



Corporate Parenting Panel

Date **Friday 26 February 2021**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **This meeting will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams**

Business

Part A

Items which are open to the press and public

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2020
(Pages 3 - 10)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Number of Looked After Children - Verbal update from Head of Children's Social Care
6. Update on Residential Children's Homes - Verbal update from Head of Children's Social Care
7. Regulation 44 Visits - Commissioning Arrangements - Report of Strategic Commissioning Manager (Pages 11 - 14)
8. Investing in Children / Children in Care Council update - Presentation of Project Officer, Investing in Children (Pages 15 - 20)
9. Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People 2020-2022 - Report of Head of Children's Social Care (Pages 21 - 62)
10. Care Leavers' Strategy - Annual report - Report of Head of Children's Social Care (Pages 63 - 102)
 - a) Care Leavers' Update - Presentation (Pages 103 - 110)
11. Performance update - Report of Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager (Pages 111 - 118)
 - a) Performance Update - Presentation (Pages 119 - 124)

12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.
13. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)

14. Regulation 44 visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Children's Residential Homes - Report of Head of Children's Social Care and Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children (Pages 125 - 132)
15. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

Helen Lynch

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
18 February 2021

To: **The Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel**

Councillor I Jewell (Chair)
Councillor H Smith (Vice-Chair)

Councillors B Bainbridge, H Bennett, J Carr, J Charlton,
J Considine, P Crathorne, P Jopling, M McKeon, J Makepeace,
O Milburn, C Potts, S Quinn, A Reed, G Richardson, E Scott,
M Simmons and C Wilson

Co-opted Members

C Baines
A Ferguson
W Taylor
Young person representative of the Children in Care Council
(CiCC)

Contact: Jill Hogg

Tel: 03000 269 711

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a remote meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** held on **Friday 18 December 2020 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor I Jewell in the Chair

Panel Members:

Councillors B Bainbridge, J Considine, P Crathorne, M McKeon, J Makepeace, O Milburn, C Potts, S Quinn, G Richardson, E Scott, M Simmons, H Smith, T Tucker, C Wilson

Co-opted Members:

A Ferguson

Also in attendance:

Kelsey Clayton - Legal Services Manager
Helen Fergusson - Head of Children's Social Care
Paula Gibbons – Head of Service, Regional Adoption Agency
Lindsey Herring – Commissioning Officer
Robert Johnson - Project Manager, Investing in Children, and, Amber and Mitchell from the Children in Care Council
Selwyn Morgans – Centre Manager, Aycliffe Secure Centre
Claire Morris - Strategic Manager, Children Looked After Resources
Martyn Stenton - Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
Melanie Stubbs - Head of the Virtual School
Jayne Watson - Senior Partnerships Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from C Baines, Councillor J Charlton, Councillor P Jopling, Councillor A Reed and W Taylor.

2. Substitute Members

No substitute members were in attendance.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 24 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Number of Looked After Children

The Head of Children's Social Care, Helen Fergusson, informed the Panel that as at 18 December 2020 there were 960 children looked after, representing a slight increase on the number reported at the last Panel meeting held in October. Plans for children and young people which had been delayed due to COVID-19 were progressing well, however, the impact of the pandemic was likely to continue to be reflected in the figures over the coming months.

6. Investing in Children / Children in Care Council Update

Robert Johnson, Project Manager, and Amber and Mitchell delivered a presentation which updated on recent activity by the Children in Care Council (CiCC) (for copy of presentation see file of minutes). The information provided included the following matters.

Young people from the Children in Care Council delivered training to over fifty designated teachers, at which the young people provided their views on key messages and school policies. The young people suggested they would like to have some of their review time held in private, as some young people may feel more comfortable discussing private matters without their designated teacher present. The young people also discussed the importance of the continuity of their designated teacher, which promotes trust and stability, and, allows the relationship to develop.

The young people engaged with social work students from Durham and Sunderland Universities to discuss issues raised by the Children in Care Council, including the use of language and the importance of the voice of the child. The young people are keen to see what the students learnt from their visit and follow-up work is planned for the new year.

The Children in Care Council delivered virtual training to future foster carers which was very well received, and, following requests from the foster carers, the young people are exploring further opportunities to work with them.

A piece of work is being done, with the Children's Commissioner for England, on a national policy which is being developed in Sussex which aims to improve policies between the police and care experienced young people. A number of the young people would like to progress this work further by becoming ambassadors for the purposes of future development and training. It is hoped that and this learning will be incorporated into training for foster carers.

At a recent Children in Care Council meeting, the young people discussed working with the Corporate Parenting Panel in order to develop an annual fundraising event to raise money for young people including care experienced young people.

Discussions had taken place on the benefits for children and young people of spending time with, and, caring for, animals, and, the young people talked about ways in which Durham County Council could support this initiative. They suggested that Durham County Council could investigate the possibility of adopting an animal, possibly through a partnership arrangement with a local farm, which could be linked to the 'freedom card' incentive scheme.

Councillor Scott asked what action could be taken to progress this matter. The Head of Children's Social Care confirmed that the suggestion from the young people is being considered, and the Strategic Manager for Children Looked After Resources is taking the matter forward, with a view to providing an update to the Panel in the spring. In addition, the Head of Children's Social Care explained that the comments from the young people had been raised with Social Workers and Independent Review Officers, to highlight the importance of young people's relationships with pets, and, how this can have a significant impact, particularly when placement moves are necessary.

Following on from the discussion at the last Corporate Parenting Panel meeting on promoting the positives of care experienced young people, the Project Manager was pleased to report that Ian from the Children in Care Council had been selected as one of only 25 young people nationally to become a National Voice Ambassador for Coram Voice. Coram Voice is a national charity for the rights of children who are either in, or, leaving care, which aims to ensure children's rights are upheld, and, that their voices and experiences inform and improve the systems that care for them. The Project Manager commented on how proud he is of Ian's achievement and he added that he is looking forward to supporting Ian in this work which will link with the Children in Care Council, Durham County Council and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Corporate Parenting Panel placed on record their congratulations to Ian on his success and wished him well in his new role. The Chair thanked Rob, Amber and Mitchell for attending the meeting, for providing the informative presentation and for sharing their views.

7. Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers

The Panel considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning for County Durham CCG and Durham County Council which set out Durham's strategic approach to securing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of children looked after, and, presented the Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers for the period 2020-2023 (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

Lindsey Herring, Commissioning Manager, delivered a presentation and outlined the key strategic priorities as follows:

- Grow the number of in-house foster carers and reduce reliance on independent foster care provision
- Increase the number of adopters
- Continue to develop and broaden the residential homes offer and maximise opportunities with external providers
- Develop access to a diverse range of appropriate accommodation for Care Leavers

Claire Morris, Strategic Manager for Children Looked After Resources, thanked Commissioning colleagues for their work in producing such a detailed strategy. By way of a brief update, she explained that, in respect of the plan to expand the smaller homes offer, a 3-bedded home had recently been purchased and recruitment for the manager of the home is underway.

Panel members asked questions and commented as follows:

- Councillor Smith referred to the recent Overview and Scrutiny Review into Children's Residential Care Homes and commented that she was pleased to see the increased liaison with private providers which she hoped will lead to more children and young people being placed closer to familiar surroundings and locations.
- Councillor McKeon acknowledged the work of the Commissioning team to create a flexible offer and to endeavour to meet the individual needs of the unique group of young people within the county and she thanked officers for the hard work. Speaking from experience within her ward, she reported that local members, the parish council, and, the community had been very well briefed and consulted on proposals for the location of a children's home within the ward. The Commissioning Manager highlighted that joint working is undertaken with the police, providers, and, young people, to carry out comprehensive assessments of the potential impact on communities.

- Councillor Considine thanked officers for their hard work and added her support for the plan to increase the offer for smaller homes.
- Councillor Crathorne spoke of the importance of providing support to young people on leaving care, and the development of the Staying Close pilot scheme, to offer young people leaving care the opportunity to continue to access support from their previous children's home.
- Councillor Tucker referred to page 9 of the strategy and noted the net current forecast overspend of approximately £5 million and she asked how this is likely to impact spending throughout the next financial year. The Commissioning Manager informed the Panel that financial profiling is underway and the Head of Children's Social Care added that careful consideration will be given as to how projects will be prioritised, both in terms of finance, and, the needs of children and young people.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8. Aycliffe Secure Centre Update

The Panel received an update on Aycliffe Secure Centre from Selwyn Morgans, Aycliffe Secure Centre Manger which included presentations on how the Centre had continued to operate effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic and the plans for a Transition Home, to prepare young people for integration into the community (for copy of presentations see file of minutes).

The Centre Manager provided details of the numerous changes implemented since March 2020 to ensure the Centre continued to care for young people whilst maintaining a safe environment for all. He paid tribute to staff for rising to this unprecedented challenge and he also thanked the young people for playing their part to minimise the impact, with incidents of restraint and self-harm reducing during the pandemic.

The Centre Manager was pleased to report that, at a recent assurance visit by Ofsted, the Centre maintained its outstanding rating and received very positive feedback.

Referring to the success of virtual visits which were implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair asked if these would continue to be offered when normal service is resumed. The Centre Manager confirmed that that this initiative will continue as it had worked very well and enabled the young people to stay in contact with their families, safely, throughout the pandemic.

Councillor Quinn asked if there were any plans to vaccinate staff. The Centre Manager responded that there were no immediate plans, however, the situation was being monitored, with regular meetings being held with colleagues from NHS England, Public Health and the Department for Education.

Councillor Bainbridge expressed her support for the plan for the Transitions Home.

Councillor Richardson asked for further information on how the young people based in the Transitions Home would access education. The Centre Manager clarified that the young people would attend education establishments within the community and the education team based within the Centre would work with those establishments. In addition, facilities for education would be available within the Transition Home.

The Chair thanked the Centre Manager for the informative update.

9. Update on Regional Adoption Agency – Adopt Coast to Coast

The Panel received an update report of the Head of Children’s Social Care on the Regional Adoption Agency, presented by Paula Gibbons, Head of Service, Adopt Coast to Coast (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Head of Service provided details of the significant amount of work which had taken place since the Cabinet approved the development of the hosted model in December 2018. The Panel noted that the partnership model will be delivered through a hub and spoke structure and that workstreams are meeting regularly in preparation to go live in early spring 2021.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10. Adoption Report: April 2020-September 2020

The Head of Service Adopt Coast to Coast presented the 6 monthly Adoption Service report and delivered a presentation on activity from April to September and key priority areas for 2020-21 (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Head of Service highlighted the good performance during the challenging period and praised staff for their actions to develop new ways of working, in light of the pandemic.

The Chair thanked the Head of Service for the comprehensive report and he placed on record the Panel's thanks to staff for implementing the changes which had enabled the Adoption Panels to continue, by being held virtually.

Councillor Richardson asked how the offer in County Durham differs from that of neighbouring authorities. The Head of Service explained that all local authority adoption services work within the same set of regulations and carry out considered and thorough adoption assessments. Durham had the opportunity to investigate processes which enable a timelier journey for adopters, and, Adopt Coast to Coast had benefited from learning from the experiences of other regional adoption agencies.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11. Any other business

The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Panel of an initiative that was introduced during the pandemic which aimed to capture the experiences of the pandemic, of children and young people looked after, through creative activities, such as the production of videos, poetry and photographs. As a result, an e-book had been produced which would be circulated to the Panel with the minutes: [CYPS Lockdown Diaries](#)

The Panel viewed an audio clip of one of the poems written during lockdown, which was narrated by the author of the poem, a child looked after.

The Strategic Manager for Children Looked After Resources shared a positive story about two young people residing at one of the county's children's homes. The young people had noticed that, during the pandemic, people had more time to enjoy nature, which provided them with an enterprising idea. They spent recent weeks clearing the shed in the garden in order to create a wood shed in which they intend to use their design skills to make bird-tables in time for the spring. The young people have impressed staff by fully engaging and showing a real commitment to this project.

12. Exclusion of the public

Resolved:

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

13. Regulation 44 visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Children's Residential Homes

The Panel considered a joint report of the Head of Children's Social Care and Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children which provided an update on Regulation 44 visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Children's Residential Homes (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Corporate Parenting Panel

26 February 2021

Regulation 44 Visits – Commissioning Arrangements



Report of Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioning Manager – Children’s Services, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report outlines the plans to carry out a commissioning exercise to outsource Regulation 44 visits for Durham County Council maintained Children’s Homes and our rationale for arriving at this decision.

Executive summary

- 2 The national Children’s Homes Regulations 2015 (Regulation 44) sets out requirements for organisations responsible for the delivery of children’s homes to ensure that an independent visitor visits the children’s home at least once each month to undertake a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home’s arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home’s care. There is a requirement to ensure that the findings and any recommendations from the visit are captured within an independent report and forwarded to the Local Authority and Ofsted for the area in which the home is located.
- 3 Durham County Council is currently the Registered Provider of 14 Children’s Residential Homes (including 1 overnight respite home and 5 secure children’s homes). In addition, plans have been approved to expand and broaden our maintained children’s home offer, including smaller homes and an edge of care residential home, in response to the growing demand for residential care and accommodation for children with complex needs.
- 4 In June 2017 a decision was taken to commission the Durham County Council Commissioning Service to undertake the monthly Regulation 44 Visits on behalf of Children and Young People’s Services.

- 5 Following a review of the current arrangements it is apparent that whilst the DCC commissioning service has been able to ensure that all Regulation 44 visits have been undertaken and reported to Ofsted in a timely manner, the current arrangements have not consistently enabled the department to identify issues prior to regulatory inspections which has impacted on the feedback and outcomes from Ofsted. It is felt that this is due primarily to the professional backgrounds of the commissioning officers involved and that this situation could be improved if the visits were undertaken by visitors who had a background in the provision and management of children's residential care homes.
- 6 The current arrangements in relation to community homes can at times lead to a conflict of interest, as Commissioning Officers play an integral role in the brokerage of placements for children who require residential care where both maintained and independent options are being considered.
- 7 The main options that have been considered for the future delivery of Regulation 44 visits are:
 - a) Maintain current arrangements with the DCC Commissioning Service.
 - b) Develop capacity within the Independent Reviewing Officer team to undertake visits.
 - c) Undertake a procurement exercise to secure an independent consultant(s) or organisation for community homes and secure homes
 - d) Undertake a procurement exercise to secure an independent consultant(s) or organisation for community homes only, with the DCC Commissioning Service continuing to carry out Reg 44's for all secure homes.
 - e) Develop reciprocal arrangements with another Local Authority.
- 8 Having considered a comparison of potential costs, strengths, and weaknesses for each of the above options, based on this appraisal, Option (d) is the most viable option. This will provide Durham County Council with the opportunity to appoint a service with a proven track record of undertaking work of a similar nature and provide CYPS with the assurance they need that all safeguarding matters associated with the DCC children's residential homes will be identified and fully explored. It is anticipated that this option will require a small increase to the budget for the service.

Recommendation

- 9 The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of this report which outlines the rationale and recommendation to outsource Regulation 44 visits for DCC community children's home and retain the Reg 44 function within the Commissioning Service for secure homes.

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Presentation by Mitchell (CICC/ CPP representative) and Robert (Investing in Children)

Covid-19 'A Challenge and opportunities'

This presentation focuses on the activities of Durham's CICC during March 2020 until February 2021, giving an overview of the involvement and contributions made by some amazing young people and that of Durham County Council. Achieved mostly through virtual meetings!

- 18 CICC meetings.
- 4 CICC newsletter planning meetings.
- 4 CICC newsletters produced.
- 8 CICC members involved in the Summer Pack Project 2020
3k secured to implement a feel good project during the Covid
19 pandemic



Covid-19 'A Challenge and opportunities'

- 2k secured to work with the Full Circle team to enhance therapy spaces, input & design by CICC members.
- 2 social work sessions with two universities. 44 student social workers participated and the sessions promoted the importance of language and relationships.
- 1 Youth and Community Studies Session -16 students
- 20 future foster carers involved in CICC training.
- 3 IRO sub groups and team day presentation.
- 1 Designated teacher session 50 teachers.





Covid-19 'A Challenge and opportunities'

- 3 CICC website development meetings.
- 1 social work academy session – co-produced poetry class.
- Poetry developed -tweeted by Children Commissioner for England
- 1 meeting with Durham Youth Council, looking to connect CICC reps onto the Youth Council in 2021.
- 20 future foster carers involved in CICC training.
- 7 CPP mini virtual meetings
- 3 CPP virtual board meetings. Two new CICC /CPP reps

Covid-19 'A Challenge and opportunities'

Some of the Topics and Impact

- Friends/Friendship Matter – seeing friends was discussed as being so important and this is now part of care reviews.
- Animals, Care and the importance. Again, this was important to the young people and is aligned to relationship building ,connecting with animals and live story work that promotes this.
- Travel bursaries awareness – DCC connecting with HE colleges regarding different approaches to support students.
- App development and involvement- 'Mind of My Own'.
- Children friendly policing - Working with the Children Commissioner Team for England – aim to train with the police in County Durham-based on a report currently being produced by the Commissioner's team.
- "Positive Matters", challenging stigma campaign – launched at CPP meetings.





Covid-19 'A Challenge and opportunities'

Some of the Topics and Impact

- Developing education focused policy with virtual head teacher-key messages developed.
- Connecting with Regional Care Council.
- New CICC website being developed, launched on Care Day 2021.
- Development of Podcast to promote support, practice and learning in 2021
- **40** different young people have connected with CICC during this period, aged 8 to 21, and who are cared for by DCC.
- We would like CPP members to read an article in the latest CICC newsletter, written by a young man from a DCC young people's home. The article is called Video Games, Good or Bad? – we think it's a brilliant article and makes you think. Well done. 'Positive Story'!

