

## **Corporate Parenting in Southwark Motion submitted to Council Assembly - 11 July 2018**

**Proposer:** Cllr Kath Whittam

**Seconder:** Cllr Jasmine Ali

This motion seeks to build on the good work that Southwark is doing with children in our care and young people leaving care. Last year we received a good rating from Ofsted, secured innovation funding to enable young people in care to reconfigure our care leaving services, and waived council tax fees for all care leavers.

This year, in our forward plan, we have guaranteed an education placement or apprenticeship for all children and young people preparing to leave care.

### **Background**

At the same time we have witnessed a national scrutiny spotlight being put on children's social care. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has released updated statutory guidance to improve corporate parenting. This was followed by the launch of the Education Committee's scrutiny of foster care which was in turn swiftly followed by the release of government commissioned Foster Care in England Inquiry authored by Martin Narey and Mark Owers.

The Government's response to the scrutiny reports has yet to be released – but we can anticipate a shift to improve services along the lines of permanence as opposed to fragmented responses to families requiring care services into adoption, SGOs and foster care.

At the same time the LGA and the ADCS have launched its Brighter Future campaign which has exposed a £2 billion deficit in children's social care. In Southwark we hosted the launch of a suite of reports entitled Care Crisis.

### **Individual Councillors as Corporate Parents**

The role that this council plays in looking after children is one of the most important things that we do. Just like all other local authorities, we have a unique responsibility to the children that we look after. It is in this context that local authorities are referred to as the 'corporate parent' of these children and young people, and the critical question that we should ask in adopting such an approach is 'would this be good enough for my child?'

- Council assembly recognises that children in care are more likely to succeed in education or employment if someone is interested in their progress.
- Council assembly will build on its strong ethos of corporate parenting by inviting **all** councillors to participate in this role, not only those on the Corporate Parenting Committee
- Council assembly calls on Cabinet to develop a scheme to engage councillors with looked after children, including monitoring their progress and encouraging written contact in the form of cards to acknowledge birthdays, faith festival dates and dates of exams, results of exams and education or job interview results
- Council assembly encourages councillors to volunteer to be a part of this initiative, recognising that this is a serious commitment to a potentially vulnerable child.