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Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

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

February 2026

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

Overview

This document provides a summary of responses to the Welsh Government's public consultation between 4 August and 27 October 2025 seeking views on proposed changes to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014-part 6 code of practice (looked after and accommodated children). This includes proposals for a new corporate parenting chapter within the Code.

Action Required

This document is for information only.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Contact details

For further information:

Improving Outcomes for Children
Social Services and Chief Social Care Officer
Health, Social Care and Early Years
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Email: corporateparenting@gov.wales

Additional copies

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

Link to the consultation documentation: [hyperlink](#)

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Section 1

1.1 Overview

This consultation sought views on the proposed changes to the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014 part 6 code of practice \(looked after and accommodated children\)](#) including:

- a dedicated corporate parenting chapter which provides guidance for local authorities to support their role as corporate parents
- strengthening the importance of the voice of the child specifically within the care and support planning and placements chapters of the code
- strengthened guidance on the undertaking of moves and review meetings
- an update on terminology and legislation since the last update of the code which took place in April 2018

A full review of the code of practice will take place early in the next Senedd term (post May 2026).

1.2 Introduction

The consultation sought views on the first phase of a review of the code.

The main activity of this review is the inclusion of a new dedicated section on corporate parenting and strengthening the importance of the voice of children and young people. It will also review terminology throughout the code which will require updating since the last review in 2018.

The first phase will also include updates in relation to fostering, adoption and kinship care. A separate consultation has been undertaken on these aspects as they are linked to regulations. The final version of the code will integrate the changes of both consultations into a single updated code of practice which will be laid before the Senedd.

The second phase of the review of the code will take place in the next Senedd term and will include updates around different parts of the code such as care leavers.

1.3 Background

The code is issued under [section 145 of the Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) ("the act"). The code was last updated and reissued in April 2018.

The code contains guidance on the exercise of a local authority's responsibilities under the Act for:

- care and support plans in relation to looked after children and young people, including education and health
- the ways in which looked after children are to be accommodated and maintained, including placements of looked after children

- contact and visits to looked after and previously looked after children, including independent visitors
- arrangements for leaving care, personal advisers, pathway plans and assessments, suitable accommodation and support for higher education
- secure accommodation
- children accommodated in other types of establishments (by health and education authorities, or in care homes or independent hospitals).

1.4 Proposed changes to the Code and consultation questions

The consultation page set out proposed changes to the Code and consultation questions. A link to the webpage is below –

[Consultation on corporate parenting: part 6 code of practice on looked after and accommodated children \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

1.5 This consultation

A 12-week consultation was undertaken between 4 August and 27 October 2025. We invited respondents to submit their views via the online form, by email or post. Notification of the consultation was sent via email to a range of stakeholders with an interest in the proposals.

The consultation was also highlighted through social media during the consultation period.

1.6 Consultation Responses

The Welsh Government received 28 responses to this consultation. The organisations that responded (and did not specify they wished to remain anonymous) are listed below:

- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Cardiff Council
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) on behalf of its Young Commissioners Group
- Children in Wales
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Cwm Taff Morganwg
- Estyn
- Flintshire County Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

- National Adoption Service for Wales and Foster Wales
- Newport City Council
- NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) Cymru
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Corporate Parenting Board
- Rhondda Cynon Taf Virtual School
- Swansea Council
- TGP Cymru
- The Fostering Network
- Torfaen County Borough Council, Children and Family Service
- Vale of Glamorgan County Council
- Welsh Local Government Association

Section 2- Summary of responses received

2.1 Chapter 2 – Placements

Question 1: 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?

Summary of consultation responses

There were 28 responses to this question. 18 responses of yes, two of no and eight others.

Key theme/s

- Strong support for strengthening the voice of the child.
- Need for clarity on roles and responsibilities.

Comments

- Concerns about resources and capacity.
- Importance of bilingual communication and advocacy.
- Difficult to fully respond without seeing the changes within the full draft code of practice.

Recommendations

- Provide clear guidance and definitions.
- Ensure adequate resources and training.
- Embed voice of the child in all processes.
- Maintain bilingual accessibility and advocacy support

2.2 What is corporate parenting?

Question 2: What are your views on the term “community parenting”?