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Corporate Parenting Panel

26 February 2021

Corporate Parenting Strategy for
Children and Young People 2020-2022



Report of Helen Fergusson, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to present the Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years, 2020-22 to the Corporate Parenting Panel for information.

Executive summary

- 2 The Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines the statutory obligations and collective responsibilities within County Durham in regard to children and young people who are in the care of the Local Authority.

Recommendation

- 3 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to note the Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years 2020-2022, for information.

Background

- 4 The Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years is produced on an annual basis to reflect on the achievements over the previous year, and to set out ambition for our Children Looked After and Care Leavers, and our key priorities for the year ahead. Given the global Coronavirus pandemic, this strategy will cover 2020-2022 to incorporate the impact of Covid 19 on service delivery.
- 5 The development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-22 has been delayed as a result of the demands on staff due to the Covid 19 pandemic. As well as responding to the ever changing situation, a huge amount of work continues within the service which is reflected within the strategy, both in terms of achievements and our plans and priorities moving forward.

Content

- 6 The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-22 provides information on:
 - (a) An introduction to Corporate Parenting
 - (b) Durham County Council's Position Statement
 - (c) Our 'Promise' to Children and Young People
 - (d) Role of the Corporate Parenting Panel
 - (e) Children and Social Work Act Corporate Parenting Principles
 - (f) Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme
 - (g) Sources of information to the Corporate Parenting Panel
 - (h) Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report
 - (i) The strategy then goes on to provide achievements in 2019-20 and priorities for 2020-22 for the following eight themes:
 - (i) Multi agency partnership work and integrated governance
 - (ii) Enabling children and young people to remain at home with their families, where it is safe to do so
 - (iii) Sufficiency of placements and placement stability
 - (iv) Early permanence
 - (v) Local Offer for care leavers

- (vi) Health and wellbeing of our children and young people
- (vii) Employment, Education and Training opportunities
- (viii) Engagement with children and young people

Conclusion

7 A range of work is taking place across County Durham to improve outcomes for our Children Looked After and Care Leavers, and plans are in place to continue to make improvements.

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Corporate Parenting Panel's role is to lead on ensuring the corporate parenting responsibilities of the Council are being met in line with the duties under the Children Act 1989.

Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 sets out the general duty of the local authority in relation to children looked after by them, to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of these children, ensuring effective, individualised support and access to services.

Finance

Financial implications are noted and considered within the service.

Consultation

No implications

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No implications

Climate Change

No implications

Human Rights

No implications

Crime and Disorder

No implications

Staffing

Staffing implications are noted and considered within the service.

Accommodation

Accommodation implications are noted and considered within the service.

Risk

No implications

Procurement

No implications

Appendix 2: Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 years, 2020-22

Attached as a separate document.

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Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0–25 years

2020-22

1 INTRODUCTION - CORPORATE PARENTING

Looking after and protecting children and young people from harm is one of the most important jobs that a Local Authority can do. Where a child cannot remain safely at home for whatever reason and comes into the care of the Local Authority the council becomes the 'corporate parent' for that child. They are also the corporate parent for any young person who is under 25, who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday.

The term 'corporate parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, in providing the best possible care and safeguarding support for the children and young people who are looked after by the council for the purpose of this strategy document. The associated responsibility and any reference to 'we' refers to all multi-agency partners. A child in the care of the council looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every elected member and employee have statutory responsibility to act for that child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child.

This strategy sets out Durham County Councils (DCC) ambition for our Children Looked After and our key priorities for 2020/21.

Our commitment is to all children and young people living in foster care and residential care; placed for adoption; living in supported lodgings or at home under Placement with Parent Regulations as well as those living in secure establishments or in custody, and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

2 DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Durham County Council is committed to be the best parent it can for our Children Looked After and Care Leavers and strives to ensure that we deliver support and care that is as good as every good parent.

Durham County Council is committed to ensuring our Children Looked After and Care Leavers have the best opportunities available to them to achieve their full potential and that these are at least as good as the opportunities available for all other children. It is recognised that many children and young people face significantly greater levels of challenging circumstances before reaching adulthood than their peers and that this may mean that they have the need for additional support. Durham County Council are committed to ensuring that services are designed with and for Children Looked After and Care Leavers to meet their needs.

We want all of our Children Looked After to live in loving, stable and safe homes in a place that they can 'call home'. We want the people who are caring for them to be fun, loving, skilled, enthusiastic, ambitious and to fight their corner every step of the way. We want our children to form good, trusting, nurturing relationships with their carers and have positive experiences.

We want our children to live in stable placements, only moving when it is in their best interests or when they have chosen to do so.

Durham County Council is ambitious for our children and wants to encourage them to dream big and fulfil their potential. We are committed to ensuring that they receive the best education in the best schools and get additional support if they need it; that they are well prepared for independence and work through apprenticeships, high quality training, support into higher education and into university for those who aspire to do so.

We want our children to be well, healthy and have good emotional and mental health. We want to celebrate their achievements, no matter what these are, so that they can be proud of themselves and know that we are proud of them too. We want them to have fun and be able to develop their own interests and hobbies so that they can develop in confidence and establish friendships and make memories that they can fondly look back on in later years.

Across Durham County Council, we are committed to listening to our children and young people, hearing what they have to say and acting on it wherever possible. We will develop our services based on this feedback and regularly check with them that we have got it right. We will welcome their feedback and will use this to challenge the way we do things, and to make changes based on their views.

We want our care leavers to be well prepared for adulthood and want to ensure they feel part of an extended family who will be there for them if they are needed. We want our young people to be able to make mistakes and know that they will be supported to pick up the pieces if things don't go to plan. This is part of learning and developing, and an important part of growing up and it is really important that there is someone there to offer help, support and guidance at these times.

We want our young people to be able to move into their own homes when they are ready, and to feel safe and supported. This can be a big a challenge for any young person and we know that young people who leave care, often do so earlier than their peers.

We also want our young people to have the knowledge, skills and confidence to be able to independently manage their own health and wellbeing to ensure they are living the best life they can.

3 YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROMISE

We have a 'promise' that has been developed with children and young people who are in the care of Durham County Council to show our commitment to providing the best care we can. Our 'promise' outlines what young people have said they want from their social workers, foster carers and the other services we provide, to support them, to help them achieve and succeed and to ensure we listen to their views and their voice throughout the time we look after them.

Printed copies were distributed to DCC teams and offices that work with children Looked After, and framed copies are displayed in public view outside the offices of our Chief Executive, Director of Children and Young People's Services and Heads of Service within Children and Young People's Services.

We have asked those who work with our Children Looked After to keep the promise and stick to these principles in all aspects of their work. We promise to:

- Treat you with respect and to remember that everyone is different
- Help find best home we can for you. It will be where you feel safe, cared about and treated well
- Help you stay in touch with family and friends if it is ok to do so
- Listen carefully to you and try to act on what you say
- Make sure that your social worker will get to know you well
- Make sure your social worker will keep in touch with you and listen to what you say
- Really listen to things you would like to change about being looked after
- Be honest and share any information or changes with you
- Involve you in any decisions, plans or changes that affect you or your future
- Give you any help or support that you need
- Help you to be the best that you can at school, college, training and work
- Give you help and support when needed to move from care to adult life
- Work together and support you during every change in your life e.g. moving placement or leaving care.

Young people from the Children in Care Council (CICC) regularly challenge us on any areas where they do not feel we are keeping our promise, and we encourage them to continue to hold us to account.

4 ROLE OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) is made up of 21 elected members including the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services and the Chair of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as senior officers from within the council. In addition, there are co-opted members on the panel including representatives from local schools and health services as well as young people from the Children in Care Council.

The Corporate Parenting Panel is responsible for the following five functions as set out in the Council's constitution:

Function One: Ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parent to children and young people in care and care leavers including:

- Children and young people in residential care
- Children and young people in foster care
- Children and young people placed for adoption
- Children and young people placed at home under care planning, placement and case review regulations
- Young people who are living in supported lodgings
- Young people in secure services
- Young people in custody.

Responsibilities:

- Take an overview of the Councils and partner agencies responsibilities toward children and young people in care and care leavers
- Monitor performance of services for children for whom we are corporate parents, including care leavers, receipt of information on regulation 44 visit and inspections, referring any systemic issues to Cabinet and or Scrutiny as required
- Maintain a strategic overview of all developments, plans, policies and strategies for children whom the Council is a corporate parent and make appropriate recommendations for action
- Ensure all members of the Council are regularly updated on issues affecting children for whom they are the corporate parent including care leavers through an annual report to Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny
- Receive an overview of Regulation 44 visits and inspections of private children's homes within the County Durham area
- Receive an update on independent residential homes within County Durham and their Ofsted inspection reports outcomes
- Agree an annual work programme based on corporate parenting strategy and priorities.

Function Two: Engage and listen to the views of children, young people and their carers for whom the Council is the parent.

Responsibilities:

- Provide a forum for children and young people in care and care leavers to participate and influence policy and have an opportunity to talk about their experiences of the services they have received
- Ensure that positive experiences are maintained, lessons are learnt, and changes made in areas that require improvement
- Meet with children for whom the council is corporate parent and their carers on a regular basis and celebrate their achievements
- Participation in Regulation 44 visits quarterly allows the Panel to improve planning and understanding of care in residential homes
- Ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our Children Looked After and care leavers.

Function Three: Work in partnership with other statutory agencies to drive forward improvements in care.

Responsibilities:

- Examine ways that the Council as a whole and partner agencies can improve life chances of children in care and care leavers
- Ensure there is good joined up working with partner agencies
- Develop links with the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership including a picture of Serious Case Reviews of Children Looked After.

Function Four: Act as the governing body for the Virtual School for Children Looked After and young people.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain an overview and provide challenge of governance arrangements for the virtual school
- To monitor and bring challenge to ensure Children Looked After's educational attainment and performance is optimised.
- To encourage and support each looked after child to achieve optimum educational outcomes at each stage of their schooling.

Function Five: Act as the governing body for Aycliffe Secure Services, monitoring and ensuring the quality of secure accommodation.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain an overview and provide challenge of governance arrangements for Aycliffe Secure Services
- Support and bring challenge to achieve the best outcomes for Children Looked After who are in secure services
- Agree the themes and performance, on an annual basis that enhance corporate parenting of Children Looked After in secure services.

5 CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WORK ACT

Section one of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to have regard to the following seven corporate parenting principles when discharging their functions in relation to Children Looked After and care leavers:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

6 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Corporate Parenting Panel sets its work programme around key lines of enquiry as outlined in the Local Government Association (LGA) resource packs (Corporate Parenting; Permanence; Support for Care Leavers; Youth Justice), in relation to outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers which require oversight and scrutiny, these include:

- Understanding the characteristics of our cohort of young people including age and length of time in care; where children are placed; numbers of children in different types of provision; those waiting for a permanent placement or match to a prospective adopter, those with additional health or developmental needs
- Understanding the role of key partners in supporting our young people to achieve good outcomes and providing challenge where this is needed
- Exploring how we demonstrate to children in our care that we have high aspirations for them
- Understanding how well we provide stable environments for our children.
- Ensuring that the partnership is looking after the health and wellbeing of our children
- Understanding how many children are placed out of county and the reasons for this, and ensuring there is sufficient placement provision within the local authority
- Ensuring that we support our foster carers well
- Examining the quality of outcomes for our care leavers against a range of measures
- Understanding how well we develop and commission new services to meet the needs of our children
- Ensuring that children and young people have an opportunity to express their views and ensuring that we know that they have been acted upon.

7 SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

There are numerous sources of information provided to the Corporate Parenting Panel, which informs the work of the Panel, and the Work Programme. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Monthly Corporate Parenting Panel meetings, where members receive regular reports and updates from a range of sources.
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, meetings were cancelled from March 2020. In their place, we have developed monthly briefing notes which are circulated to members of the CPP to ensure they receive assurance around the wellbeing of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers during the pandemic and receive regular updates on how young people are being supported in response to the ever changing situation.
- The Children in Care Council (CICC) have a standing item on each Corporate Parenting Panel meeting agenda, where they provide feedback from CICC meetings.
Due to the CPP meetings being cancelled from March 2020, we have implemented monthly CICC meetings, which are hosted virtually through Microsoft Teams, enabling young people to continue to have regular communications with the chair and vice chair of the CPP and senior leads from within CYPS during the pandemic.
- The CICC usually host two meetings per year, where they set the agenda. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel and senior officers within the service area are invited to attend, and feedback is shared through the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings and actions taken as appropriate. Due to the pandemic, these have been replaced by the monthly CICC meetings, however we hope to re-establish these meetings as soon as we are able to do so as CPP elected members value the direct interaction with children and young people.
- Care Leavers have a separate forum and feed their views into a panel either by attending personally or through their representative
- Feedback from foster carers and adoptive families is shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel
- A number of annual reports are presented to the CPP, including:
 - Independent Reviewing Officer in respect of Children Looked After
 - Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership, including Serious Case Reviews
 - Fostering Service
 - Adoption Service
 - Care Leavers
 - Sufficiency Strategy
 - Virtual School
 - Corporate Parenting Panel

- The Corporate Parenting Panel receives regular updates from the Corporate Parenting Panel subgroups, which has been incorporated into the monthly briefings during the pandemic:
 - Virtual School
 - Aycliffe Secure Centre
- Regular Performance Reports are presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in respect of the following:
 - Placement stability
 - Health of Children Looked After and timeliness of health and dental assessments
 - Education outcomes
 - Outcomes for care leavers including the proportion in education, employment and training and appropriate accommodation
 - Children placed out of Durham or in external provision
 - Children who are missing from care
 - Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
 - Children awaiting adoption or permanence.

During the pandemic, this information has been captured in the monthly briefing note.

8 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL ANNUAL REPORT

The Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference which form part of Durham County Council's Constitution, make specific reference that the Corporate Parenting Panel will prepare and provide an Annual Report that will be shared with Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny.

To ensure the voice of the child is reflected in the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, it was agreed that young people from the Children in Care Council, supported by officers from Durham County Council Partnerships team, would co-produce the Corporate Parenting Panel's Annual Report.

For the 2017-18 Annual Report, the young people worked on the design, layout, content and language of the Annual Report to ensure it was easy to read and understand. Moving forward, a decision was made to use DCC Design and Print Team to align the Annual Report with other strategic documents. This was implemented for the 2018-19 Annual Report, and young people worked with us to approve a template to be used for future versions, ensuring the corporate design retained enough of the young people's original design to make it appealing to young people and easy for them to read and understand.

The Annual Reports are published on the Durham County Council website, and hosted on the Investing in Children website, and the Children in Care Council website.

We held one meeting with young people in March 2020 to get their comments and ideas on what the 2020-21 Annual Report should include. Approximately 25 young people attended this session, however due to Covid 19 restrictions, which were implemented later that month, the rest of the consultation was undertaken virtually, which has proven to be really successful.

The Annual Report includes information on:

- Message from chair
- Message from Co-opted CICC members
- What a Corporate Parent is
- Why and where young people are in care
- The role and responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference
- Key performance data
- Achievements
- Care Leavers Challenge
- Children in Care Council
- Update against 2019-20 priorities 'You Said – We Did'
- Virtual School subgroup update
- Aycliffe Secure Centre subgroup update
- The Corporate Parenting Panel's priorities for 2020-21.

9 ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019-20 AND PRIORITIES FOR 2020-22

Priority 1

Ensure good multi-agency partnership work and integrated governance to meet the needs of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

We need to work closely with all partner agencies to ensure there is high quality multi-agency working to meet the wide range of needs of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

Achievements in 2019-20

The Looked After Strategic Partnership group continues to meet to ensure that there is a joined up approach to our multi agency work with children and care leavers.

There is a proactive multi agency steering group leading the work on developing services and support for care leavers.

In addition, the Multi-Agency Collaborative Care Meeting was established in March 2019. The membership of the group comprises of a range of organisations who can help to identify children and young people who are at risk of being admitted into hospital due to their mental health needs as well as tracking and monitoring care arrangements for young people once admitted. The group are responsible in ensuring that the appropriate care and treatment can be identified to meet the needs of children and young people post discharge from hospital.

The group are also responsible for the Dynamic Risk Register (DRR). In Durham we have expanded the criteria for the DRR to include all of those Children and Young People at risk of in-patient admission regardless of diagnosis.

The group has recently reviewed its membership and has agreed that the social worker with care/aftercare planning responsibility should attend the meeting virtually to give an overview of progress and next step planning. This will also give the social worker an opportunity to hear and receive advice from the specialist mental health providers and commissioners who are core attendees.

In recent months, during the Covid pandemic, the group has observed a significant rise in the number of children and young people admitted into hospital for specialist treatment who were unknown to services previously. In response to this the group has identified that Care Education and Treatment Review (CETR)'s could and should be considered for children and young people earlier, and that everyone working in children's social care need to understand what a CETR is, why and when they are used to prevent hospital admissions and so children and young people can receive treatment to meet their needs in the community close to where they live.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
CETR Awareness Training delivered across children's services	March 2021
Re-launch of the Multi-agency Collaborative Care Group (MACC)	October 2020
Work in partnership with a range of mental health providers and commissioners to create an intensive support crisis offer to young people and their families to prevent admission into specialist mental health provision.	February 2021

Priority 2

We will develop services which are focused on providing high quality support to enable children and young people to remain at home with their families where it is safe to do so.

