a collective being child centred and child friendly. Don't know if it could get better than that!! x "

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