Summary of consultation responses

They were 28 responses to this question. From responses there was clear support for the term from 10 respondents. There were mixed views from 8 respondents and concerns and opposition from 10 respondents.

Key theme/s

The main positive theme was around “Positive Framing”, in relation to the term community parenting. It was seen by some respondents as:

- Inclusive and aligned with the concept “it takes a village”.
- Encourages wider community involvement beyond statutory bodies.
- Favoured by some youth advisory boards for sounding less bureaucratic.

Comments

- Potential confusion around clarity and accountability
- Risk of blurring statutory vs non-statutory responsibilities,
- Fear of diluting legal accountability of corporate parents and potential for tokenistic use without clear guidance.
- Some respondents highlighted the need for clear definitions and others requested explicit definitions and boundaries. Suggested alternatives to “Community Parenting” included Collaborative Parenting, Corporate Parenting Network and Community Support.

Other practical considerations and comments raised by respondents included:

- Questions about resources, roles, and expectations for community partners.
- Calls for wider consultation with care-experienced young people before adopting terminology.
- Language and Perception
- Corporate parenting seen as formal and bureaucratic; community parenting perceived as more relational.
- Confusion across agencies if multiple terms are used.

Recommendations

- Define roles and responsibilities clearly to avoid confusion.
- Retain corporate parenting for statutory duties, use community parenting for non-statutory partners with clear guidance.
- Consult care-experienced young people on terminology and framing.
- Develop accountability mechanisms for community partners (e.g., reporting frameworks).
- Provide training and resources to support implementation,

2.3 Corporate parenting delivery including voice of the child

Question 3: What are your views on the proposals in this section of the chapter on corporate parenting panels or groups?

Summary of consultation responses

There were 28 responses to Question 3 on corporate parenting panels/groups.

Key theme/s

Overall, there was strong support for corporate parenting panels, with emphasis on guidance, inclusivity, and meaningful engagement of children and young people.

Comments

Risks highlighted in responses included:

- Over-reliance on panels.
- Lack of mandatory requirement.
- Narrow definition of corporate parenting.

Recommendations

- Develop national guidance and toolkit.
- Ensure panels are inclusive and child-led.
- Mandate transparent reporting and feedback loops.
- Provide alternative engagement methods.
- Clarify scope to include all care-experienced children

2.4 Corporate parent's role in providing information when leaving care

Question 4: What are your views on the proposals for this section of the chapter? Is there anything missing?

Summary of consultation responses

There were 28 responses with some marked as "No response" or "N/A".

Key theme/s

The analysis of responses to Question 4 reveals strong overall support for proposals aimed at improving the accessibility and consistency of information for care leavers.

Comments

- Responses emphasised local relevance.
- Avoiding duplication with existing resources.
- Potential digital exclusion for those without smartphones or internet.
- Consideration for neurodivergent children, ALN, and language barrier was also highlighted, with the the risk of double disadvantage for Welsh-medium ALN learners

Recommendations

- Develop national guidance.
- Develop a national online resource (webpage/app) with local customization.
- Ensure multi-format accessibility (easy-read, audio, video, Welsh language).
- Maintain and strengthen role of personal advisors alongside digital tools.
- Mandate young people's involvement in design and review of resources.
- Introduce clear accountability measures for corporate parenting duties.
- Extend statutory support for care leavers to age 25.
- Provide guidance for multi-agency collaboration and define benchmarks for good practice.
- Calls for guidance on how other services (health, housing, police, DWP) act as corporate parents.
- Suggestion to replace "reasonably practicable" with "best interests of the child".

2.5 Corporate parent's role in providing information when leaving care

Question 5: Do you think this information would be better located on a national or local platform? Please explain.

Summary of consultation responses

The majority of respondents advocate a hybrid approach with both national and local platforms, linked together. Very few prefer local only, citing differences between authorities and risk of unrealistic expectations.

Key theme/s

Hybrid approach

The hybrid approach is seen as best for clarity, accessibility and relevance with clear signposting needed between both platforms.

National Platform

The key reasons respondents gave for favouring a national platform are set out below:

- Consistency across Wales, shared standards and accountability.
- Shared costs for translation and accessibility.
- Benchmarking and good practice sharing.
- Support for care leavers who move between authorities.
- Central monitoring and accountability.

Local platform

The main reasons respondents provided for favouring a local platform are highlighted below.