Achievements in 2019-20

We continue to implement the Signs of Safety (SOS) practice framework. The Signs of Safety Framework puts the child(ren) and their naturally connected networks of support at the centre of decision making and planning so that more children can remain safe and well in the care of their families. We have seen examples over the last year where this approach has been used and children have been safely returned to the care of a family member. We currently have a focus on holding family network meetings with families as early as possible in their journey through services. The Supporting Solutions Service have been supporting this work.

The Supporting Solutions Service (SSS) has been in operation for 24 months offering crisis interventions for young people aged between 11 and 17 years, classed as being on the Edge of Care (EOC). The service also manages a crisis bed for young people who need emergency out of hours accommodation for one night.

Supporting Solutions have successfully engaged with 169 young people on the edge of care between April 2019 and March 2020.

The SSS is also responsible for Family Group Conferences (FGC), the aim which is to find extended family and ensure the family are supported to work together to create their own solutions and create sustainable safety plan to the local authority of family support to prevent a child becoming looked after.

Ofsted Feedback – Inspection of Durham’s Children’s Social Care Services - September 2019: “The work of the supporting solutions service (edge of care) is strong and effective. Good use is made of family group conferences to develop networks of support or to identify suitable alternative care arrangements for children who cannot continue to remain at home safely.”

Development Activity

Family Group Conference video for young people – SSS have now been awarded ongoing ‘Investing in Children’ status as an outcome of the project completed with young people. The aim of this was to create a video animation that helped to describe to Children and families the role of a FGC through the eyes of a young person. This has been a huge success and we now have an excellent engagement tool designed and created by young people for young people. This has really helped other professionals to have a better understanding of the FGC process and ethos.

Sessional Support - The service has a number of staff from across Children’s services who offer sessional intervention to young people over weekend periods if this is required as part of a crisis support package.

Consultation Clinics - The Therapeutic Social Worker provides a number of sessions per week for staff to discuss individual young people and their families/carers who require a service from Full Circle. This also includes fast track referrals into CAMHS. The Full Circle Social Worker is also able to work alongside the EOC Worker in some instances to deliver therapeutic interventions where appropriate.

Voluntary and Community Sector – Since January 2020, a member of the VCS has sat within SSS one day per week. This arrangement has strengthened the links between SSS and the VCS, team members have reacted positively to this change and have expressed how beneficial it has been. This has also helped to build stronger links between the families we work with and the resources they have in their local communities to empower families to access more sustainable support moving forward.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
Extend the service criteria to support children from 8yrs old	January 2021
Family Group Conference Workers to be link workers into safeguarding teams to help social workers expand skills in delivering family network meetings	September 2020
Signs of Safety implementation to work towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family Network Meetings being held with all families within 15 days of a new referral - The identified network will be involved in creating and reviewing the plan for the child / young person - Where there are plans for a child / young person to return home, then the identified family network will be involved in safety planning and the trajectory tool will be used to support this 	January 2021 January 2021 March 2021

Priority 3

Sufficiency of Placements and Placement Stability is important for our children and young people. We want to ensure there are enough high-quality placements to meet their diverse needs and to ensure that young people have a choice where this is appropriate.

Placement Sufficiency

We have reviewed the remit and membership of the Placement and Resource Panel (PRP) to ensure all young people who live in foster care (in-house or with an Independent Fostering Family), residential care (in house or external) and young people who live in supported living arrangements have their package of care or support agreed at panel and reviewed by PRP. This ensures we are reviewing whether their home continues to meet their need and that a tighter and more robust process for agreeing and reviewing the financial arrangements and quality of provision is in place. This has included a review of all young people who are placed out of area or at a distance where we can explore if it is right for them to return to Durham and if so, that this happens in a timely manner in line with their needs. Equally we have reviewed all arrangements where there is a bed block in place, ensuring support is given, progress is made, and financial review of these arrangements is undertaken.

The Sufficiency Strategy was reviewed considering both the current demands on the market due to The Covid pandemic, and in line with the needs of Durham County Council. This strategy will continue to be under review as we move through 2021. A key focus within the strategy is to ensure we have enough bespoke and solo homes in place to meet the needs of the children and young people, who due to the level of trauma and challenges in their lives, need homes who can care for and safeguard their individual needs.

Kinship Carers (friends and family carers)

We have taken the opportunity over the last year to review and strengthen our information, guidance and assessment tools, learning from feedback from the people who use our service and national best practice. This has helped carers understand the process, what is expected and by when.

We have worked hard in the last year to ensure our support offer to kinship carers has continued to be strengthened. This offer has seen the increased support and offer through Grand Parents Plus, who are an organisation specifically set up to support kinship carers with the challenges they face. Equally we have seen the increased support provided by Full Circle, our therapeutic team, who offer advice, guidance and training. The kinship team have continued to develop their sign posting offer which helps kinship carers know which service to access and how to access them based on their individual needs.

Residential Services

We have embarked on supporting a change in culture across the homes which has seen several changes come into place across the establishment. These changes have been underpinned by our child centred values. This drive has seen us share more widely the views of children and young people and ensure they are at the

forefront of shaping their home and future homes for other children and young people. This has seen children and young people take a more active role in reviewing and changing the things that matter most to them, for example pocket money and holiday allowances, Wi-Fi access and being an active member of the interview panels for new appointments to the service.

We have worked hard across our residential homes to ensure that we have the right infrastructure to support our ongoing development. This has included a review of our recording system which will see our paper records replaced with electronic files available through Liquidlogic, to bring us in line with the rest of the service. This work also includes the updating of our policies which underpin and guide the teams. Equally we are strengthening the training and development offer, ensuring training and development includes research, access to networks, development of the champion role, involvement in service and partnership activities and a bespoke programme designed and delivered specifically for registered managers on Regulation 45 reports.

We have designed and piloted two quality frameworks across the residential homes. One which looks at the qualitative information which feeds into the Annex A and Regulation 45 process which is outlined in the Children's Home Regulations 2015 and develops a greater understanding of what's happening and where it is recorded. The second tool is a reflective audit tool used to support analysis and case discussion which focuses on the qualitative information which improves thinking and practice as well as the quality of our records.

We have worked hard to ensure the move of one of our existing homes, to a new home, which ensures we continue to have a range of homes that are of high quality and in good repair. Equally we have purchased an additional home which will support three young people who require a higher level of support to ensure their safe care.

It's not withstanding that Covid has presented us with some challenges, however from this we have looked at opportunities to change and review the way we work as well as ensuring we continue to safeguard and care for our young people during these unprecedented times. We used the opportunity the Covid pandemic presented to support people to work across different homes and take advantage of moving on a more permanent basis to a new home by sharing skills and energising teams. We have also undertaken a recruitment campaign which has enabled us to succession plan some of our existing team members, recruit new people into the residential team and develop a pool of relief workers who are trained and supported to provide high quality and consistent care to our children and young people.

Unfortunately, the development of the Residential Edge of Care provision was halted whilst we responded to Covid, and to allow us to ensure we responded to the needs of young people who need to live in a children's home. This was particularly important as the private sector struggled to meet demand, particularly during this period. However, we are back on track with our search for a suitable property and the work already undertaken will not be lost. Equally our relationship with our colleagues in the supporting solutions team has grown from strength to strength, which ensures progress will be expedited throughout 2021.

Mainstream Fostering

We have worked hard in recent months to review the marketing offer ensuring that we look at recruitment and retention in tandem following a slow start to the year. We are steadily improving our understanding of the market position and how we can target campaigns and responses to get the best responses to our campaign. Equally, we have increased our focus on understanding how to maintain and support our current foster carers, particularly when many of us are reflecting on the future. We have seen more active targeted marketing which promotes our unique selling points, this was demonstrated in the Christmas Wonderland event and our radio campaigns.

We reviewed the feedback from children and young people and as a result the care experienced young people reviewed the pre induction training for foster carers which they deliver. The feedback from carers and young people is phenomenal. We have also strengthened the foster carer support group and young people's group, reviewing delivery and attendance. This has been positive and will continue to develop. Care experienced young people and foster carers continue to support recruitment, whether that be recruitment to the team or recruitment of new carers.

In preparation for April 2020 we reviewed the work across the service to ensure the fostering teams can focus on the right areas of work and that they can consolidate their work to get the most out of their roles. This resulted in formation of a designated connected carers team, two mainstream teams, a recruitment and retention team and placement team. We have also ensured that we have improved our recording system within Liquidlogic to ensure the teams have a robust and effect workspace and as we progress throughout the rest of 2020 we will continue to develop the performance dash boards and reports which enable us to better understand ourselves. We have had a huge push on ensuring a timely and effective response to family finding and have put in place more robust measures to support and track progress. Equally the introduction of performance reviews have meant we have been able to strengthen and quicken our response to foster carers when needed, provide more stability and consistency from named fostering social workers and improve the timeliness of the foster carer reviews which supports retention.

What further actions will we take and when?

What	When
<p>Sufficiency Strategy: Working alongside commissioning undertake a needs analysis to inform the range of accommodation options required to meet the needs of children looked after and care leavers</p> <p>Review existing accommodation options to identify gaps in relation to emerging need and develop proposed accommodation solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing in-house/independent residential capacity - Developing access to a diverse range of appropriate accommodation for Care Leavers - Develop an appropriate community-based accommodation and care solution which meets the needs of children and young people stepping down from tier 4 mental health hospital provision 	December 2021
<p>Sufficiency Strategy: Continue to monitor the efficiency of placements through the Placement Resource Panel, ensuring providers continue to meet standards and agreed outcomes for children and young people.</p>	Weekly throughout 2020 - 2021
<p>Residential Care: Develop a new edge of care home within the Residential Service to support placement stability and to prevent children and young people from coming into care</p>	October 2021
<p>Fostering: Support growth in the number of in-house Foster Carers and review the existing marketing strategy to ensure a focus on recruitment and retention as well as targeted and general campaigns.</p> <p>Increase the number of foster carers joining Durham and reduce the number leaving.</p> <p>Review the support and opportunities to support the skills, knowledge and values of foster carers to understand, respond too and care for our young people.</p>	<p>January 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p>
<p>Recording and Performance: Continue to develop and embed Liquidlogic within the fostering service and develop dashboard and performance reports to track and monitor progress</p> <p>Support the development of a Liquidlogic workspace for the review of kinship assessments and develop dashboard and performance reports to track and monitor progress.</p>	<p>February 2021</p> <p>July 2021</p>

What	When
<p>The voice of children, young people and families: Review the learning from feedback and best practice to inform what support is available to kinship carers.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Ensure care experienced children and young people continue to inform and shape practice using collaborate approaches and opportunities such as training, interviewing and joint projects / reviews.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Expand the opportunities whereby care experienced children and young people share their views.</p>	Ongoing

Priority 4

Promoting Early Permanence is a key priority for us, we want to ensure that children are moved into their permanent placement or adoptive placement as quickly as possible once this has been agreed as the appropriate plan.

Achievements in 2019-20

Since the implementation of the Early Permanence Strategy in May 2018 which included an improved focus on 'fostering for adoption' whereby prospective adopters are also approved as foster carers to ensure that very young babies have the opportunity to be fostered by the people who want to adopt them, where it is appropriate. To date we have 4 babies (children between 0-4) under foster to adopt arrangements, since 2018 we had a further 7.

During 2019-20, 164 children were permanently matched into foster placements, which is an improvement on the previous year which was 155.

We have continued to increase the number of children and young people subject to a Special Guardianship Order and in receipt of financial support from the local authority, which means we have been able to secure stable long term permanent care arrangements for children within their families.

During 2019-20 the Adoption Team have worked hard to improve practice in all areas of their responsibilities. Processes and practices were reviewed and streamlined to increase efficiencies. A concerted effort to improve the timeliness of assessments of prospective adopters resulted in all assessments allocated from November 2020 being completed in the statutory timescale. This achievement increased the number of available in-house adoptive placements to 25 with a target of 31 for 2020-21.

The availability of in-house adoptive placements has positively impacted on the time for some children to be placed with their forever family, with 55 children adopted in 2019-20.

Work has continued regionally during this period to prepare for the launch of Adopt Coast to Coast, the Regional Adoption Agency, which is a partnership model for Durham, Cumbria and Together for Children/Sunderland. A shadow launch is planned for 1 February 2021.

The Pre-Birth model and ambition is to enable babies to remain with their parents, or at least within the birth family where it is safe to do so, or identify quickly that parents cannot meet their babies needs and ensure children achieve permanence without delay and numerous moves. The current criteria is that either parent has had a previous child permanently removed from their care through care proceedings.

A review of the Pre Birth Intervention Service (PBIS) was undertaken, this highlighted a great deal of positive and effective work being undertaken. However, it also highlighted the complexity of the work, a large proportion the team were working with parents who were resistant to the intensive 20-week pre-birth intervention programme and parents showed very little capacity of change. It was clear that the

intervention had deviated from the original intention and referrals were accepted whether meaningful consent was given by parents or not.

This led to a review of the criteria for the PBIS which focused on the most vulnerable groups of parents who would benefit from the intensive package of support on offer. Consideration has been given to care leavers, parents with a learning disability and parents who have had a previous child removed through care proceedings at least 12 months previous, where there are some noted positive changes of circumstances.

Following a successful regional 18 month pilot of the PAUSE project, Durham have commissioned their own PAUSE project from the licensed provider who would look to support 24 women across the county who have experienced repeat removals of children from their care. The Pause program works with mothers who have had 2 or more children removed permanently from their care, before they become pregnant again. The aim of the service is to help mothers address their own individual issues before they become pregnant, so that they stand a better chance of keeping their babies. This may be supporting them to access services to address their mental health issues, self-esteem, relationship issues, substance misuse issues, housing etc. It is anticipated PAUSE will 'go live' at the end of November 2020.

We monitor children with a plan of permanence with foster carers by understanding which children have a plan of permanence who are in a permanent placement awaiting a match and the number of children with a plan of permanence who are not in a permanent placement and who we are actively family finding for. We have reviewed the way in which we undertake family finding to ensure this is linked directly to the consultant social workers role. Whilst this work is in its early days, we have already seen an improvement.

To help us improve and reduce the time it takes to achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity we have embarked on a review of the performance data which we will then streamline to develop a cross service permanence tracker. This will tighten the focus, maintain grip and increase challenge

There are built in review points between the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service and social work team to monitor the progress of the child/young person's plan. This is in addition to those stated within the IRO Handbook.

All staff across Children Social Care were invited to attend workshops on Early Permanence and Family Time in the spring of 2020. Since then further work to promote the family time service has continued which has been really positively received by children, young people, parents and carers.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
Finalise the develop a service wide permanency dashboard and report which provides real time information which demonstrates progress and challenges drift.	February 2021
Continue to recruit prospective adopters and foster carers who can meet the needs of our children, particularly for brothers and sisters, children with complex needs and our older young people.	Ongoing
Review the Post Adoption Support offer, including streamlining the referral process and improving timeliness and consistency of response.	December 2020
Improvement the adoption workflow on LCS to aide service delivery and review.	January 2021
Support the adoption team and wider staff groups for the launch of Adopt Coast to Coast.	Ongoing
Review of the IRO Dispute Resolution Process to have a focus on improving outcomes for the child/young person.	October 2020
Implement the changes to the PBIS criteria	December 2020
PAUSE to go live	November 2020

Priority 5

Durham County Council and its partners will develop a 'local offer' for our care leavers and provide them with advice and support from a personal advisor until they are 25 years old.

Care Leavers need to have a range of appropriate accommodation options to meet their needs.

Achievements in 2019-20

- The Local Offer has been reviewed and work continues to be ongoing in order to develop services/support for care leavers. A meeting is planned in September 2020 with the Director of Children's Services and senior managers to look at broadening the offer across the council and with local community businesses.

There continues to be excellent working relationships between CYPS, Housing the Improving Progressions team, and human resources, to continuing developing The Local Offer with a range of suitable accommodation options for care leavers and extend the employment/further education opportunities. Work is also being undertaken to look at work experience on a wider scale within the council.

