



NORTH AYRSHIRE CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT

JULY 2019

Elected Members



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Corporate Parenting Manager

Corporate Parenting Report 2019

This Corporate Parenting report has been written to let you know some of the things that have been achieved over the last year, celebrating our success and how we will continue to put care experienced children and young people's needs at the centre of everything we do.

The Scottish Government asked that we write a Corporate Parenting Plan on how we were responding to the six new duties in Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and how we were working together as Corporate Parents.

In October 2017 we published that Corporate Parenting Plan (2017-20) that sets out the high level priorities for our Care Experienced children and young people. We followed this up with an action plan to achieve the promises we made in the plan.

The Scottish Government also asked that a report on our Corporate Parenting activities was published at least once every three years. This report to the Scottish Government was published in April 2018.

Within our Corporate Parenting Plan (2017-20) we promised that we would prepare a brief annual report for Elected Members within North Ayrshire Council (as Corporate Parents) on progress and future plans. A list of Corporate Parents is found in **Appendix 1**. This report will therefore cover our activity from April 2018 to April 2019

As you will see from this report, we are making steady progress towards our overall promises and our Corporate Parenting Plan.

The core elements of our 2017-20 plan are as follows:

- The rights and views of Looked After Children and Young People will be taken into account when designing services and interventions.
- Partnership working and collaboration between Corporate Parents
- Measurable promises made to Looked After children and young people
- Actions to progress the six duties within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and its associated Statutory Guidance.

The six new duties within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 are:-

- *Be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom corporate parenting applies.*
- *Assess the needs of those children and young people for the services and support they provide.*
- *Promote the interests of those children and young people.*
- *Provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.*
- *Take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people to (i) access the opportunities it provides, and (ii) make use of services, and access support, which it provides.*
- *Take such action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to the children and young people to whom corporate parenting applies.*

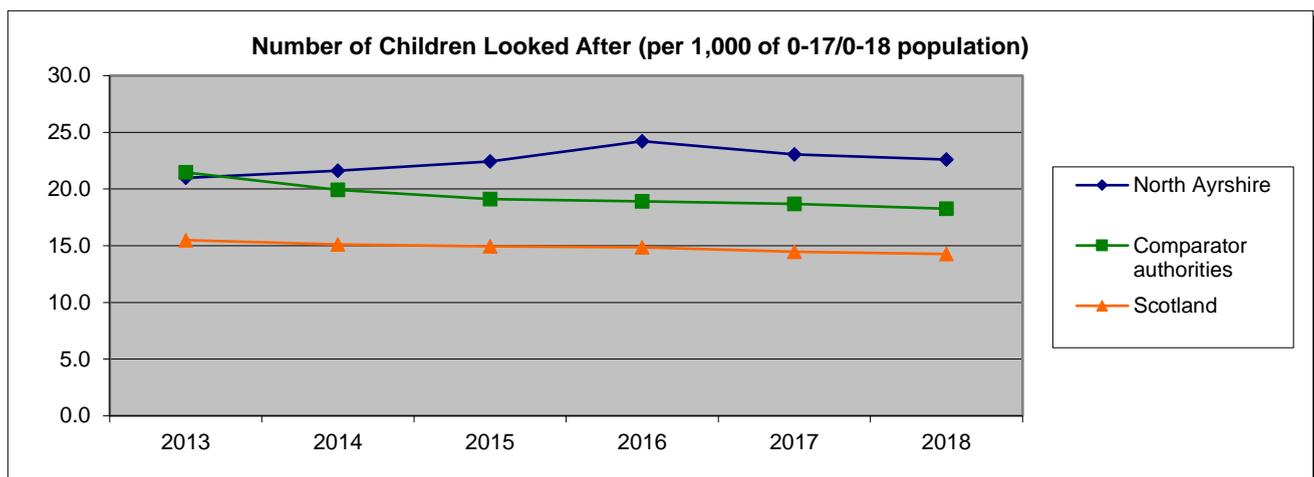
Rather than report on every element of the Corporate Parenting Plan this report will highlight some of our achievements and plans for the future but will make reference to most of the individual actions contained in the associated Action Plan.