- Tailored to local needs and services.
- Direct engagement with local partners.
- Practical, immediate support in the community.

Comments

Concerns about who will be responsible for updating the information and ensuring there is clarity around ensuring information is current - both nationally and locally.

Recommendations

- The platform must be accessible; child-friendly, plain English, multi-language, and available offline.
- To help ensure robust there was a suggestion for an independent host for trust and oversight.

- There must be young people involvement with design and content co-produced with care-experienced young people.
- National landing page with local authority links.
- App-based solutions (with automatic updates if moving areas).
- Integration with existing platforms (e.g., Safeguarding Procedures App).
- National compendium of good practice for benchmarking.

2.6 Corporate parenting reporting

Question 6: What do you think would be the most effective way of measuring progress in relation to corporate parenting?

Summary of consultation responses

There was a mixture of suggestions for how progress can be measured, including quantitative and qualitative measures, which meant there was not one clear option to progress. In addition some felt these should be developed locally and some felt they should be national.

Key theme/s

Responses provided a range of suggestions about how progress can best be measured.

Concerns/comments

- A need for clarity on mandatory vs. suggested measures.
- Concerns about duplication with existing frameworks.
- Need for guidance on trauma-informed practice and psychological safety.

Recommendations.

- Develop a national performance framework combining:
 - Quantitative KPIs (placement stability, education, health).
 - Qualitative feedback (surveys, panels, case studies).
- Introduce mandatory reporting cycles (annual + six-monthly updates).
- Create a national data dashboard for benchmarking.
- Establish a community of practice and good practice compendium.
- Ensure child and young person participation is embedded in all reporting.
- Align measures with health and education datasets for consistency.
- Consider public transparency mechanisms (published reports, quality marks).

2.7 Section 3: chapter 4

Question 7: Do you agree with the proposed additions and amendments to these sections of the code?

Summary of consultation responses

The majority agreed with the proposed changes, those who answered did not cite concerns about wording or clarity of aims. There was an emphasis on listening to wishes and feelings of children and young people and ensuring they influence decisions.

Key theme/s

- Strong support for child participation as the key aim of reviews.
- Broad agreement to strengthen Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) responsibilities:
 - Prioritise child's voice.
 - Provide clear explanations for changes.
 - Build relationships with children.

Comments

- Reviewing the child's plan and outcomes should remain central, alongside participation.
- Concerns about scope creep; questions about whether IROs should monitor managerial supervision.
- Children looked after being recognised as having protected characteristics.
- Risk of additional pressure on teams due to increased expectations.

Recommendations

- Need for clear national guidance and resources to support implementation.
- Suggestions for advocacy services and young people chairing their own reviews.
- Support for updating terminology from "special educational needs" to "additional learning needs".
- Advocacy should be actively offered and recorded.
- Consider independent employment of IROs for greater impartiality.
- Strengthen language to ensure meaningful consideration of child's views.
- Clarity on purpose of review. Some respondents worry that participation could overshadow the legal purpose of reviewing the care plan and outcomes.
- To minimise implementation burden there is a need for streamlined processes and resources.
- Use "a key aim" rather than "the key aim" to balance participation with outcome Review.
- Provide national guidance on:

- Trauma-informed practice.
- Advocacy integration.
- IRO responsibilities and boundaries.
- Ensure resources and training for IROs and staff.
- Embed child voice mechanisms (advocacy, pre-meeting contact, participation options).
- Align with UNCRC and include health and wellbeing indicators.

2.8 Section 4: additional questions

Question 8: 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.

Summary of consultation responses

There was high engagement to this question, and many respondents used this space to raise additional issues. There was a strong message of the challenges of commenting without seeing the full draft code of practice and those responding would like the opportunity to comment on the full draft before it is published.

Key theme/s

Themes covered in responses spanned education, advocacy, corporate parenting scope, health, and implementation clarity.

Comments

- There were concerns about the potential implementation burden and the need for resources and clarity was highlighted.
- Some respondents were concerned about transparency and wanted visibility of proposed changes.
- There were comments supporting national standards and use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure consistency.
- Strong emphasis on strengthening advocacy services.
- Concern about narrow definition of corporate parenting in the Code.