- Unfortunately, the EPIC awards have not taken place this year due to the COVID 19 pandemic, however achievements have been recognised on an individual basis.
- We currently have four Care Leavers in apprenticeship posts within the council, with a further three Care Leavers starting apprenticeships in September 2020.
- Work continues to develop further opportunities for Children Looked After and Care Leavers through the corporate apprenticeship approach and associated Organisational Development (OD)/Work Force Development (WFD) programmes e.g. work experience, traineeships.
- Close joint working continues with the CYPS Progression and Learning Team and the Looked After and Permanence Service to provide support to Children Looked After and Care Leavers to access the council's apprenticeships. All unemployed Children Looked After and Care Leavers have a Progression Advisor through the council's DurhamWorks programme.
- In addition to the support provided through DurhamWorks, Children Looked After and Care Leavers are supported through the recruitment process as follows:
 - guaranteed interview if essential criteria for the post is met;
 - revised qualification levels for apprenticeships, based on the minimum entry requirements for the apprenticeship standard subject to business requirements. This helps to remove qualification barriers for Children

- Looked After and Care Leavers to enable them to meet the essential criteria to be guaranteed an interview;
 - Where Children Looked After and Care Leavers are shortlisted, the Organisational Development (OD)/WFD team contact the Lead Officer prior to the interview to remind them of their corporate parenting responsibilities and to provide the highest level of support/opportunities in-line with these responsibilities.
- The teams are improving the quality of the pathway plans, ensuring a more consistent approach across the three teams, with all teams using the Signs of Safety practice model. Team managers are continuing to quality assure the plans, and this has also been reported back from the IROs. There is still room for further improvement and this work will be monitored closely by managers, IRO's and the Quality Improvement Service.
- Premises have been identified which will provide an opportunity for a drop-in centre to be developed. Refurbishment of the premises is expected to begin in December 2020.
- Joint work is being undertaken with Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), Housing Solutions and Commissioning to increase the supply of accommodation:
 - Housing Solutions and CYPS jointly fund supported accommodation provision for homeless young people, Children in Need and Care Leavers, delivered by Changing Lives for 16-21 year olds as part of Homeless Support Services Contract
 - The Newly formed County Durham Lettings Agency will provide further opportunities to source appropriate tenancy options for young people
 - Working with Housing Providers on New Start model to reduce bed blocking in Supported Accommodation and secure own tenancy.
 - A bid has been submitted by Housing Solutions to secure government funding to introduce a 'Housing First' model in Durham.
- A meeting has taken place with the Department for Education (DFE) to explore the possibility of us being part of a pilot to develop 'Staying Close'. Housing colleagues are looking to identify premises which are in the close locality of the residential home.
- Changing Lives have been successful in supporting young people into independent living from Hedley House, discussions are taking place to see if this can be developed further with outreach support workers supporting young people following the move.
- An accommodation and support framework for young people aged 16-18 with complex needs was commissioned in December 2019 and is now in place offering a range of solo occupancy provision across a range of providers. Market engagement was carried out as part of the commissioning exercise as referenced above. Accommodation options and gaps are evaluated on an ongoing basis and are considered in the sufficiency strategy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
Joint working continuing with Young People's Service (YPS) and housing to offer a wider range of suitable accommodation options for care leavers	Review April 2021
Joint working continuing with YPS Improving progress team, HR and the virtual school to extend opportunities for young people with employment, education and training through work experience, developing Teenagers to work and continuing to offer a wide range of apprenticeship opportunities	Review April 2021
Develop and review the Local Offer for care Leavers and broaden the offer across the council and local partnerships	Review April 2021
Joint working with commissioning to review and develop services to support care leavers	Review April 2021
Work with DFE, housing, residential and YPS to implement Staying Close	Review March 2021
Programme in place for Drop-in centre available for care leavers	April 2021
Continuous improvement of pathway plan assessments, with measurable outcomes	Review April 2021

Priority 6

We will work to ensure the right services are in place to meet the health and wellbeing needs of our children and young people

Achievements in 2019-20

- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT) have strengthened the Vulnerable Parent Pathway, and have introduced a single point of contact
- Within the safeguarding service specifications and Local Quality Requirements there are clear requirements for the Children Looked After nurse team with key outcomes relating to health assessments and health passports, supervision and training being reflected within the local quality requirements. In response, two dashboards have been developed for County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) to measure activity in regard to Children Looked After service delivery and improve our understanding of the Children Looked After cohort to inform and improve service delivery.
- The number of children seen by a paediatrician within 20 working days, if paperwork is received from the local authority within 7 working days, has shown an improvement. It is to be noted that some factors which may impact the assessments taking place cannot be controlled by either health or the local authority, for example young people leaving care before the assessment has been undertaken, parent/child refusing consent etc. However, these numbers are small and have limited impact on compliance.

Number of children offered IHA appointment within 20 working days of LAC start date, where paperwork was received from LA within 0-7 working days of coming into care.	78 (95%)	69 (100%)	57 (95%)	55 (100%)
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- The Designated Nurses successfully submitted a business case for additional resource into Durham, which includes a Designated Nurse for Children Looked After to give priority to children in care, and this post will commence in November 2020. One young person was an active panel member for this recruitment process. Furthermore, there will be an additional session for the Designated Doctor role which will support the strategic priorities as well as meeting the needs of children in care. As well as the Designated Doctor the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) also commission paediatric sessions to support the adoption medicals, initial health assessments and the panel requirements of both the adoption and fostering panels.
- A template has been developed to improve GP compliance and the quality of information being shared in health reviews for children. This will be embedded and audited during 2021.
- As part of the public health contract, 0-19 staff are commissioned to undertake review health assessments (6 monthly for under 5 and annual for over 5s) for those children in care within the boundaries of County Durham and Darlington, including those still in care at the point of leaving full time

education. The CDDFT Children Looked After nurse team will continue to request the member of staff undertake the assessment 3 months prior to the due date and will forward to the local authority upon completion. The Children Looked After nurses will monitor the quality and timeliness of review health assessments providing performance data to HDFT and CCGs on a quarterly basis. Furthermore, the new public health 0-25 contract that HDFT were successful in securing will consider the needs of care leavers. Further development will be part of the transformation process.

- During 2019/2020 The Looked After Health Needs subgroup continued to meet prior to the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions. This is a joint County Durham and Darlington partnership meeting with membership including health providers (CDDFT, HDFT), commissioners (Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health), Education and the Local Authority with two Young People as substantive members of the group. The sub-group meets bi – monthly with the aim of improving operational processes and the quality of services for children in care. The group is a subgroup of the Durham Children Looked After Strategic Partnership and Darlington Multi-Agency Children Looked After (MALAC) to which it is accountable. The aim is to support the improvement of health outcomes for Children Looked After and governance arrangements across County Durham & Darlington.
- During Covid all children continued to be offered an initial health assessment (IHA) and review health assessment (RHA). Health agencies responded quickly to a new and uncertain situation ensuring the health needs of our young people were either met or at least followed up post lockdown. The Designated Nurses joined a daily National Network of Designated Health Professionals to understand the emerging picture for children in care during this pandemic, which included understanding the provision for care leavers and unaccompanied asylum seeking children as well as those in pre-adoptive placements. The challenge for health professionals going forward is to understand the impact of the pandemic on our children and their families, to understand what has worked well and what we need to adapt, and this must be completed jointly with children and young people.
- The Health Needs Assessment identified the following four priority areas, and work has taken place to implement the recommendations and actions plan:
 1. Mental health and emotional wellbeing
Currently half of all children in care meet the criteria for a possible mental health disorder, compared to one in ten children outside the care system. Pathways to access mental health services need to be robust and clear to all agencies. In response to this, a task and finish group was established in October 2019 to produce an outcomes audit to include mental health and the emotional well-being of children in care. Public Health worked closely with key partners to lead a review and improve the current mental health pathway for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. This was progressed via a workshop which reviewed the pathways and resources for addressing mental health and emotional wellbeing for children in care in County Durham including the KOOOTH programme of online support for

young people. Commissioned by TEWV 'KOOOTH' is a free, online counselling and emotional wellbeing platform which is available to young people aged 11-18 years across County Durham and Darlington. Public Health report on data and progression of the review for Children Looked After to the aforementioned children looked after groups in County Durham and Darlington.

2. Risk-taking behaviours, including smoking, substance misuse, sexual health and teenage conceptions

We continue to deliver the updated rolling training programme including introduction to sexual health services, C Card and Sexual Health and the law to Foster Carers and staff within residential homes, however the impact of Covid 19 has caused delays.

Pathways are in place to ensure that Children Looked After and Care Leavers are able to access dedicated, enhanced support through Teen Mother Pathway delivered by County Durham and Darlington's Integrated Sexual Health Service. This service provides effective contraception advice, and a subsequent plan to prevent further unplanned conceptions.

Education Durham continue to offer a comprehensive offer of training and support to staff who are supporting Children Looked After and Care Leavers, this includes the delivery of a number of evidence-based programmes aimed at promoting topics such as confidence and self-esteem and healthy relationships.

3. Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

In respect of Speech and Language we undertook an audit of speech and language therapy (SLT) assessment of children during their initial health assessments. As an outcome from that piece of work we explored utility of the clear cut communication tool and agreed as a strategic partnership to look at embedding this assessment in the early stages of working with children, young people and their families, recognising that communication underpins any support, intervention or plan. This is in the process of being rolled out within Children's Services

4. Wider determinants of health for care leavers: e.g. education, employment and training; accommodation and financial management

All children aged 16-17 years should now receive a summary of their health records in line with 'Promoting the health and wellbeing of Children Looked After: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS England (2015)'. A working group was established in 2017 to develop and introduce health passports, in line with the pathway plan and 'developmentally appropriate healthcare'. Young people were consulted, and one young person attended the working group deciding when and how they wanted this information to be shared. Those young people not opting in continue to be reviewed within review health assessment processed to ensure they are appropriately signposted for

their health needs. Additionally, 100% of the Review Health Assessments for Care Leavers are quality assured.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
Determine if young people age 16+ want digital Health Passports See what Apps are currently on the market/available	Ongoing
Further identify ways to ensure we include the voice of our Children Looked After and young people	Ongoing
To work with GP practices to inform GPs about their responsibilities to care leavers by progressing the Task and Finish Group gap analysis based on Children Looked After commissioning toolkit	August 2021
Increase compliance of Primary Care GP information to inform initial and review health assessments.	May 2021
The GP Template completed however requires further action to embed into primary care	February 2021
Initial Health Assessment Quality assurance audit to be completed	April 2021
Children Looked After outcomes multiagency audit to be completed with the agreed focus to include Care Leavers, access to health assessments, mental health and emotional wellbeing, to include child/Young Person's voice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - did we listen? - were we accessible? 	May 2021
Due to an increase in under 1's in Durham becoming looked after, plan a review of the pre-birth service including birth response plans and Early Help	February 2021
The impact of Covid 19 on Children Looked After and the assessments utilising the national questionnaire March – June identifying the views of children prior to reviews in September to include the voice of the child and influence of further services provision	December 2020
Continue the development of a process for health passports for those young people who are placed out of area and those requesting a passport post 18 years	August 2021
Roll out of ClearCut Communication Tool across Virtual School, Early Help and Looked After service initially	March 2021

Priority 7

We will continue to work with our children and young people to ensure they have opportunities to access good education, employment and training to achieve their full potential.

Achievements in 2019-20

- The process for completing Personal Education Plans (PEPs) has been streamlined to ensure we meet the 10-day deadline for initiation, and work is ongoing to improve quality assurance systems. A new IT system has been implemented to help achieve this. This now covers early years and Post 16 PEPs for Year 12 and will support Year 13 from September 2021.
- We have improved opportunities for our children and young people to have their voice heard with regards to education / voice of the child (VOTC). We have attended Children in Care Council meetings and have supported them in producing a leaflet for the Designated Teacher. They are to support a future Network meeting. We are working with them to produce a series of Podcasts for the Virtual School website.
- Work with social care teams has been undertaken to establish a PEP process for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Post 16 and in September 2020 we moved to an electronic system.
- We reviewed the impact of the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) grant and explored how to use it more effectively to secure additional and timely therapeutic input to support emotional and mental wellbeing and readiness to learn. We have secured a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Full Circle to provide an Early Help helpline for schools and training where the need is identified. We have access to 0.5 Education Psychology and an SLA with Durham Counselling Service. We have promoted the SLA with schools, settings, social workers and IRO with Future Steps (Occupational Therapy).
- We continue to share National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH) research. During the Covid period the focus has been on outcomes for children, supporting Carers during lockdown, supporting emotional wellbeing, attachment and trauma. Information was shared with the Head of Children's Social Care on the outcomes of the research on Children in Need and Children Looked After which was carried out by David Berridge (Emeritus Professor of Child and Family Welfare).
- Work is ongoing with teams in Early Years and Post 16 to ensure seamless transition in and out of statutory education and support young people to achieve the best outcomes they can to support transition into Employment, Education and Training (EET). WE have added an Early Years Specialist to the Virtual School team (0.4 Post) to support Early Years children as they move into reception. We have also introduced systems to share information and establish clear communications between Early Years settings and

schools. A seconded post from the Progression and Learning Team has been brought in to support the Post 16 system, work with Young People's Advisors (YPAs), Post 16 providers and Children Looked After PEP Caseworkers to introduce improved systems for transferring information to help the young person succeed in Post 16 settings. This post will also play an active part in supporting young people to avoid them from becoming NEET.

- Care Leavers have continued to receive sustained wrap-a-round support through the DurhamWorks Programme, to enable them to progress into and remain in Education, Employment and Training. Since the Programme commenced, 579 young people who identified themselves as Children Looked After / Care Leaver have been supported by DurhamWorks. Of these, 224 young people have completed the programme, with 190 progressing into Education, Employment or Training – a progression rate of 84.8%.
- Care Leavers have accessed opportunities to increase their confidence and motivation, as part of the DurhamWorks Programme. For example, Care Leavers have had the opportunity to access specialist learning provision (First Point Training - On the Road Programme), which has focused on providing support to young people who have additional needs / barriers.
- Two Care Leavers successful obtained Apprenticeship opportunities with Durham County Council. These posts were ring-fenced specifically for Care Leavers (the original intention was to ring-fence six Apprenticeship positions for Care Leavers but as a result of Covid 19, the overall recruitment of Apprenticeships by Durham County Council was reduced). Additional support was provided to Care Leavers applying for the Apprenticeships through the DurhamWorks Programme, this included support with their application form and interview preparation.
- Care Leavers in Year 11 received information about their Post-16 progression pathways through one-to-one careers interviews from Specialist Progression Advisers during school. There are also annual Post-16 Options Events which are specially tailored for Care Leavers. There has been an increase in the proportion of Care Leavers progressing into post-16 Education, Employment or Training – the 2019 Year 11 Activity Survey shows that 86.9% were participating in learning, compared to 82.1% in 2018.
- The number of Care Leavers into Higher Education is increasing. In 2019-20, 23 Care Leavers were attending a Higher Education institution, compared to one young person in 2010.
- We continue celebrating the success of Care Leavers who progress into Post-16 EET through annual awards, which included the annual EPIC Awards (organised by the Children and Young People's Service). Care Leavers were also nominated for awards at the annual DurhamWorks Achievement Awards.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
Undertake consultation on top slice PP+ with DAPH / DASH.	Ongoing
Develop Work Experience, Traineeship and Apprenticeship opportunities for Children Looked After and Care Leavers, by embedding our 'Durham County Council Pathway for Young People'	Ongoing
Develop more opportunities for young people to develop skills for life, to support their transition.	Ongoing
Work with Social Care to identify smoother transitions and improved procedures when a child/young person is placed outside of County and the move is Care led.	December 2020
Provide further training on the ePEP system for Social Workers and IRO's to ensure a high quality PEP is produced for all Children Looked After of Statutory School Age.	December 2020
Embed the new Virtual School structure to support better outcomes for Children Looked After	November 2020
Develop training for Post 16 Providers and YPA's to support the new PEP system.	September 2020
IROs to review all plans as part of the looked after review relating to a child/young person which will include the PEP, EHCP and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).	October 2020
Utilise opportunities through the Government's Plan for Jobs e.g. the Kickstart Scheme, to support unemployed Care Leavers who have been affected by COVID-19, to progress into employment.	October 2020
Provide further pathways into employment within Durham County Council for Care Leavers e.g. paid sessional employment opportunities.	December 2020

Priority 8

The engagement and influence of children and young people is a key priority across Durham County Council.

We will continue to work with Children Looked After to ensure that we have adequate strategies in place to hear their voice. We will work proactively to ensure that opportunities are available to enable more young people to share their views and be involved in developing services and setting priorities.

Achievements in 2019-20

- Meetings with DCC's Chief Executive Officer and the CICC continue to take place, providing young people an opportunity to have discussions and share ideas, thoughts or concerns directly.
- Children and young people are regularly part of the recruitment process for staff who will be working with Children Looked After and Care Leavers within the council. The views of children and young people are also included in relevant recruitment packs so that candidates know what children want from their practitioners from the outset.
- Children and young people can chair their own looked after reviews where they wish to do so.
- Two young people from the CICC have co-opted positions on the CPP and attend each meeting (supported by IIC) to share feedback from the CICC. The young people attend the full meeting and are involved in decision making within the CPP, which influences service decisions and developments as necessary.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, CPP meetings were cancelled from March 2020 and replaced by monthly virtual meetings with young people from the CICC, providing an opportunity for young people to maintain regular contact with the chair and vice chair of the panel, along with senior leads from CYPS. These meetings do not pick up CPP work programme items, instead they are led by the young people and are proving to be popular, with young people keen to engage.

- In addition to the formal CPP meetings, children and young people from the CICC (supported by IIC) host a joint meeting with the CPP every 6 months. The young people set the agenda/venue for the meeting and invite members and officers of the CPP to attend to meet with the full CICC. This is a much less formal meeting than the CPP meeting, and provides an opportunity for all of the young people who are part of the CICC to raise issues which are important to them, and have discussions directly with members and officers of the CPP. Feedback from the discussions is collated by IIC and key issues are presented by the young people from the CICC at a formal CPP meeting, for further discussion. Work takes place to address these issues within the service, and feedback is provided to the CICC at the next joint meeting.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, these meetings have been incorporated into the monthly virtual meetings, with wider CICC members being encouraged to join in.

- During Covid 19, young people from the CICC have developed two newsletters, which have been circulated to members of the CPP and also shared with The Children's Commissioner for England to enable our young people's experiences to be included in a piece of work they are doing about 'life in lockdown'.
- As CPP meetings have been cancelled, a monthly briefing has been developed to ensure that members of the CPP receive assurance around the wellbeing of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers during the pandemic and receive regular updates on how young people are being supported in response to the current situation.
- At the request of our young people, photographs and profiles of Regulation 44 visitor are on display in all residential settings so that the young people know who's who before they come to visit their home. These have also been included in the CPP Annual Report.
- All of Durham County Council's looked after services and their nine residential homes have retained the Investing in Children Membership AwardTM, and each were able to clearly demonstrate the ways in which children and young people had a voice and evidence the changes that had been made as a result.
- Young people from the CICC have continued to be involved in the co-production of the CPP annual report during the pandemic, with meetings being adapted to virtual communications. This has proved successful, allowing young people to be involved in the process from start to finish.
- Young people from the CICC challenged the CPP to undertake the Care Leavers Challenge to live on £57.90 per week. The young people want members to understand some of the challenges faced by care leavers, and champion for change on the back of this. Following a previous challenge, a letter was sent to the Secretary of State for Education requesting that consideration be given to bring the benefits system in line with the legislative requirements of local authorities to provide care to the age of 25.