During the writing of the Corporate Parenting Plan 2017-20 a number of other policies were also introduced by the Scottish Government. The two principle policies are ‘Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People Strategy (2015)’ and ‘The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (2016)’. Both these policies were taken into account in our Corporate Parenting Plan.

The plan has been taken forward by the Corporate Parenting Partnership and actions have been either carried out collaboratively or by a single agency with statutory duties in relation to Looked After Children and Young People.

Comparator Statistical Data till July 2018

The Statistics outlined below are the last available comparator statistics as of July 2018. The comparator authorities here are Dundee City, Inverclyde, East Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire and Comhairlie nan Eilean Siar. These are the comparator set of authorities for Looked After Children in North Ayrshire.



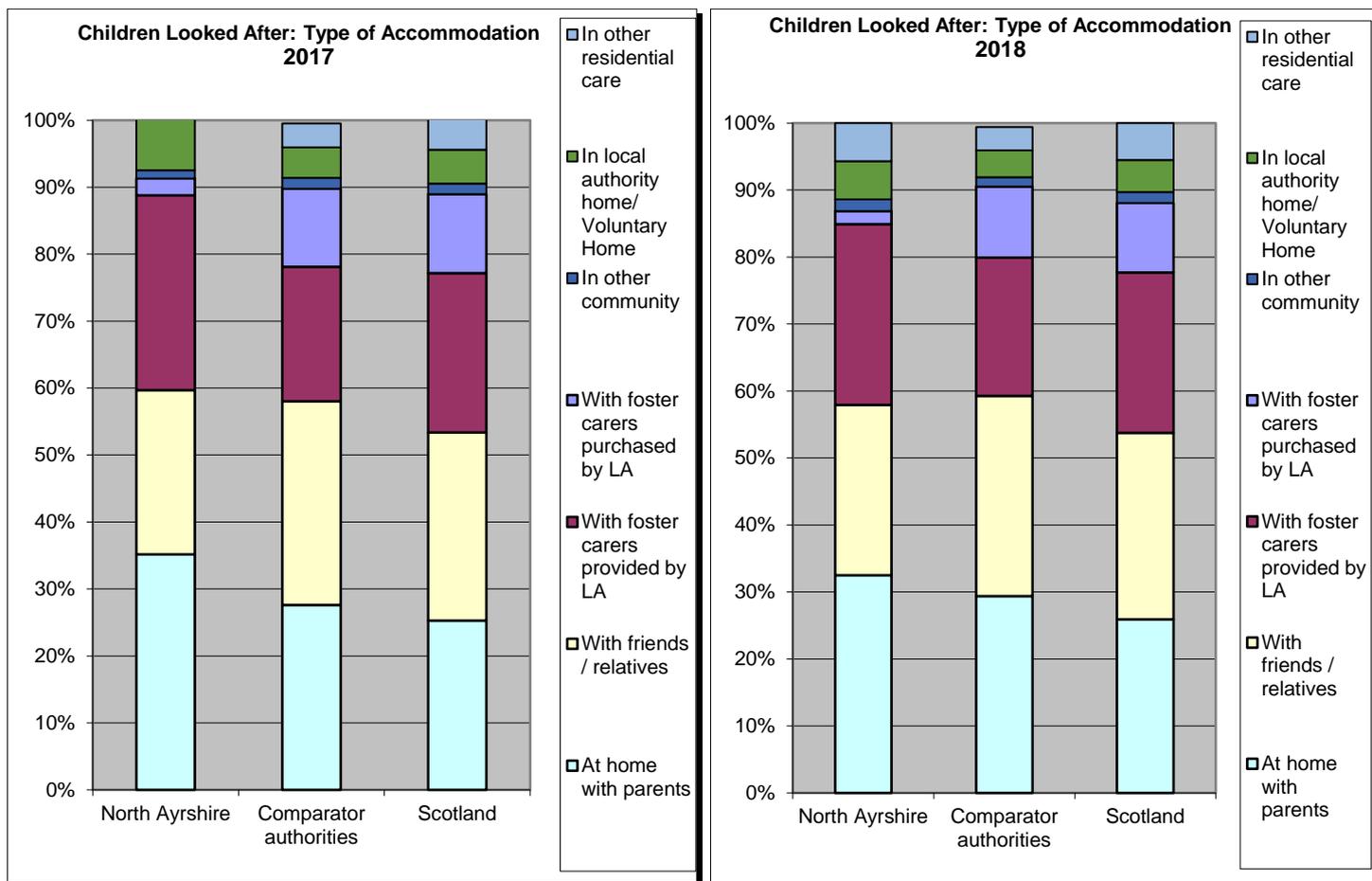
- The number of children looked after in North Ayrshire at July 2018 was 563 (a decrease of nearly 4% from 585 in 2017). The comparator authorities show a decrease of 1.8%, while Scotland figures show a decrease of 1.1%

