

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1 October 2026

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2025 - 2026

Report from: Dr Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive

Author: Nicoleta Stangu, Head of Service Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice

Summary

The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) Annual Report 2025-26 provides an overview of how Medway Council and its partners have fulfilled their corporate parenting responsibilities during the year and the progress made in improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The report highlights achievements in permanence, placement stability, education, health and participation whilst recognising the growing complexity of need and increasing demand across the care system.

The report also outlines the strategic priorities for 2026-27 and demonstrates how Medway is responding to national children's social care reforms, strengthening partnership working and ensuring that the voices of children and young people continue to inform service development and decision-making.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of the CPB Annual Report 2025-2026 and the progress made in delivering the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025-2027.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1 Corporate parenting is a statutory responsibility under the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Council must have regard to the corporate parenting principles when exercising functions in relation to children in care and care leavers. The Annual Report provides assurance regarding how these responsibilities are being discharged across the Council and wider partnership.

- 2.2 The report aligns with the Council Plan priorities relating to delivering quality social care and community services, improving health and wellbeing, supporting educational achievement and enabling children and young people to realise their potential. It also supports the ambitions within Medway's People Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan.
- 2.3 The report has no direct financial implications; however, effective corporate parenting contributes to reducing future demand across children's services, housing, health, education and community safety services through improved outcomes and reduced long-term dependency on public services.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Board provides strategic oversight of services and outcomes for children in care and care leavers, ensuring that the Council and its partners fulfil their responsibilities as corporate parents. During 2025-26 the Board continued to oversee delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025-2027 and monitored progress across the five priority areas of safety and permanence, preparation for adulthood, health and wellbeing, education and participation.
- 3.2 The year has also seen significant developments nationally through implementation of children's social care reforms and the Children's Wellbeing and School bill. These reforms place greater expectations on local authorities and partners to improve permanence, strengthen support for care leavers and deliver a more integrated and preventative approach to supporting vulnerable children and young people.

4. Options

- 4.1 Note the Annual Report and recognise the progress achieved during 2025-26 whilst supporting the strategic priorities identified for 2026-27.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1 Throughout 2025-26, the Corporate Parenting Board continued to provide effective strategic oversight of services for children in care and care leavers. Evidence contained within the Annual Report demonstrates positive progress across several key outcome areas including permanence, placement stability, education participation, care leaver accommodation and young people's engagement in decision making.
- 5.2 The Board has maintained a strong focus on ensuring that children and young people influence service development through co-production and participation, while also responding to emerging challenges associated with increasing demand, placement sufficiency, health inequalities and transition to adulthood.

5.3 The Annual Report demonstrates that Medway is well positioned to respond to national reforms and continue improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers through strong partnership working, effective governance and a clear focus on the experiences of children and young people.

5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment is not required as the report is presented for information and does not propose changes to policy or service delivery.

6. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Increasing demand for care and complexity of need	Growth in the number of children in care and increasing complexity of need place pressure on children's services, health, education and placement sufficiency.	Delivery of Corporate Parenting Strategy, sufficiency planning, strengthened permanence arrangements and partnership oversight.	B2
National children's social care reform	Failure to effectively implement national reforms may impact outcomes for children and care leavers and create financial and operational pressures.	Supporting Care Leavers Workstream, partnership governance and reform implementation planning.	B3
Placement sufficiency and permanence	Insufficient local placements and delays in achieving permanence could impact stability and outcomes for children.	Fostering recruitment, kinship programme and development of local provision.	B2
Care leaver accommodation and transition to adulthood	Housing pressures and increasing numbers of care leavers may impact successful transitions to independence.	Housing Advisor, Joint Housing Protocol, Staying Put and Staying Close developments.	B3

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	1 Critical 2 Major 3 Moderate 4 Minor

7. Consultation

7.1 The Corporate Parenting Board receives regular feedback from children in care and care leavers through the Medway Children and Young People's Council, annual surveys, participation events, Young Inspectors Programme and direct

engagement activity. This feedback has informed both the Annual Report and the priorities identified for 2026-27.

8. Climate change implications

- 8.1 There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

9. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) implications

- 9.1. Following the announcement of the pause on 7 September 2026, officers will monitor the ongoing situation and will consider any relevant impacts as they arise.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

11. Legal implications

- 11.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Lead officer contact

Dr Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive,
leeanne.farach@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2025-26

Background papers

None