From this year's challenge one of the significant issues was transport costs, and as a result this has been identified as a priority area of focus in the CPP Annual Report for 2020-21.

- Young people from the CICC deliver foster carer training to potential foster families and feedback has been that this is invaluable in informing potential foster families to make informed decisions.

- Young people from the CICC deliver training to those on Social Worker courses in the North East, ensuring these students understand what young people in care want from a social worker from the outset.
- Head of Service training was delivered last year by the CICC, to ensure senior leaders are aware of the views of our children and young people, and use this to shape service delivery
- Young people sit on the fostering panel, and supported lodgings panel to provide diverse representation, from a young people's perspective.
- Consideration is being given to the language used across Durham County Council as a result of feedback from children and young people. Further work is scheduled to take place to address this, but some initial changes have been made, including:
 - Using 'children who are looked after' instead of 'LAC'
 - Using 'family, brother/sister' instead of 'siblings'
 - Using the 'family time' instead of 'contact'
- Feedback from the CICC, indicated that the young people thought that the 'risk assessment forms' which were completed before they went into placements made it sound like they were dangerous and should not be placed. Members of the CPP requested work to be undertaken on this to address the young people's concerns and the forms have been amended and agreed by the young people.
- Following our continued commitment to listen to young people and act on what they tell us, we are making changes to the rooms where family time takes place after feedback indicated that these are not particularly nice places to spend time. Young people, supported by staff within the service have identified the changes they wish to make to the rooms, and have sought out items they want to purchase. The money to make these changes have been allocated by members from their own individual neighbourhood budgets. Work will continue, although the Covid 19 pandemic has slowed progress.
- The CPP recognised the importance of informal meetings, and the value this brings in effective communications. With this in mind, elected members donated money from their own budgets to pay for our care leavers to go out for a Xmas meal in 2019. The young people chose the venue and 31 young people, 2 of their own children and 14 staff from the YPS celebrated together. Enough money was secured to repeat this in 2020, although due to the Covid 19 pandemic we are looking to postpone this until 2021.
- Across Children and Young People's Services, 44 teams have worked with young people to achieve Investing In Children Membership Awards, which give national recognition for the good practice and active inclusion of children and young people in dialogue that results in change

- The IRO service has worked in partnership with the CICC to establish a young people forum to hold the IRO service to account, feedback on developments and provide an expert view as care experienced young people on any future changes needed for the service.

What further action will we take and when?

What	When
Durham County Council engagement approach to be rolled out across the council, with the development of a youth council with representation from the CICC	October 2020
Exploration into the expansion of the Freedom Cards to establish a discount scheme for care leavers.	Ongoing
Care Experienced Young Inspectors would help us to shape the services we provide in Durham County Council Children's Residential homes. The Inspectors will be developing a framework and toolkit, accessing training and support to allow them to carry out the role of a Young Inspector. The role would involve them visiting homes and sharing their views and observations on the services provided to the young people and their home.	April 2021
Work with young people to improve WIFI in our Children's Homes	April 2021

Corporate Parenting Panel

26 February 2021

Care Leavers' Strategy – Annual report



**Report of Helen Fergusson, Head of Children's Social Care,
Durham County Council**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update Corporate Parenting Panel on progress against the objectives set out in the Care Leavers' Strategy 2019 to 2023.
- 2 To provide a refreshed and updated Care Leavers' Strategy for 2021 (appendix 2).
- 3 To provide a Care Leavers Action Plan for 2021 (appendix 3).

Executive summary

- 4 The Care Leavers Strategy has been in place for a number of years now and it is recognised that it will need a full re-write in 2021.
- 5 Although there has been less progress against the strategic priorities this year due to the impact of COVID-19, performance against a number of strategic priorities has remained strong.
- 6 The action plan sets out a number of strategic priorities and associated actions to be completed over the course of 2021, aimed at improving outcomes for care leavers.

Recommendation

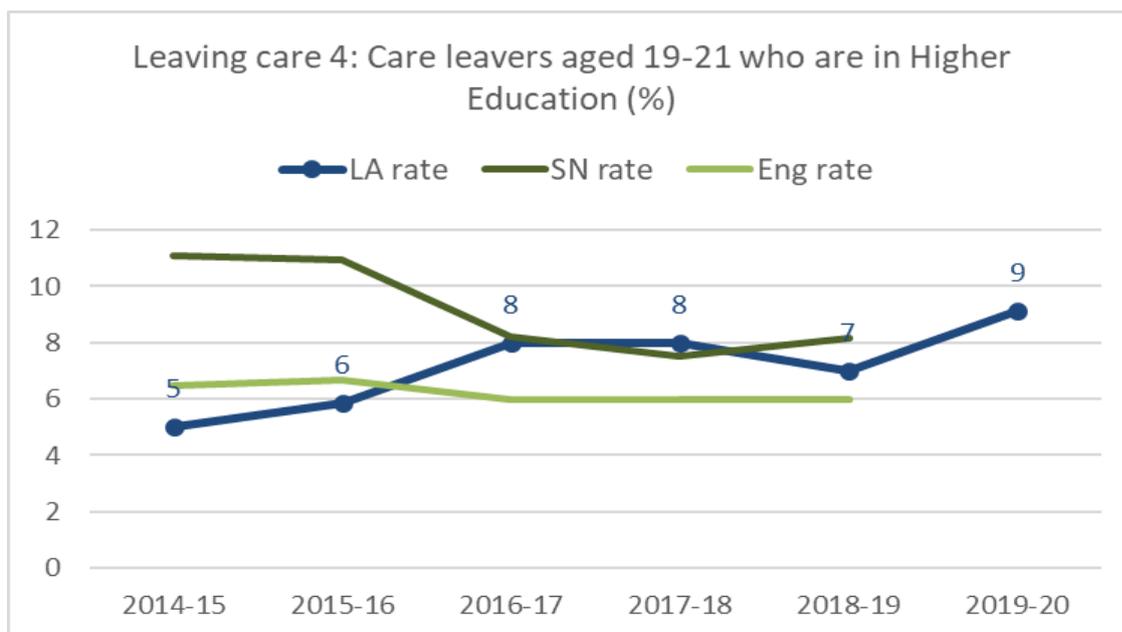
- 7 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:
 - (a) Receive this report and the updated care leavers strategy and care leavers action plan.

Background

- 8 The original Care Leavers Strategy was written in 2015. In 2019 the strategy was updated to reflect changes in legislation and practice, but it remains fundamentally the same as the 2015 strategy.
- 9 This updated version of the strategy will be fully and re-written, and a new Action Plan agreed, in November 2021.
- 10 As of October 2020, Durham was responsible for 381 care leavers. Of these, 248 care leavers were receiving an active service from the Young People's Service, and either had a social worker or a Young Person's Advisor (YPA). The remaining 133 care leavers were what is referred to as 'In Monitoring', which relates to older care leavers who choose not to have active involvement with the service but can access support from the Young People's Service at any time. The service has a responsibility to keep in contact with these young people at intervals of no less than twice a year. If a young person requires any additional support, they will be allocated a Young Peoples Advisor.

Progress against Objectives in Care Leavers Strategy 2019 - 2023

- 11 The previous Action Plan was devised for 2017 – 2021, therefore is not in line with the timescales for the current strategy. Many of the original objectives have been achieved, and others are no longer relevant.
- 12 As of December 2020, Durham's performance on most of the key indicators of outcomes for care leavers, such as suitable accommodation, remains strong, despite the impact of Covid.
- 13 For example, in relation to accommodation of care leavers, throughout 2019/20 the Young People's Service continued to work with Housing colleagues to develop a range of accommodation options for care leavers, including Hedley House and the Durham Lettings Agency.
- 14 As of December 2020, 88% of 17 and 18 year olds and 95% of 19 to 21 years olds were in suitable accommodation. This included 18 18 to 20 year olds in a 'staying put' arrangement with their former foster carers at the end of 2019/20. We also have an additional 18 young people living in Supported Lodgings 'staying put' with former carers.
- 15 Likewise, Durham's performance in relation to participation of care leavers is in line with or above that of our comparators, with 70% of 17 and 18 year olds and 65% of 19 to 21 year olds in education, employment and training at the end of 2020.
- 16 We are particularly proud to report that we currently have 30 young people at University or other higher education establishments.



- 17 The Local Offer now includes an additional winter fuel allowance for care leavers with low incomes.
- 18 The mental health of our care leavers continues to be a key priority, particularly in relation to the impact of Covid. The Full Circle Therapeutic service now works in a trauma-informed way with 18 to 21 year olds as well as younger care leavers.

Future Developments

- 19 We will involve care leavers in developing support services, group sessions and drop-ins at the new Care Leavers hub, from April 2021.
- 20 We are rolling out the use of the ClearCut Communication tool to assist us in understanding the communication needs of care leavers. Staff will be trained to use the tool from April 2021 onwards.
- 21 We will extend the current offer provided at Hedley House, based on the findings at the 6-month review stage, developing two dispersed supported living properties with outreach support, in line with our increasing care leaver numbers.
- 22 In addition to the use of Staying Put, the Young People's Service, in conjunction with Residential Services, will develop a Staying Close pilot. This will enable young people to continue to receive support from the staff they know after they leave children's homes within County Durham.
- 23 We will continue to work to improve the quality of pathway plans, fully involving young people in developing their plans.

- 24 We will review and update the independence and life skills programme for care leavers.
- 25 We will work with health colleagues to ensure that all care leavers aged 15 + are offered a Health Passport.
- 26 To increase employment options, we are developing sessional work opportunities across Durham County Council and are exploring how to increase positive action in relation to care leavers within the County Council's Recruitment Policy.

Conclusion

- 27 Despite the challenging circumstances resulting from the Covid pandemic, efforts are continuing to expand opportunities for care leavers to achieve positive outcomes and realise their potential.

Author

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Services for care leavers are subject to legislation and statutory guidance

Finance

None

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Care Leavers' strategy is inclusive of young people in all protected groups

Climate Change

No impact

Human Rights

The Strategy promotes the rights of care leavers

Crime and Disorder

The Strategy includes consideration of Youth Justice implications

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None

Appendix 2: Care Leavers' Strategy for 2021

Attached as a separate document

Appendix 3: Care Leavers Action Plan for 2021

Attached as a separate document

Care Leavers Strategy

2019 – 2023

[Updated January 2021]

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Appendices

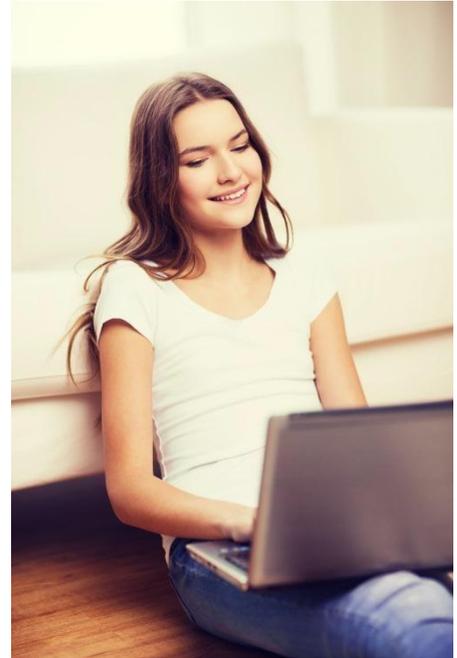
1. Number of Care Leavers – Table	
2. Care Leavers Steering Group Action Plan 202	

1. Introduction

As Corporate Parents we want to give Care Leavers every opportunity to be happy, healthy and safe and to achieve their full potential. It is important that their transition into adulthood is positive and that all young people have the necessary life-skills, confidence and experience to enable them to thrive.

The responsibility for meeting the needs of Care Leavers requires an integrated multi-agency approach involving the Young People's Service within Children's Services, the County Council as a whole, and our partners.

This Strategy is supported by a Care Leavers Action Plan (2020/21) which outlines how the priorities within this document will be delivered.



2. Definition of 'Care Leaver'

The term 'care leaver', as defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, refers to eligible, relevant and former relevant children:

- **Eligible** children are those young people aged 16-17 who are still in care and have been 'looked after' for a total of 13 weeks from the age of 14 and including their 16th birthday;
- **Relevant** children are those young people aged 16 and 17 who have already left care, and who were 'looked after' for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and have been 'looked after' at some time while they were 16 or 17;
- **Former relevant** children are those young people aged 18, 19 or 20 who have been eligible and/or relevant.

A Care Leaver can also be considered as a '**qualifying**' care leaver. This applies to young people who:

- Left care after they had turned 16, but who are not 'eligible' or 'relevant' because they were not looked after for 13 weeks.

- Were not looked after on their 16th birthday, but lived in residential education or a mental health establishment, or in private fostering or Special Guardianship.

For this category of care leaver, local authority help is discretionary, but can include advice, assistance, befriending, help with education and training costs and the provision of accommodation during college/university vacations.

3. Purpose

This Strategy reflects a 'whole' system integrated approach to support Care Leavers. It provides a framework for the Council, elected members, officers and partners to fulfil our duties and responsibilities as Corporate Parents of Care Leavers.

The document outlines what we have achieved and areas that we would like to develop further.

The successful implementation of this strategy will result in the following benefits:

- Improved health and well-being of our Care Leavers;
- Emotional resilience;
- Improved placement stability, safety and quality;
- More opportunities and improved attainment at school, college and university for our young people;
- Young people leaving care on an educational or work route that meets their ambitions;
- Resources being used to maximise outcomes

4. National Context and Guidance

In 2018/19, 11,140 young people left care in England. Of these 1,530 were aged 17 and 9,610 were 18.

Young people leaving care tend to leave home at a much younger age and have more abrupt transitions to adulthood than their peers.

Under the Government's Strategy for Care Leavers, 'Keep On Caring; Supporting Young People from Care to Independence' published July 2016, the entitlement of care leavers was extended, enabling young people to access support from a local authority Personal Adviser until the age of 25..

Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that other young people receive from their parent(s). This strategy is based on the principles of good corporate parenting, in line with the government's commitment to remove some of the practical barriers that care leavers face as they progress into adulthood.

National Guidance on the Local Offer

The 2016 'Keep On Caring; Supporting Young People from Care to Independence' strategy also included the development of the Local Offer to care leavers, which was placed on a statutory footing by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This requires local authorities to publish their information about the services it offers to care leavers which may assist them in preparing for adulthood and independent living. These services may include health and wellbeing, education and training, employment, accommodation, and participation in society.

The guidance on the Care Leavers Local Offer, issued February 2018, states that local authorities should provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers, including information about their statutory entitlements, as well as any discretionary support that a local authority chooses to provide.

5. Durham's Vision and Local Context

The County Durham Vision for 2035 includes the aspirations that:

'Our young people will achieve their full potential by having access to good quality education and training to prepare them for employment'

And:

'Our children and young people will have the best start in life and enjoy good health and emotional wellbeing'

Our vision for the County's children and young people is:

'County Durham will be a great place for children and young people to grow up in and for Durham to be a place where all children are healthy, happy, safe and achieving their potential.'

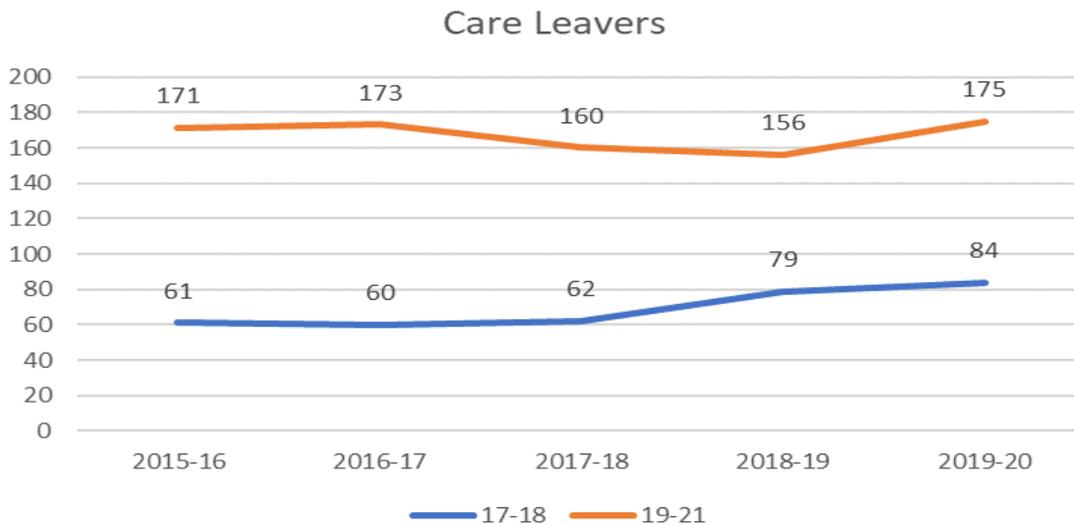
In line with these visions, our aspiration for our care leavers is:

“All care leavers live in suitable and appropriate accommodation, they are well supported and the service has the same aspirations for them as we would our own children to ensure they realise their potential”

Local Context

In the last 5 years Durham has seen an increase in the number of care leavers that it supports aged 17-18 and in the last year also an increase in those aged 19-21, following a decrease over the last 2 years. This is reflected in Graph 1. NB: The Department for Education amended the way care leaver figures were collated and reported in 2016.