As of July 2019 we had 562 care experienced children and young people. This is almost identical to July 2018.

- The rate (per 1,000 population) is 22.6 which is greater than the Scotland average of 14.3 and the comparator authorities of 18.3. It has been noted by the National Children’s Social Work Statistics group that, “In general, the higher the level of deprivation, the higher the proportion of children who are looked after”.

Children Looked After - By Accommodation Type

The tables below are the latest comparator figures. However, we have our own figures from July 2019 and the comments below the tables refers to both years.



On July 2018 (n=563), 33% of Looked after children in North Ayrshire were **cared for at home**. (32% on July 2019) (This is a decrease of 2% from 2017). 25% were looked after by friends or relatives in 2018 (24% on July 2019). This is the same as 2017. In 2018 27% were with foster carers provided by the local authority, again a 2% decrease from 2017. (27% also on July 2019)

This report highlights the promises we have made to children and young people in the different age groups below and work carried out to date and what we are planning to do. **The graphics in this report are a result of a Care Experienced event called 'Who am I?' and are the voices of young people.**



The core elements of our 2017-20 plan (published October 2017)

Elements	Progress	Evidence and impact
The rights and views of Looked After Children and Young People will be taken into account when designing services and interventions.		<p>We have restructured our governance arrangements to incorporate the views of care experienced young people who now have their own participation groups where they set the agenda for change.</p> <p>During the process of completing the Corporate Parenting Plan we worked with children and young people to seek their views and thoughts. This was accomplished by having groups of young people coming together from foster care, residential care, kinship and looked after at home. The groups were facilitated by operational staff. The Corporate Parenting Plan reflects some of their views and the plan quotes these children and young people throughout the document.</p>
Partnership working and collaboration between Corporate Parents		<p>We have restructured our governance arrangements (See Appendix 2) and have reviewed our Corporate Parenting Steering Group membership to ensure all relevant Corporate Parents are included. This has resulted in a closer working relationship between Corporate Parents that has given us a solid platform for increased partnership and collaborative working.</p> <p>We have appointed a Corporate Parenting Coordinator and support worker to take forward specific actions within our Corporate Parenting Action Plan. This was only made possible through close collaboration between Corporate Parenting partners.</p>
Measurable promises made to Looked After children and young people		An action Plan has been put in place with particular attention to monitoring outcomes as a driver for further improvement and change.
Actions to progress the six duties within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and its associated Statutory Guidance		Our Corporate Parenting Plan and Action Plan has been structured to address the new six duties and collaboration activities.

Early Years: 0-5 year olds

Our Vision

We want all our children before they are aged 5 to have a secure, consistent place to live where we are robustly assessing their needs and supporting their caregiver to give them the best possible start in life.

Our Promises

To make sure we can fulfil our vision we have made a number of promises to children in this age group. We have said that we will promise to: -

- **Reduce the number of moves between different carers that they will experience before they are 5 years old**
- **Help their mum and dad learn what is important in order to be a supportive and confident parent when they are looked after at home**
- **Use a tried and tested assessment framework before they are born and afterwards to make sure that they are being cared for.**
- **Look for ways to secure a permanent place for them to live, by either returning them home or securing a kinship care order, permanence order or adoption**

Our Response

- a) We have developed our Universal Early Years Teams to include Health Visitors, Early Years Social Workers, Family Nurturers, Assistant Nurse Practitioners, Health Care Support Workers, a speech and language therapist and a peri-natal Mental Health Nurse who can all respond to the needs of children and their parents.