. Recommendations

- Strengthen guidance on school exclusions and monitoring of independent school placements.
- Make advocacy provision mandatory in residential settings; embed opt-out approach.
- Incorporate Charter principles into Code; extend duties to Health Boards.
- Publish full draft Code early; provide roadmap for reforms and Code revisions.
- Introduce mandatory health checks pre/post placement; align monitoring with NHS digital initiatives/national health datasets.

- Develop national Key Performance Indicators for transparency and benchmarking and publish local authority performance data. (These could include panel attendance, delivery of commitments, participation of care-experienced young people and outcomes in health, education, wellbeing).
- Explore protected characteristic status for care-experienced individuals.
- Calls for child participation as a key aim and pre-meeting contact by IROs to build trust.
- Need to firm up corporate parent responsibilities with partners signing corporate parent charter producing data about their offer of opportunities to children who are looked after and care leavers.
- Avoid duplication and unintended consequences.
- Minimise the risks of frequent placement moves and out-of-area placements.
- Need for respectful handling of belongings (no bin bags).

2.9 Unintended consequences

Question 9: Do you think that any of the proposals outlined in this document will have any unintended consequences? If so, please explain.

Summary of consultation responses Most respondents do not foresee unintended consequences.

Key theme/s

Some responses highlighted risks related to resources, clarity of roles, terminology, and accountability

Comments

- Increased child participation and advocacy will require more staff time, training, and funding.
- Without additional resources, changes risk becoming tokenistic or inconsistent.
- Health services may face increased demand, requiring investment and workforce planning.
- Concerns that corporate parenting responsibilities could continue to be perceived as a Children's Services responsibility rather than a whole-LA and multi-agency responsibility.
- Calls for clear frameworks and guidance to define responsibilities and avoid duplication of governance structures.
- Increased expectations for participation and reporting could place additional pressure on stretched teams.
- Risk of tick-box approaches if participation is not properly resourced.
- Need for quality assurance in advocacy services and clarity on how voice of the child will be embedded.
- Concern that online resources might replace personal advisors rather than complement them.
- A highlighting of risk of adopting a narrow definition of corporate parenting inconsistent with previous Welsh Government work.

- Introduction of new terms like “community parenting” may confuse stakeholders and young people and potentially dilute statutory responsibilities if not clearly explained.

Recommendations

- Provide clear national guidance on:
 - Roles and responsibilities for corporate and community parenting.
 - Implementation expectations and resource requirements.
- Secure additional funding and training to support participation, advocacy, and trauma-informed practice.
- Communicate terminology clearly to avoid confusion and dilution of statutory duties.
- Plan for increased service demand, especially in health and advocacy.
- Embed accountability mechanisms and avoid tokenistic approaches.
- Publish impact assessments and ensure co-production with young people.
- A call for:
 - Cross-party commitment post-2026 elections.
 - Equalities and Children’s Rights Impact Assessments.
- Co-creation of the full draft with stakeholders and young people

2.10 Impact on groups of people

Question 10: What are your views on the likely impact of the proposed changes to part 6 code of practice (corporate parenting) on groups of people, particularly those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010? What effects do you think there would be?

Summary of consultation responses

The responses received were predominantly positive. Most respondents believe the proposed changes will have a positive impact and several responses state they do not anticipate any negative effects.

Some responses highlight that benefits do however depend on robust implementation, clear guidance, and accountability.

Key theme/s

Themes included recognition of care experience as a protected characteristic, voice of the child, inclusivity and equality, implementation challenges, intersectionality,

Comments

- Strong emphasis on improving participation and ensuring children's voices are heard, especially those with communication needs.
- Positive impact expected for children with disabilities, LGBTQ+ identities, minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Some implementation challenges and risks include lack of partner engagement, administrative burden, and insufficient funding.
- The issue of intersectionality was highlighted with some groups e.g., asylum-seeking children, pregnant care-experienced young women with compounded disadvantages.
- Potential to reduce inequalities across education, health, housing.

Recommendations

- Respondents advocate treating care experience as a formal protected characteristic.
- Calls for accessible communication, culturally competent services, and equal access to participation methods.
- Training, monitoring, and clear frameworks for corporate parenting panels.
- There should be clear guidance and inclusion of third-sector organisations.
- There were suggestions for stronger oversight, inclusion of third-sector partners, robust equality impact assessments/children's rights impact assessments and monitoring of outcomes.