Graph 1 – Care Leaver Figures (Updated October 2020)



In Durham, when a looked after young person reaches the age of 15, the Young People’s Service works closely with the Looked After Team to facilitate the transfer of the young person to a social worker within the Young People’s Service. The role of the YPS social worker is to become involved in the young person’s pathway plan and providing ongoing support to develop independent living skills.

When a young person reaches the age of 18 they are assigned a Personal Advisor, unless the young person is a young parent or has high level complex needs, in which situation their social worker will remain involved. The Personal Advisor will support the young person in their life choices and providing practical support.

Durham’s Performance in relation to Care Leavers:

- In 2019-20, 65% of our Care Leavers aged 17-18 were in education, employment and training (EET), in comparison to 64% in England, 63% in our Statistical Neighbours and 63% in the North East (2018-19).
- In 2019-20, 54% of our Care Leavers aged 19-21 were in education, employment and training (EET), in comparison to 52% in England, 52% in our Statistical Neighbours and 50% in the North East (2018-19). This includes an increase in the proportion in higher education to 9% which is also higher than comparators.
- In 2019-20, 90% of our Care Leavers aged 17-18 were in suitable accommodation, in comparison to 88% in England, 91% in our Statistical Neighbours and 93% in the North East (2018-19).
- In 2019-20, 83% of our Care Leavers aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation, compared to 85% in England, 87% in our Statistical Neighbours and 90% in the North East (2018-19).

Educational attainment on leaving care

As the attainment of our care leavers at Key Stage 4 is an important determinant of outcomes throughout life, every effort is made to maximise their attainment.

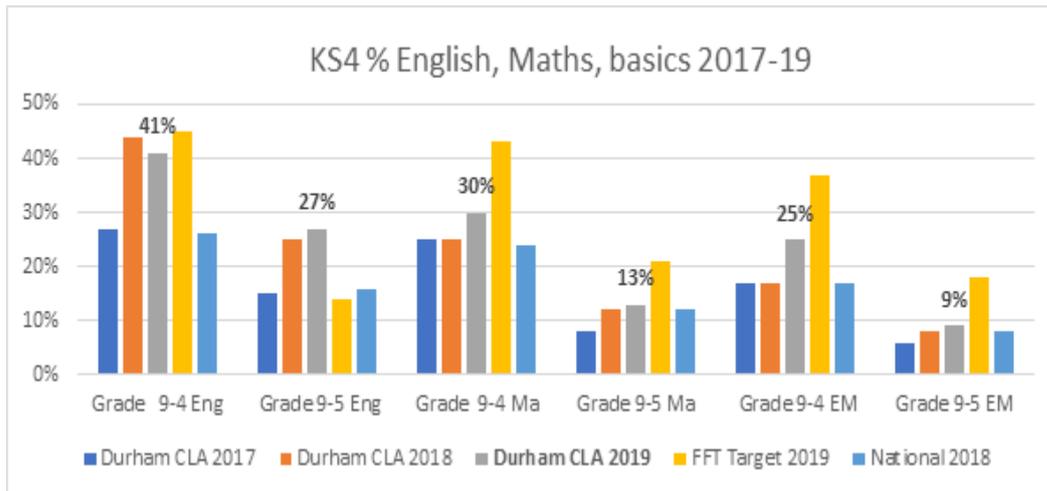
In 2019 there was further improvement in attainment at KS4 with a positive 3-year trend in all measures apart from English at Grade 9-4, where results showed a slight dip (3%, equivalent to 2 pupils). This followed a 17% increase the previous year

The Virtual School had shared their concerns about the 2018 maths outcomes with schools, and provided maths tutors for many of the cohort, and as a result this subject shows signs of improvement. The Virtual School was able to offer tutoring in a range of subjects in 2019, held revision sessions and worked with therapeutic services for those young people who were very anxious about exams. 4 young people with identified needs achieved grade 4+ in English, 5 achieved this in maths, and 3 achieved both, a real achievement. There are still gaps with all Durham children, but it is expected that these results will be above the national averages for children in care when comparative data is available.

The 3-year increase at 9-5 is a result of targeting higher grades and instilling higher expectations. In 2019 our young people deserve

congratulations for achieving 4 grade 7s and 1 grade 9 between them in English and Maths

However outcomes for our children continue to be below the targets provided to schools by the Fisher Family Trust (FFT), in line with the national trend. (FFT is a charitable organisation who use data about specific children to produce predicted grades. Schools can then use as a benchmark to monitor a child's performance.)



6. Our Promise

Children and young people who are looked after have the right to the same outcomes as every child in County Durham – to ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm and are enabled to ‘believe, achieve and succeed’.

Our ‘promise’ to all children and young people in care and care leavers is:

- To treat you with respect and as an individual;
- To help find you the best available home where you feel safe, cared about and treated well for as long as you need
- To help you stay in touch with family and friends like other young people not in care where it is safe and appropriate;
- To take what you say seriously by listening to you and trying to act on what you say;

- That you will have a Social Worker who will get to know you well and who will keep in contact and listen to what you say;
- To really listen to things you would like to change about the care system to make your daily life better where there are problems;
- To work in an open and honest way and share any information or changes with you;
- To involve you in any decisions, plans and changes that affect you and your future and your Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, carers and other people who support you will make sure that this happens;
- To make sure we offer you the opportunities, guidance and support needed in placement, in education, your health and all other areas of life;
- To help you be the best that you possible can at school, college, training and employment;
- To give you all the support and help you need to make a success of moving on from being cared for to living an independent adult life;
- To work together and support you during every transition in your life while you are looked after, for example during placement moves, when you are leaving care and similar situations.



7. Corporate Parenting and Governance

The Corporate Parenting Panel in Durham recognise that they have a critical role in both setting the strategic direction of the council's services and in determining policy priorities. The Corporate Parenting Action Plan sets out 3 priority areas (see appendix 2). These are:

- Employment, education and training (EET);
- Care Leavers; and
- Placement Stability

We will:

“Continue to be excellent parents for care leavers and wish to see every care leaver have the very best experience and chances in life, as any good parent would expect”

8. Strategic Priorities

In 2019 the key strategic priorities for the 3 years 2020 to 2023 were refreshed. These are in line with the priorities outlined in the National Care Leaver Strategy, 'Keep On Caring; Supporting Young People from Care to Independence', 2016.

(i) Physical Health and Mental Health

Children often enter the care system with a poorer level of physical and mental health than their peers, and their longer-term outcomes remain worse.

Young people making the transition to adulthood may have continuing health needs that require ongoing treatment. The Department of Education Statutory Guidance – Promoting the health and wellbeing of looked-after children (2015) states that local authorities should ensure that there are effective plans in place to enable looked after children aged 16 to 17 to make a smooth transition to adulthood, and that they are able to continue to obtain the health advice and services they need.

We will

- *Refocus the work of the Pre-Birth team to provide assessment and intervention to care leavers who are becoming parents and require that level of support, to maximise their opportunities for successful parenting*

We will continue to:

- *Support the emotional wellbeing of care leavers so they are able to reach their full potential. Ensure that each Looked After Child and Care Leaver has an up to date statutory health assessment and a health plan that outlines how their physical and emotional health needs will be met. These will be of high quality and will be timely.*
- *Make sure that health plans include personal and family health histories in order to enhance the value of health plans and facilitate better awareness of current and future health needs, including when children return home.*
- *Ensure that all Care Leavers have access to and understand their full health history by collating a 'Health Passport' with their health history recorded. They will also have access to all key documents such as birth certificate, passport, national insurance number and NHS number.*
- *Ensure that Care Leavers have advice on health matters prior to moving onto independence or semi-independence and have ongoing support. This will provide knowledge of their health history so that Care Leavers are empowered to manage their own health needs.*
- *Work collaboratively with Health partners to ensure young people and their personal advisors are aware of how to meet their health needs during the transition to adulthood and beyond?*
- *Ensure that personal advisors have access to information and training about how to promote physical and mental health.*



- *Ensure that a young person's health plan and pathway plan enables looked after children and care leavers to understand how they can promote their own health in the future by adopting healthy lifestyle choices e.g. diet, substance misuse, risk taking behaviours and emotional well-being, pregnancy, keeping safe, sexual health and the benefits of sport and exercise.*
- *Ensure that commissioning arrangements for health provision addresses inequality for care leavers and ensure they are a priority group.*
- *Continue to provide the Full Circle Service which is joint-funded with CAMHS that provides services to support and promote the emotional and psychological wellbeing of looked after children and young people, care leavers and their carers.*

We will:

- *Explore potential options for extending referral criteria for emotional and mental health services to include access for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This will prioritise short term placements, new placements, placements which may be at risk of breakdown and care leavers. The difficulties faced by Care Leavers in receiving mental health services was highlighted by young people in the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategic Needs assessment.*
Full Circle now works in a trauma-informed way with 18 to 21 year olds.
- *Develop policy and guidance so that all children, young people and care leavers can have access to support and specialist services to help them understand their past and reasons why they became looked after e.g. through life-story work, revisited at key stages and as they grow up. There is now a Life Story Work Co-ordinator in place, to maximise the opportunities for life story work being, and an Access to Records Officer post has recently been recruited to. We will develop awareness raising for the new Access to Records Officer and our YPAs on proportionate, appropriate and sensitive access to records, to improve outcomes for care leavers.*

(ii) Housing and Staying Put

Care Leavers are a vulnerable group of young adults who have particular needs in relation to housing and homelessness. Nationally around a quarter of people living on the streets have a background in care.

Securing better placement stability and increased choice to meet a variety of needs will enable young people to stay safe. Young people are discouraged from leaving their final placement until they are ready to manage on their own, with ongoing support as required.

We aim to secure placement stability through increased placement choice and to provide more tailored services to those young people with the most complex needs where they are unable to live in traditional care arrangements e.g. Children's Homes.

This continues to be supported by our 'Staying Put Policy', which was implemented in 2014, enabling young people to leave stable and secure homes when they are ready and able to make the transition to independence. It also helps young people enter adult life with the same opportunities and life prospects as their peers.

Staying Put enables care leavers to continue living with their former foster carers when they reach the age of 18. This is an 'arrangement' whereby a young person, who when they became 18 was in law an 'eligible child' placed with a foster carer, continues to live with that person. This arrangement can continue until the young person becomes 21. A young person who enters into a Staying Put arrangement is likely to view this as continuation of fostering and to refer to the person providing the care as their foster carer, in much the same way. Similarly, Staying Put carers will often view the arrangement as just an extension of fostering.

If a young person cannot stay within the family network or does not feel that this option is appropriate to them, our Young People's Service is able to offer tailored accommodation options that provides a pathway between care and independence. When it is appropriate for a young person to return home, we will support the young person to do this, through a package of support.

At the end of 2019/20, there were 18 18-20 year olds who were in a 'staying put' arrangement with their former foster carer. We also have an additional 18 young people living in Supported Lodgings 'staying put' with former carers.

In addition to the use of Staying Put, the Young People's Service, in conjunction with Residential Services, is developing a Staying Close policy to enable young people to continue receive support from the staff they know; once they leave residential care provision within County Durham.

We will continue to:

- *Take appropriate steps to increase the number of Care Leavers in suitable and appropriate accommodation.*
- *Support Care Leavers to move into a Staying Put arrangement with their carer(s) if this is what the young person and carer wants.*

- *Develop a Staying Close policy that will enable Care Leavers to continue to access support from staff within residential services*
- *Implement and monitor the use of an Independent Living Skills booklet for young people; in order to assist in their preparation for Independence*
- *Revise and re-develop the NOCN Accredited qualification across the service for young people who wish to participate in this nationally accredited qualification around developing independent living skills*
- *Provide a range of support and different types of semi-independent living accommodation which supports different levels of independence and transitions to adulthood and which meets the needs of those young people with the most complex needs.*
- *Commission a range of placements to meet the needs of young people who have come through the care system and are moving towards independence, including those young people who come into care as 16 or 17 year old Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.*
- *Increase and improve the capacity for Supported Lodgings for the 16-19 year old group. This will provide accommodation and support to young people who cannot 'Stay Put' or who wish to move. This will include provision of placements for vulnerable young people and young people with complex needs/behaviours that preclude them from mainstream supported accommodation options within County Durham.*
- *Apply a zero tolerance approach to the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people involved with our service. Only in an extreme emergency will bed and breakfast accommodation be used and for a maximum of 2 days in exceptional circumstances.*
- *To continue to work with the Housing Solutions Service to ensure young people access appropriate accommodation should they become homeless; ensuring CLASP meetings are held and the housing support plan devised under the remit of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 meets the needs of the young person.*

We will:

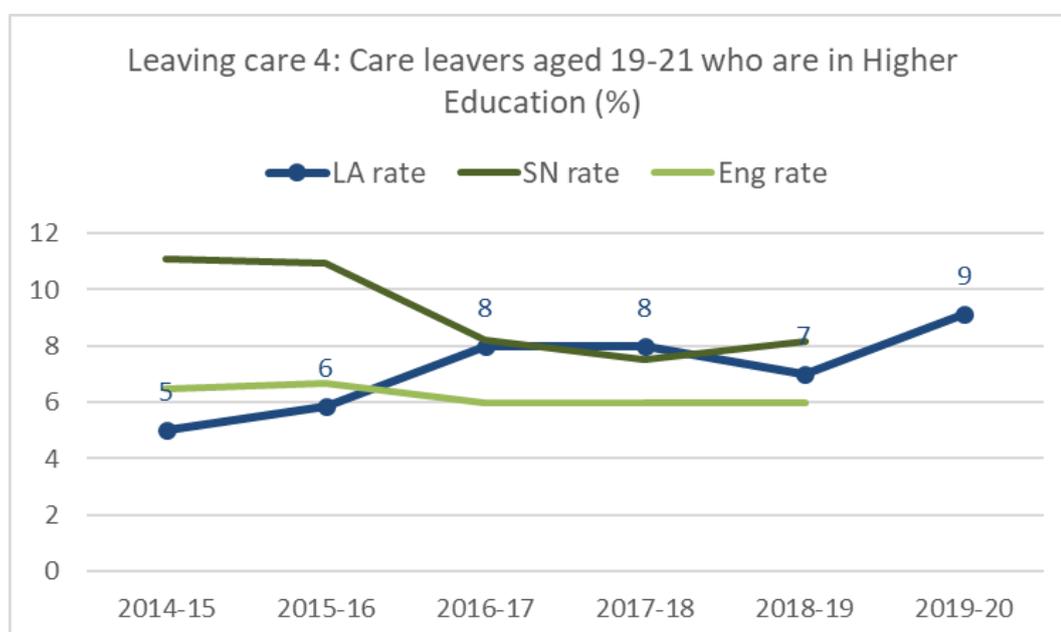
- *Develop a 'no eviction policy' within County Durham, which will result in improved placement stability.*
- *Continue to work with Housing colleagues to develop a range of accommodation options for care leavers, including utilising the Durham Lettings Agency.*

- *As part of our Sufficiency Duty, we will work with commissioners to develop a wider variety of services to meet the needs of those young people with the more complex needs.*
- *The revised and updated Sufficiency Strategy will include the provision of supported accommodation for care leavers*
- *Hedley House Supported Living Accommodation opened in 2019, housing 12 young people. We will explore the possibility of extending the current offer*

(iii) Education and Attainment

There continues to remain a gap between the educational achievements of care leavers and their peers. In 2019-20, 9% of Durham’s former relevant young people were in higher education, compared with 5% in 2014-15. As of October 2020 we have 30 young people in higher education. This is stronger performance than that of our comparators in 2018-19.

It is anticipated that these figures will continue to rise in forthcoming years, as work is undertaken with young people to raise their aspirations and improvements in educational attainment are progressed in Key Stage 4.



It is a priority that care leavers receive the support they need from schools, colleges, universities and local authorities to maximise their educational attainment and employment opportunities.

Young people aged 16-19 are currently supported to access a bursary via college to assist in their attendance at college.