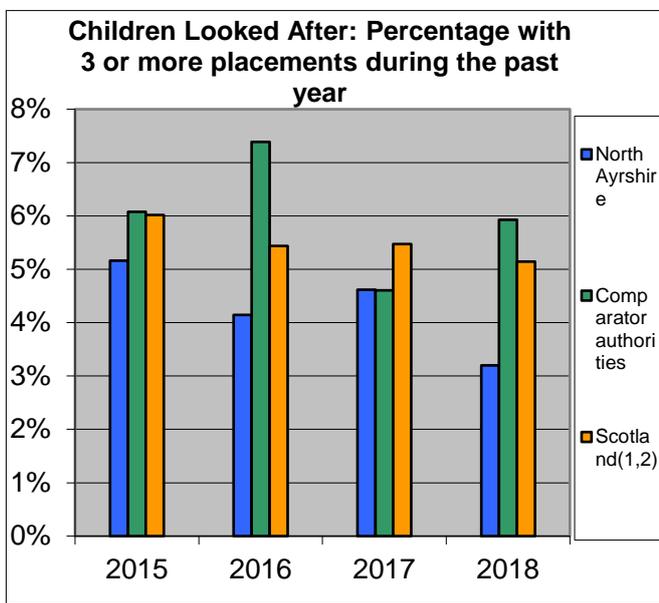
- b) All parents receive an offer of parenting and other support through the universal early years team. Any parent who is identified as needing additional support is offered this support.
- c) 100% of all expectant mothers are offered a wellbeing assessment.
- d) Even though we have not explicitly focused on 0-5 years we have over the years been working to reduce the number of unnecessary moves a child experiences (**see stats on next page**) by developing our Assessment and Plan and have developed a Kinship Care Panel.
- e) We have adopted the Universal Pathway for Health Visiting and associated assessments including initiating a wellbeing assessment.

Every Looked after child has a wellbeing assessment and a Child's Plan, focusing on wellbeing outcomes reflecting the strengths and needs of the individual child.
- f) Kinship Care – All carers are subject to a Carers assessment to ensure that the placement can meet the child or young person's needs.
- g) We have provided a 'We work for families' service to help parents who lack confidence or have low self-esteem to secure training or employment.

Next Steps

- We will increase the number completed assessments where a carer's capacity is included, and twin planning processes have been considered. This will ensure that the child's immediate and long term needs are taken into account.

- We will ensure all Early Years education and health and social care staff receive the relevant training to help them deliver the right support to parents.
- We will develop a training strategy and pathway for all 0-5 practitioners focusing on parenting.
- We will increase the numbers of relevant people attending training focusing on assessment, planning and thoughtful practice and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- We will make sure every Looked After Child will have a wellbeing assessment and a Child's Plan shared on AYRshare¹



The percentage of children or young people having 3 or more moves is substantially lower than the National average of 5% and 6% for comparator authorities. North Ayrshire 18 children with three or more moves that equates to 3%.



Not enough known of people experiencing care - COULD LEARN MORE

¹ AYRshare is an information sharing tool used by practitioners across North, South and East Ayrshire and NHS

Ayrshire and Arran to collate significant event and relevant documents.

School age: 5–18year olds

Our Vision

We want all our all children and young people in this age group to be helped to reach their potential: physically, mentally, socially and emotionally to be able to develop their skills and learning so they can realise their aspirations and goals.