2.11 Effects on the Welsh Language

Question 11: We would like to know your views on the effects proposed changes to part 6 code of practice (corporate parenting) would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Summary of consultation responses

Most respondents believe the proposed changes will have minimal or positive impact on the Welsh language. Several responses state there are no adverse implications and many see this as a chance to promote bilingual services and strengthen Welsh language use.

Key theme/s

Key themes to emerge from responses were commitment to bilingualism, active offer and equal access, highlighting of some practical challenges, opportunities to make a positive impact were noted and some replies emphasised alignment with wider legislative framework and policy direction.

Comments

- Responses highlight the importance of the Active Offer and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.
- Challenges of recruitment of Welsh-speaking staff and consistency in Welsh-medium provision for ALN.
- Responses also highlight relevant legal and policy alignment with references to Welsh Language Standards, UNCRC Article 30, and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Recommendations

- Ensure bilingual provision for all documentation, meetings, and engagement forums.
- Strengthen guidance to include Welsh language considerations explicitly.
- Monitor impact on Welsh-medium learners, especially those with ALN.
- Invest in workforce development to address shortage of Welsh-speaking staff.
- Publish accessible versions of guidance for children and young people in both languages.
- In respect of opportunities for positive impact arising from the proposals suggestions include:
 - Recording linguistic preference in PEPs.
 - Publishing child-friendly versions of guidance in Welsh.
 - Monitoring Welsh-medium provision for care-experienced children.

2.12 Overview of consultation responses

Key themes emerging

- **Voice of the Child:** Strong support for strengthening participation, but concerns about tokenism and need for practical guidance.
- **Community Parenting Term:** Mixed views—some see it as inclusive, others fear confusion or dilution of statutory duties.
- **Corporate Parenting Panels:** Broad support, but calls for flexibility and clarity on membership, accountability, and feedback loops.
- **Information for Care Leavers:** Most favour a **hybrid approach** (national + local platforms), with emphasis on accessibility and bilingual resources.
- **Measuring Progress:** Consensus on combining **quantitative data** (KPIs, placement stability, education outcomes) with **qualitative feedback** (surveys, lived experience).
- **Equality & Welsh Language:** Generally positive impact expected, but need for bilingual resources and attention to ALN/Welsh-medium provision.
- **Unintended Consequences:** Risks identified include resource pressures, confusion over roles, and unrealistic expectations without funding.

Key Takeaways

- **Broad Support** for strengthening voice of the child and corporate parenting panels.
- **Terminology Debate:** “Community Parenting” seen as inclusive by some, confusing by others.
- **Information Platforms:** Hybrid approach (national + local) preferred for consistency and relevance.
- **Measurement:** Need for combined quantitative KPIs and qualitative feedback.
- **Risks:** Resource strain, unclear accountability, and potential tokenism if not implemented well.
- **Concern:** difficult to fully respond without seeing the changes in the full draft of the code of practice.

Welsh Government Response

The overall response to the proposals was positive and welcomed the changes but many responses commented they could not fully respond as the proposals were not set in the full code of practice. As a result, Welsh Government intends to publish a second consultation on the full draft code of practice. This will enable those who responded to see the context and full wording within the code.

The feedback from the initial consultation on the proposed changes has been taken into account in the changes made to the draft code of practice which will be published for consultation. These include:

- adding a section on corporate parenting to the first chapter of the code of practice so it is presented as an overarching responsibility relating to the full code and not seen as separate;
- Including a recommendation Corporate Parenting Panels/Boards are established in local authorities;
- a requirement to ensure children looked after have online access information about their rights and entitlements at a national and local level;
- Ensuring the voice of the child is integrated throughout their care and support;
- Ensuring the voice of the child and young person is integral to Corporate Parenting Strategies, Boards/Panels;
- Updated the sections on placement moves and personal education plans as set out in the consultation.

In addition, feedback and recommendations will be pursued separately from the code of practice as they will relate more widely to other agencies who do not have statutory duties as corporate parents but offer wider support to children looked after and care leavers. We will continue to work with all sectors under the Corporate Parenting Charter to make this progress, particularly around suggestions for forums to share good practice and support organisations who sign up to the Charter to develop and implement their pledges.