We will continue to:

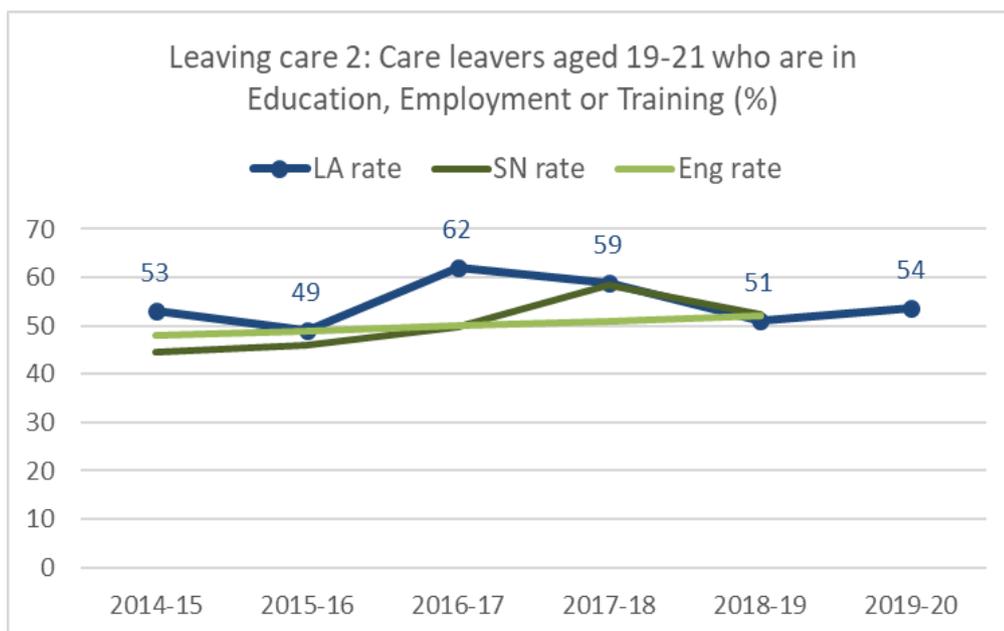
- *Ensure that Personal Advisors engage with future care leavers from Year 9.*
- *In line with Section 23 of the Children's Act 1989, ensure that young people eligible for leaving care services resume a programme of education or training after the age of 21.*
- *Provide care leavers with a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25, in line with Keep On Caring guidance; subject to the wishes of the young person.*
- *Encourage care leavers to attend further and higher education and give them specialist advice and support and careers advice when applying for further education or higher education where this meets their aspirations. (We currently have 30 young people in higher education).*
- *Provide information and advice on apprenticeships where this would be the most appropriate pathway.*
- *Support young people fully in their transition to higher education or further education, employment and training. The future life-chance of Care Leavers are dramatically improved if they can be supported effectively.*
- *Ensure that all partners are aware of a young person's potential from the end of Year 9 to enable them to receive the right support in a timely manner.*

- *Have a post 16 PEP in place for all Year 11's in line with Improving Progression legislation.*
- *Promote educational achievement for care leavers through the Virtual School head and ensure that a quality PEP is in place.*
- *Ensure that foster carers, social workers and teachers will all have high aspirations for young people and will work in partnership together having an active role in supporting transition into education, employment and training.*
- *Increase the proportion of young people aged 16 who achieve grade 5 and above in English and Maths and the Basics measure and improve their progress and grades across all subjects.*

(iv) Employment & Training

Employment and training not only provide the best route out of poverty, it also delivers positive change for individuals and for communities across County Durham. Having a job or accessing appropriate training provides structure, a sense of purpose, progress, achievement, encourages self- confidence and personal responsibility for young people who are Care Leavers. It is also important to note that young people have a statutory duty to participate in education, employment or training until at least their 18th birthday.

Through targeted work within the Young People's Service and through the partnership working with DurhamWorks, the number of young people aged 19-21 engaged in EET is 54%. This is above the England average of 50% and statistical neighbour rates of 52% for 2018-9.



The proportion of care leavers aged 17-18 engaged in EET is 65%, this is also higher than the England average of 64% and statistical neighbour average of 63% for 2018-19. Data from the Local Authority's Client Caseload Information System shows that the proportion of Care Leavers aged 16 and above participating in education, employment and training has increased across the previous three years, whilst the proportion of Care Leavers who are NEET has declined.

Participation in Education, Employment and Training of Care Leavers aged 16 +

	March 2018 %	March 2019 %	March 2020 %
Education	44.2	45.8	46.8
Employment	11.6	10.8	10.2
Training	5.1	6.6	5.7
Re-engagement Activities	2.3	3.3	10.2
Total EET	63.3	66.5	72.8
NEET	31.6	29.2	23.4

The Local Authority undertakes a number of actions to support Care Leavers into sustained education, employment and training. These include:

- The offer of individual careers guidance with a Specialist Progression Advisor to support transition.

- The opportunity to undertake work experience in occupational areas of interest through the Teenagers to Work Programme. (Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 Teenagers to Work could not operate during the summer of 2020)
- The opportunity to meet and discuss progression plans with a variety of learning providers at an annual Careers Event specifically for Care Leavers.
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships – including posts within the Local Authority that are specifically ring-fenced for Care Leavers.
- Wrap-a-round support for Care Leavers who are NEET through the DurhamWorks Programme.

We will:

- Enhance the quality of pathway planning in relation to education, employment and training by ensuring that the Young People’s Service has a greater awareness of careers information, advice and guidance.
- Ensure that Care Leavers receive support with their progression into post-16 education, employment and training through the new DurhamWorks Programme for Schools.
- Ensure that Care Leavers who have learning, physical and mental health barriers to employment are supported through the new DurhamEnable Programme.
- Ensure that Care Leavers whose employment prospects have been adversely affected by COVID-19 have access to the range of support available to young people, including Kickstart, Intensive Support, as well as Employment and Skills Hubs.
- Ensure that Care Leavers receive their entitlement of £1,000 when securing an Apprenticeship and that employers are aware of financial incentives for employing young people as Apprentices, including incentives introduced as part of the Government’s Action Plan for Jobs in response to COVID-19.
- Enhance opportunities for Care Leavers within the Local Authority, including sessional employment.
- Enhance the position of Care Leavers within the Local Authority’s recruitment process through the inclusion of an Equal Opportunities statement within corporate policy.

(v) Access to ongoing advice and support

Care leavers require support and guidance before and after they turn 18. The Government's 'Keep on Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence', published in July 2016, outlined the measures local authorities should undertake to ensure that young people are better prepared and supported to live independently. The key points identified were:



- setting out in law for the first time what it means for a local authority to be a good corporate parent;
- creating a new care leaver covenant; introducing a new legal duty on local authorities to consult on, and publish information about, services for care leavers; and
- extending existing entitlements so that all care leavers will be able to access support from a local authority Personal Adviser to age 25.

As an authority we have signed up to the Care Leaver Charter which is a set of principles that capture the high aspirations we wish for our young people who are preparing to leave care.

We will:

- *Update the format for our Pathway Plans in consultation with young people, making sure that every Pathway Plan has a clear overall objective, and timely, measurable, actions*

We will continue to:

- *Provide a range of services to meet the needs of older Looked After Children aged 16 to 25 through our Young People's Service.*
- *Ensure all that Providers support young people with transition to independence in line with the young person's pathway plan e.g. providing guidance and support to find permanent housing, accessing education, employment and training, practical living skills such as financial management, budgeting and claiming benefits.*

- *Encourage care leavers to access advice and support from independent advocates when required and to continue accessing Independent Visitors until they no longer feel the need to.*
- *Offer advice and support care leavers who are pregnant or who are young parents through the Young People's Service. Additional support will be offered through the Vulnerable Parents Pathway.*
- *Make sure that Care Leavers know how to make a complaint if they need to.*

We will

- *Develop the new Drop in Centre/Hub which is specifically for care leavers. This will offer facilities for group work, support from YPS welfare rights, health , therapeutic services and career guidance.*
- *Continue to ensure that we stay in touch with all care leavers aged from 16 to 25*

The Local Offer

In line with statutory guidance from Government, we have developed a Local Offer for young people leaving care and have established website pages and a booklet for young people, outlining the support they can expect to receive from the Young People's Service, the Council and its partner agencies and any entitlements they have to services and support.

Through the Local Offer, young people will be supported to access advice and guidance from the Young People's Service and will receive specific advice around:

- Support for you
- Where I can live
- Money
- Looking After yourself including physical and emotional health and wellbeing
- Education, Employment and Training

As care leavers, young people are also entitled to the following:

- up to £2,000 to set up home
- a discount on council tax with the possibility of not having to pay any at all
- get £2,000 to help with going to university
- get £1,200 to help with attending sixth form or college
- get £500 towards driving lessons

- get a Freedom Card which is a leisure and activity pass

(vi) Financial Assistance

Having timely financial help and support is crucial when you do not have the support of family to fall back on. Care leavers can often find it difficult to navigate services and work out what financial support they are entitled to. As a local authority we are committed to ensuring that care leavers are adequately supported financially in their transition from care to adulthood to enable young people leaving care to have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential as their peers.

We will continue to:

- *Offer advice and guidance to Care Leavers claiming Universal Credit, through specialist advice from the Welfare Rights Officer based in the Young People's Service*
- *Provide information to Care Leavers so they understand how to access support from Durham's assigned DWP worker. DWP will ensure that Care Leavers claiming Universal Credit, who need help to manage their money and pay bills, have access to personal budgeting support.*
- *Provide care leavers with a Higher Education Bursary of £2,000 if they are attending university.*
- *Provide Welfare Assistance Grant (WAG) of up to £2,000.*
- *Provide a 'Setting Up Home Allowance' of up to £2,000, where Care Leavers are not eligible for WAG.*
- *In line with DfE guidance, support care leavers aged 16-19 attending a Further Education course to access a £1,200 Further Education Bursary (Educational Maintenance Allowance replacement).*
- *Ensure that care leavers have an understanding of their rights and benefit entitlements.*

This will result in care leavers receiving financial support and guidance, so that they are able to manage their income and reduce the risks of falling into debt. The Education Bursaries will continue to support care leavers attending further and higher education.

(vii) Justice System

We recognise that young adults who have been in care can be particularly vulnerable as they transition into adulthood, particularly if they are in the criminal justice system. They can also be a particularly vulnerable group that are at risk of being criminally exploited. Care leavers can also be particularly vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime, including in some cases falling victim to grooming and exploitation online or offline.

We will;

- Implement the use of the ClearCut Communication Tool across the Young People' Service to enhance communication with children and young people

We will continue to:

- *Ensure that all previously and current looked after children and young people in custody are recorded on the prison system as being a care leaver.*
- *Ensure that they receive the appropriate support and services from probation, Children and Adult Services, Youth Offending Service and the National Offenders Management Service upon release from custody.*
- *All looked after children and young people upon release from custody will have a release plan and a review of their pathway plan in partnership with relevant agencies.*
- *Introduce restorative approaches to reduce the likelihood of young person re-offending.*



9. Conclusion

This strategy sets out how we will deliver our commitment to Care Leavers and their families over the next year. We recognise the progress that we have made as an authority and the ongoing improvement that is required, which will make a difference to the lives of our care leavers.

Delivering this strategy requires an integrated and sustained effort across the Children and Young People's Service, other County Council departments and partner agencies, which will continue to improve service standards and everyday practice, and to be able to meet the challenges that the current economic climate brings.

This Strategy will be refreshed in November 2021 and an update against the key priorities within this document will be provided.

APPENDIX 1: Current number of care leavers open to the Young People's Service

Table 1: Care leavers open to the Young People's Service, as of 6th October 2020

	'Monitoring'	Open	TOTAL
Young People Services Team 1			
Number of Care leavers	41	61	102
Young People Services Team 2			
Number of Care leavers	52	103	155
Young People Services Team 3			
Number of Care leavers	40	84	124
TOTAL	133	248	381

- 'Monitoring' relates to care leavers who choose not to have active involvement with the service, but can access support from the Young People's Service at any time. The service has a responsibility to keep in contact with these young people at intervals of no less than twice a year. If a young person requires any additional support, they will be allocated a Young Peoples Advisor.

APPENDIX 2: Care Leavers Action Plan 2021

Care Leavers Steering Group Action Plan 2021

OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure that all Pathway Plans have a clear overall objective and timely measurable actions

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
1.	Revise Pathway Plan template in Liquid Logic, to reflect Signs of Safety. Consult young people and their families on revised format.	All Pathway Plans will be written in conjunction with young people, in an outcome focused style which young people are able to understand	Quality of Pathway Plans as measured by audit	Carole Gill/Andrew Grant-Soulsby			
2.	Improve quality of pathway plans and ensure that the young people are fully involved in their plans	Plans reflect young people's transition to adulthood Young people are fully involved in their plans, and we can evidence that we are working with them towards their goals	Quality of Pathway Plans as measured by audit	YPS Teams			

OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure that care leavers have the opportunity to access work experience, sessional work and apprenticeships to increase their opportunities for education and employment

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
3.	Strengthen corporate commitment to providing Care Leavers with the opportunity to access work experience, sessional work and apprenticeships across Durham County Council	Suitable opportunities for LAC/ Care Leavers are available across Durham. This will provide better employment/training opportunities	Number of care leavers in apprenticeships/ work experience	Meg Boustead/ Carole Gill/ Linda Bailey/ Joanne Coppillie			

Care Leavers Steering Group Action Plan 2021

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4.	Establish a Directorate group, chaired by the DCS, to agree a clear process for the identification of apprenticeships for care leavers across the council	Increased numbers of LAC/Care leavers apprenticeships being offered to young people	Number of care leavers in apprenticeships	Meg Boustead/ Carole Gill/ Linda Bailey			
5.	Develop opportunities for care leavers to work in a sessional capacity throughout the County Council	More opportunities for paid work experience	No. of sessional employment opportunities offered to care leavers / take-up rate	Meg Boustead/ Carole Gill/ Linda Bailey/ Joanne Coppillie			
6.	Develop a clear policy outlining the support available for young people/care leavers at college and university including what sort of financial support they can expect	All young people understand their entitlements	No. of care leavers who progress to Higher Education / retention rate	Carole Gill			
7.	Explore the opportunity for including more positive action in relation to care leavers within the County Council's Recruitment Policy	Increased employment opportunities	No. of Care Leavers recruited to DCC Apprenticeships/ posts	Meg Boustead/ Carole Gill/ Linda Bailey/ Joanne Coppillie			
8.	Identify ways of increasing the awareness of employers throughout the council and beyond to the needs and vulnerabilities of care leavers	Greater understanding of the difficulties faced by care leavers	No. of Care Leavers recruited to DCC Apprenticeships/ posts	Meg Boustead/ Carole Gill/ Linda Bailey/ Joanne Coppillie			
9.	Ensure that Care Leavers access the range of support available through the Government's Plan for Jobs in response to COVID-19, including Kickstart.	Increased proportion of Care Leavers who progress into employment opportunities.	Proportion of Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training.	Carole Gill / Linda Bailey			

Care Leavers Steering Group Action Plan 2021

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure that all care leavers have a variety of suitable accommodation choices offered to them

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
10.	To continue to develop opportunities for Staying Put	Young people have a choice to stay in their placements until they are ready to move on	Number of care leavers in Staying Put placements	Carole Gill/Claire Morris			
11.	Develop pilot scheme for Staying Close	To work alongside Housing Solutions to secure accommodation 2/3 mile from residential homes. Task and finish group meet every 8 weeks.	Number of care leavers in Staying Close placements	Carole Gill/Claire Morris			
12.	Work with Strategic Housing to maximise the opportunities provided by Durham Lettings Agency	Work with all DKO providers to maximise the chances for care leavers. A representative from each housing association will be invited to join the support accommodation panel meeting to enable supported accommodation and housing to work closer together and share information.	Number of care leavers in rented accommodation through Durham Lettings Agency	Lynn Hall/Carole Gill			
13.	Develop more proactive approaches to identifying the right property for a young person ahead of leaving care	Continue joint working with Housing Solutions to secure accommodation for post 18.	Number of young people	Lynn Hall/Carole Gill			
14.	Explore extending the current offer Hedley House Supported Living Accommodation	We will extend the current offer provided at Hedley House, based on the findings at the 6-month review stage, developing two dispersed supported living properties with outreach support, in line with our increasing care leaver numbers.	Number of care leavers supported by Hedley House	Lindsey Herring/Carole Gill			

Care Leavers Steering Group Action Plan 2021

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15	To review the marketing and recruitment strategy for Supported Lodgings.	Increased number of supported lodgings providers	Number of supported lodgings providers	Jane Bateson / Rebecca Turner (marketing & communications) Feb 2021			
16.	We will recommission our Supported Living Provider Panel for young people with needs that challenge services, in 2021, enabling new providers to join and broadening our current offer	Broader supported living offer for care leavers who have needs that challenge services (to be completed later in 2021)	Number of providers able to offer accommodation and support for care leavers who have needs that challenge services	Lindsey Herring / Lauren Burns			

OBJECTIVE 4: Improve the health outcomes of care leavers

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
17.	Development of a Care Leavers health pathway following the implementation of the 0-25 contract	Clear health offer developed to support YP transitioning from care to being care leaver	Increased support evidenced to care leavers	HDFT			
	Review the care leavers pathway and commissioning arrangements	Review of health commissioning for care leavers	Primary care networks and 0-25 care leavers pathways are linked	Named GP's Designated Professionals 0-25 commissioners			
18.	Review impact of COVID on health providers ability to meet the needs of CLA	To understand the impact of COVID on health providers in relation to CLA	Number of providers able to meet the needs of CLA and	Designated Doctor CLA			

Care Leavers Steering Group Action Plan 2021

			support for care leavers and ensuring what has 'worked well' during COVID is maintained				
19.	To review the access to dental health for CLA and care leaver's during the pandemic	Inequalities for CLA identified and addressed via NHSE	CLA and care leavers are offered dental checks	Designated Nurse for CLA			
20.	Scope and carry out 'So what about health outcomes?' multiagency audit	Audit outcome will inform practice and future development of services for CLA and care leavers	Measured by audit	LA Designated Nurse PH CDDFT HDFT Named GP's TEWV Virtual School			
21.	Ensure all care leavers aged 15 + are offered a Health Passport	Care Leavers are better informed about their health history.	100% of care leavers to have been offered a health passport and 100% to have received the details of their health history or signposted to where they can obtain it. Increased uptake in YP leaving care with a health passport	CDDFT LA Named GP's			