Our Promises

To make sure we can fulfil our vision we have made a number of promises to children in this age group. These are:-

- **Ensure that their mental health and wellbeing are a priority**
- **Support them to be as healthy as they can be.**
- **Support them to achieve their potential**
- **Help them to develop skills for life, learning and work**

In addition North Ayrshire Council has made promises to: -

- Encourage professionals who work with care experienced children and young people to use language and behaviours that are more suited to a family setting.
- Review the practice of removing children and young people from school with the aim of ceasing this practice at the earliest opportunity.
- Encourage and support new prospective foster carers, especially those who currently live in housing that cannot accommodate children, to ensure they meet the requirement of becoming a North Ayrshire foster carer.

Our Response

a) We have invested in school counsellors in our secondary schools that is accessible to all children and young people. The number of schools offering nurturing support is up to 29 (20 Primary and 9 Secondary with associated counselling services).

b) We have trained a number of professionals from Health, Education and Social Services in Mental Health First Aid.

c) We have put in place a Health Data working group that will look at developing an even more robust Health assessment when children are first looked after and when they have Health needs at any time.

d) Each school has a Looked After Child coordinator who works with the child to identify and progress their needs working alongside partners.

e) We have appointed a Corporate Parenting Coordinator who is taking forward a Family firm model.²

f) We have secured free KA Leisure cards (all ages) for any Care Experienced child or young person who wants one.

g) We have enhanced the wifi in our residential houses so that children and young people can access the educational resources that we have provided.

² The Family Firm policy was introduced by the Scottish Government in to encourage Corporate Parents and other partners to provide training, employment or skills

development opportunities to Care experienced young people

h) We have provided laptops to those children and young people in our residential houses who require one for their studies.

i) We have developed a multi-disciplinary team of Health and Social Care staff within schools to support Care experienced children and young people.

j) Participation – We have facilitated a Champions Board who views are feed into our Steering Group³

j) We have delivered Nurture training to all our residential staff and have started this training for Foster Carers to reduce placement disruption.

k) Individual attendance of Care Experienced pupils is accessed and monitored by each individual school, using bespoke reports on their management information system for pupils falling below 90% and/or below 85% and 80% attendance.

l) MCR Pathways has been commissioned to provide mentoring in two schools and we will work alongside them to look at other development opportunities.

Next Steps

- We will continue to increase the number of trained personnel in mental health first aid and the number of schools providing nurturing support
- We will continue to increase the number of looked after children receiving support at a Nurture Base returning to full time main stream schooling.
- We will continue to increase the number of formal offers of health assessments within 28 days of health services being notified a child has become looked after

³ The North Ayrshire Champions Board consist of Care Experienced young people between 14 to 21 who represent the voice of their care experienced community

- We will continue to increase the number of children or young people receiving assistance to access sports, leisure or cultural activities
- We will continue to work towards increasing the level of attainment for all Care experienced children and young people.
- We will continue to ensure schools and colleges work to continue to improve attendance and reduce exclusions in order to increase levels of participation
- We will work towards increasing the percentage of young people moving on to a positive post-school destination
- We will increase numbers of care experienced Young People being offered work experience and modern apprenticeships.
- We will have an Action plan for the commitments in the Care Leavers covenant that will be progressed and reported on annually.
- We will ensure that the 'Family Firm' policy is fully implemented with regular evaluation of activities



and are supported by staff members to affect change and policy development.

Young Adults: 18-26 year olds

Our Vision

We want all our all young adults in this age group to have access to opportunities that increase their self-esteem, access to opportunities for personal development and become more independent.

Our Promises

To make sure we can fulfil our vision we have made a number of promises to children in this age group. We have said that we will promise to: -

- **Provide access to opportunities that value them as individuals and their aspirations.**
- **Listen and seek to understand the issues which affect their mental health, giving them the right support when they need it.**
- **Support them to gain skills for life and to access meaningful opportunities for further education, training and work**
- **Help them to become more independent and have a home of their own.**

Our Response

a) North Ayrshire council have agreed to increase the number of ring-fenced Modern Apprenticeship opportunities and work has commenced with Ayrshire and Arran NHS.

b) We have agreed that the granting of a Care Experienced bursary for further education should not affect Housing benefits

c) We have agreed that Care Leavers should be exempt from Council Tax

d) We have set up an Employability and skills sub group that have developed processes and pathways to assist Care Experienced young people into employment, training and skills development.

e) We have extended the number of ring fenced Modern apprentice placements to ten and will offer work placements to help young people transition into these if appropriate.

f) Each of the 3 Ayrshire colleges have an identified member of staff who will support care leavers with any issues that arise whilst they are at college.

g) We have worked with Ayrshire College on a Care Leavers Event and our Throughcare Team have been working with Ayrshire College to identify opportunities for young people and to support them through transitions.

h) We have implemented and support a North Ayrshire Champions Board that feeds directly into the Corporate Parenting Steering Group

Next Steps

- We will increase suitable housing which meets their needs in communities of their choice
- We will increase in the number of young care leavers supported by Money Matters
- Provide help to access to health professionals who'll help assess their health needs when a particular health need is identified

- Provide support and advice to those eligible for Aftercare services.
- We will increase the number of young adults with care experience that are connected with a significant adult who can support them into a positive destination.
- Increase in the number of young adults in employment or moving towards employment through other relevant training
- We will look to extend the housing protocol to all care leavers, not just those who were still accommodated on their sixteenth birthday
- We will offer you financial support to reduce financial pressures when entering employment and having to make payments for rent and council tax

Reform
Care System



Misunderstanding
of care
experience

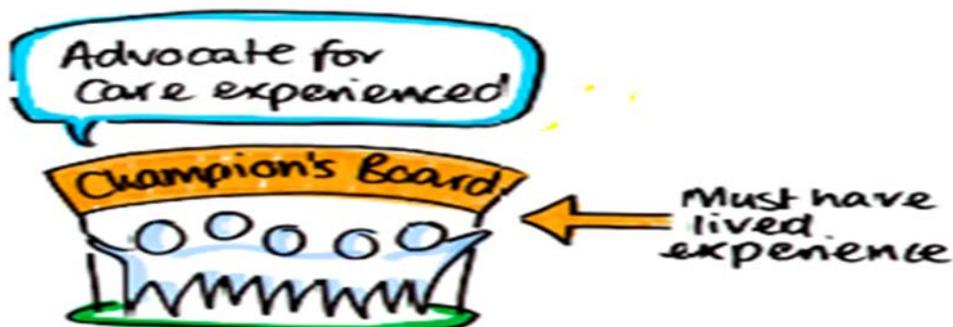


General

As well as the promises outlined above there has been other activity that spans all the age groups and are either associated with the management of the Corporate Parenting Plan or the wider engagement with Care Experienced Young People

Activity

- We held a very successful Peer research event in March around behaviours, stigma and language. This was facilitated by Care experienced young people and Modern Apprentices.
- In the spirit of the Family Firm policy and to lead by example we have appointed a Corporate Parenting Support worker and a Modern apprentice within the Corporate Parenting Team who are both Care Experienced
- We will be having an evaluation workshop in September using 'How good is our corporate parenting? How good can we be?' to further assess our performance and help us to further develop our plans
- We have set up a separate Corporate Parenting Continuing and Aftercare Group who are now at the stage of implementing our Continuing Care policy.



Appendix 1 – Corporate Parents

CORPORATE PARENTS

- 1 The Scottish Ministers
- 2 A local authority
- 3 The National Convener of Children’s Hearings Scotland
- 4 Children’s Hearings Scotland
- 5 The Principal Reporter
- 6 The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration
- 7 A health board
- 8 A board constituted under section 2(1)(b) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978
- 9 Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- 10 The Scottish Qualifications Authority
- 11 Skills Development Scotland Co. Ltd (registered number SC 202659)
- 12 Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland
- 13 The Scottish Social Services Council
- 14 The Scottish Sports Council
- 15 The chief constable of the Police Service of Scotland
- 16 The Scottish Police Authority
- 17 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- 18 The Scottish Legal Aid Board
- 19 The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland
- 20 The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
- 21 The Scottish Housing Regulator
- 22 Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- 23 Creative Scotland
- 24 A body which is a “post-16 education body” for the purposes of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2014.

Appendix 2 – Corporate Parenting Governance Structure