OBJECTIVE 5: Improve the quality of preparation for adulthood

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
22.	Work with the transitions team and adult services to ensure that there is a smooth transition in respect of care planning and funding arrangements for young people who meet the criteria for adult services	Timely and effective transition plans are in place for all young people who require the intervention of adult services	Smoother transitions for care leavers into adult services (as measured by audits)	Meg Boustead/ Mark Smith/ Tracie Joisce			
23.	Increase the awareness of colleagues in adult services of the vulnerability and life experiences of many of our care leavers	Services to have a greater understanding of the difficulties faced by care leavers	Smoother transitions (as measured by audits)	Meg Boustead/ Carole Gill			
24.	Review, revise and implement a consistent, accredited, independence and life skills programme for care leavers	Young people are prepared for independence	Young people's feedback tells us that they have been prepared for independence	Carole Gill/ Trish Lambert/Lisa Gledson			
25.	Begin the process for preparation for moving on at an earlier stage in order to increase preparedness	Young people are prepared for independence	Young people's feedback tells us that they have been prepared for independence	Carole Gill/ Trish Lambert/Lisa Gledson			

Care Leavers Steering Group Action Plan 2021

OBJECTIVE 5: Increase the co-production of services with young people

Ref	Actions	Expected Impact/Outcome	Impact Measure	Lead and Timescale	Progress to date	Progress RAG	Impact RAG
26.	Continue to consult with care leavers and involve them in service design	Young people are involved in service design	Evidence that care leavers have been involved in service design	YPS/CICC/ Corporate Parenting panel			
27.	Involve young people in developing support services/ group sessions/ drop-ins at the Care Leavers' hub	Young people are involved in planning which services could have a presence in the Care Leavers' hub	Evidence that care leavers have been involved in developing the Hub	Carole Gill/ YPS/ Housing/health			
28.	Research apps that can be used to seek the views of care leavers	An app is commissioned to seek care leavers' views that meet the needs of care leavers and the service	An app is in place and being used	Stephanie Pym/Carole Gill			

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Annual Update on Care Leavers for 2019-2020

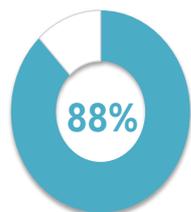
**Corporate Parenting Panel
26th February 2021**

Young People in Suitable Accommodation

- Range of accommodation options available to care leavers
- Partnership approach including CLASP
- Dedicated Accommodation and Support Officer in Young People's Service
- Hedley House and Durham Lettings Agency
- Increase in Supported Lodgings
- Stable number of in Staying Put arrangements
- Use of Bed & Breakfast extremely rare

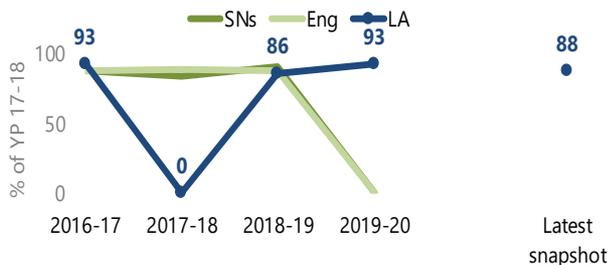
Accommodation of Care Leavers (aged 17-21)

Accommodation suitability of 17-18 year olds



- Suitable accom
- Not suitable
- No information

ChAT	Aged 17	Aged 18	Total
Numbers in cohort	11	72	83
In suitable accommodation	82%	89%	88%



Accommodation types of 17-18 year olds

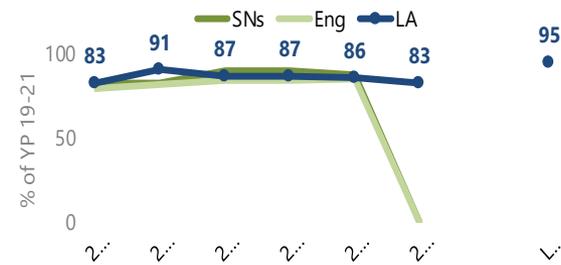
- Latest snapshot
- LA 18-19
- SNs 18-19
- Eng 18-19

Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds



- Suitable accom
- Not suitable
- No information

ChAT	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Numbers in cohort	61	59	26	146
In suitable accommodation	95%	95%	100%	96%



Accommodation types of 19-21 year olds

- Latest snapshot
- LA 18-19
- SNs 18-19
- Eng 18-19

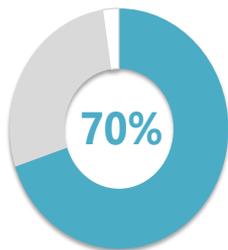
Education, Employment and Training of Care Leavers

- All unemployed care Leavers have a Progression Advisor through DurhamWorks
- Care leavers guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria
- Currently 7 care leavers have apprenticeships with the County Council
- 30 young people at University, following a wide variety of courses

Education, Employment and Training of Care Leavers (aged 17-21)

Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 17-18 year olds

ChAT	Aged 17	Aged 18	Total
Numbers in cohort	11	72	83
In EET	64%	71%	70%

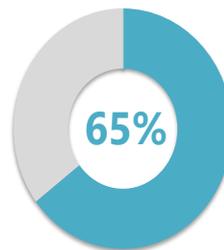


■ YP in EET ■ NEET
□ No info

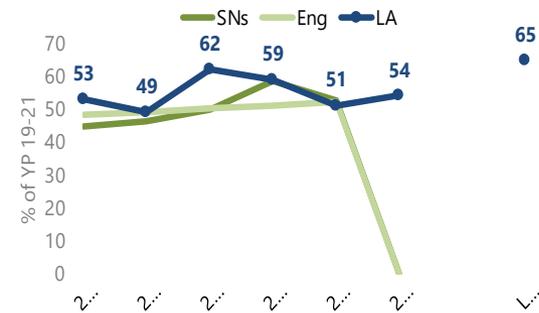


Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 19-21 year olds

ChAT	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Numbers in cohort	61	60	26	147
In EET	61%	65%	73%	65%



■ YP in EET ■ NEET
□ No info



Future Developments

- Strengthen the Local Offer
- Introduce the Clear Cut Communication Tool
- Launch 'Care Leavers hub'
- Pilot 'Staying Close'
- Extend the Hedley House offer
- Introduce sessional work opportunities across DCC
- Improve independence and life skills programme
- Improve quality of pathway plans, making sure all young people are fully involved in their plans
- Increase take up of 'Health passports'

Any questions?

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Corporate Parenting Panel

26 February 2021

Performance update



**Report of Stephen Tracey, Corporate Equality and Strategy
Manager, Durham County Council**

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the presentation is to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview of performance in relation to looked after children and care leavers.

Executive summary

- 2 The Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager, Stephen Tracey will deliver a presentation at the meeting giving an overview of performance.

Recommendation(s)

- 3 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note information contained within the presentation and comment accordingly.

Background

- 4 Until March 2020, members of the Corporate Parenting Panel received quarterly performance updates to ensure they were sighted on performance within County Durham, along with relevant comparisons to our statistical neighbours.
- 5 As a result of the pandemic, and subsequent cancelling of Corporate Parenting Panel meetings, members have been receiving monthly briefing notes, however these have not contained the same level of performance information.
- 6 The presentation provides an overview of performance to date.

Conclusion

- 7 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be sighted on performance in relation to looked after children and care leavers, and will have an opportunity to discuss performance at the meeting.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Performance scorecard

Author

Stephen Tracey Tel: 03000 268029

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

We have a duty to comply with all statutory duties in relation to the children and young people who are in the care of DCC

Finance

NA

Consultation

NA

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

NA

Climate Change

NA

Human Rights

NA

Crime and Disorder

NA

Staffing

Staffing within Children's Services will impact upon social worker caseloads

Accommodation

NA

Risk

Reputational risk to the Council and Corporate Parenting Panel if it is not judged to be performing effectively by Ofsted

Procurement

NA

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County Durham Children Looked After Strategic Partnership: Performance Management Framework

NND - No New Data

What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Rate of CLA per 10,000 u18 population [Number]	68	81	79.6 [798]	82.9 [833]	89 [899]	90 [914]	96.6 [970]	@Dec 2020	↑	65	101	94.1
Age and length of time in care						See chart 1	See chart 1	@6 Jan 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA Placement breakdown						See chart 2	See chart 2	@6 Jan 2021	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA placed over 20 miles (outside LA boundary)	5.9	6.9	6.9	7	NND	10	NND	@31 Mar 2019	N/A	16	10	9
Number of children placed for adoption			25	25	25	75	47	@6 Jan 2021	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children [Number] u18		0.6% [5]	0.4% [3]	0.4% [3]	0.1% [1]	0.1% [1/914]	0.2% [2/964]	@Dec 2020	↑	6	1	1
Social worker caseloads						See chart 3	See chart 3	@Dec 2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Do our partner agencies understand their role in supporting us as corporate parents?

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Number of CLA reported as missing or absent from care [occurrences]							21 [45]	Apr-Dec 20	N/A			
Percentage of Return to Home Interviews completed with CLA (where accepted)							100% [43/43]	Apr-Dec 20	N/A			
Percentage of CLA with a missing incident during the year	3.7%	4.0%	2.6%	5.3%	NND	6.0%	NND	Annual	N/A	11	10	11
Percentage of CSE referrals that were CLA				8% [10 of 122]	TBC	10% [12/116]	13.5% [5/37]		↑			
Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire - Average score	14.7	16.0	15.5	NND	14.1	13.6	NND	Annual	N/A	14.1	14.2	14
Percentage of CLA achieving the expected <u>Key Stage 1</u> standard in: <i>Reading</i>		61.0%	38.1%	46.7%	NND	NND	NND	Annual	N/A	51% (2017/18)	55% (2017/18)	
<i>Writing</i>		48.0%	23.8%	26.7%	NND	NND	NND	Annual	N/A	42% (2017/18)	48% (2017/18)	
<i>Maths</i>		57.0%	42.9%	33.3%	NND	NND	NND	Annual	N/A	46% (2016/17)	49% (2016/17)	
Percentage of CLA achieving the expected <u>Key Stage 2</u> standard in Reading, Writing and Maths		44.0%	35.1%	36.6%	NND	55%	NND	Annual	N/A	37%	47%	40%
Average Attainment 8 score of Children Looked After (<u>Key Stage 4</u>)			21.9	23.2	NND	26%	NND	Annual	N/A	19.2%	20.6%	19.5%

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Percentage of CLA permanently excluded [number of children]	0%	0%	0%	NND	NND	NND	NND	Annual	N/A	0.1% (2016/17)		
Percentage of CLA with at least one fixed exclusion from school [number of children]	8.0%	11.1%	9%	NND	NND	NND	NND	Annual	N/A	11.8% (2016/17)	10.4% (2016/17)	10.7% (2016/17)
Percentage of CLA classed as persistent absentees (Maintained schools)	3.6%	4.7%	6.4%	6.9%	NND	NND	NND	Annual	N/A	10.6% (2017/18)	9.5% (2017/18)	8.9% (2017/18)
Percentage of children looked after continuously for 12 months or more aged 10+ who received a conviction [number of children]	3.6% [10]	4.4% [14]	4.6% [16]	4.6% [17]	3.4% [13]	3% [11]	3% [12]	Last 12 months	↔	3.0%	4.0%	3.8%

The Virtual School Head produces an annual report which provides a detailed overview of educational attainment and attendance of Durham's CLA

How are we giving children and young people the chance to express their views, wishes and feelings? How do we know those are being acted on?

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Percentage of CLA accessing an independent visitor [Number]		1.23% [10]	1.25% [10]	2.5% [21]	2.0% [18]	TBC	TBC					

Work is ongoing to determine how the Voice of the Child is captured within County Durham

How do we show children in our care that we have high aspirations for them?

Not evidenced through performance measures

Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Percentage of CLA with 3 or more placements during the year	6	6.7% [55 of 815]	8.4% [67 of 800]	10.7% [90 of 840]	6.4% [58 of 906]	7.6% [70 / 922]	7.1% [68 / 958]	Apr-Dec20	↓	11	10	10
Percentage of CLA continuously for 2.5 years or more aged under 16 who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	69	72.6	69.3% [187 of 270]	63.9% [195 of 305]	TBC	59.8 [201 / 336]	62.7 [217 / 346]	Apr-Dec20	↑	68	69	68
Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	500 [2012-15]	450 [2013-16]	424 [2014-17]	430 [2015-18]	449	428 [2016-19]	421	Apr-Dec20	↓	376	N/A	N/A
Average number of days between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	173	196	194 (prov)	NND	166	192 [2016-19]	154	Apr-Dec20	↓	178	N/A	N/A
Percentage of children adopted from care (as % of total children leaving care) [number of children adopted shown in brackets]	11.1% [28]	17.3% [53]	14.2% [53]	12.3 [39 of 316]	16.3 [44 of 270]	16% [55 / 352]	17% [35/209]	Apr-Dec20	↑	11.7	12	18.2
Number of Mainstream Foster Carers (Approved in period)	22	25	28	26	9	12	15	Apr-Dec20	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Friends and Family Foster Carers (Approved in period)	40	46	51	52	33	42	55	Apr-Dec20	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Friends and Family Carers Temporarily Approved as Foster Carers (Approved in period)		132	124	88	70	65	51	Apr-Dec20	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Adopters (Approved in period)	35	22	25	22	16	25	33	Apr-Dec20	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A

What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after	100%	85%	74%	63%	69%	62%	64%	Apr-Dec20	↑	N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA with the required number of health assessments	89.0	85	1	1	87%	94%	88%	@14-Jan-21	↓	90	92	93
CLA who have had a dental check	95.5	87	1	85.5%	84%	87%	27%	@14-Jan-21	↓	86	86	89

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
CLA whose immunisations were up-to-date	100	84.8	99.2%	99.3%	NND	99.0%	NND	Annual	N/A	88	92	93.6
CLA whose development assessments were up to date	66.7	71.4	81.4	95.0%	NND	97.0%	NND	Annual	N/A	88	86	95.7
% CLA identified as having a substance misuse problem in the year	x	1.6	1.4	1.9%	NND	2.0%	NND	Annual	N/A	3	3	6
Percentage of new presentations to drug and alcohol treatment during period who were CLA [Number]			7% [14 of 193]	10% [18 of 185]	10% [14 of 143]	10% [21 of 216]	13% [7 of 55]	Apr-Sep20	↓	11%	N/A	N/A
Care leavers aged 17-21 who are pregnant or mothers (as a % of female care leavers)		31.1% [32 of 103]	35.7% [40 of 112]	NND	27.6% [24 of 87]	26.3% [25/95]	23.3% [28/120]	@Dec20	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A

What are outcomes like for our care leavers?

Measure	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q3 2019/20	2019/20	Q3 2020/21	Source Date	DoT	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Number of children looked after reaching 18 who 'stay put'			26	NND	27	99	115	@Dec20	↑			
Number of children looked after reaching 18 who 'stay put' with foster carers			23	NND	6	48	53	@Dec20	↑			
Number of children looked after reaching 18 who 'stay put' in supported lodgings			3	NND	21	51	62	@Dec20	↑			
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment or training (EET)	80% [50 of 61]	84% [50 of 60]	82% [51 of 63]	63.9% [53 of 83]	60% [39 of 65]	65% [55 / 84]	72% [62 / 86]	@6 Jan 2021	↑	64	63	65
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation	100% [61 of 61]	93% [55 of 60]	96% [66 of 69]	96.4% [80 of 83]	95% [62 of 65]	90% [76 / 84]	85% [73 / 86]	@6 Jan 2021	↓	88	93	91
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in higher education	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0]	5% [4 / 86]	@6 Jan 2021	↑	3	3	0
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 not in education, employment or training (NEET)			14.3% [9 of 63]	36.1% [30 of 83]	38% [23 / 84]	27% [23 / 84]	26% [22 / 84]	@6 Jan 2021	↓	30	34	27
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training (EET)	49% [85 of 171]	62% [110 of 173]	59% [95 of 160]	54.0% [87 of 161]	68% [83 of 122]	54% [94 / 175]	63% [94 / 149]	@6 Jan 2021	↑	53	52	53
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	91% [155 of 170]	87% [150 of 170]	87% [139 of 160]	94.4% [152 of 161]	93% [114 of 122]	83% [144 / 174]	95% [141 / 149]	@6 Jan 2021	↑	85	90	87
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in higher education	5.8% [10 of 171]	8.7% [15 of 173]	7.5% [12 of 160]	8.7% [14 of 161]	10% [12 of 122]	20% [35 / 175]	9% [13 / 149]	@6 Jan 2021	↓	6	7	8
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 not in education, employment or training (NEET)	47% [81 of 171]	29% [50 of 173]	32% [51 of 160]	41.0% [66 of 161]	31% [38 of 122]	35% [62 / 175]	37% [55 / 149]	@6 Jan 2021	↑	39	43	43

Together we can do

GREAT THINGS

Corporate Parenting Panel

CLA Update

CYPS Strategy Team
Q3 2020-21

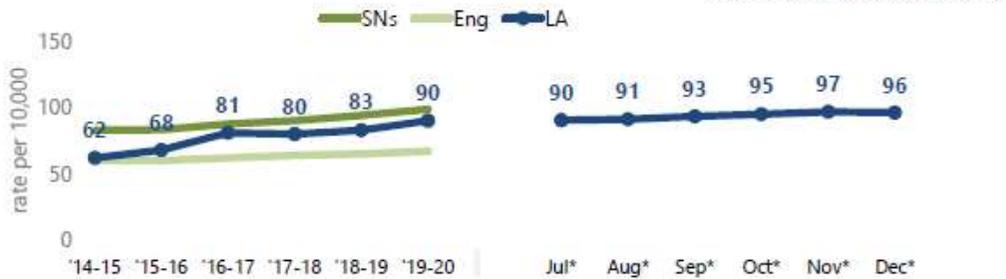


Children Looked After: 962

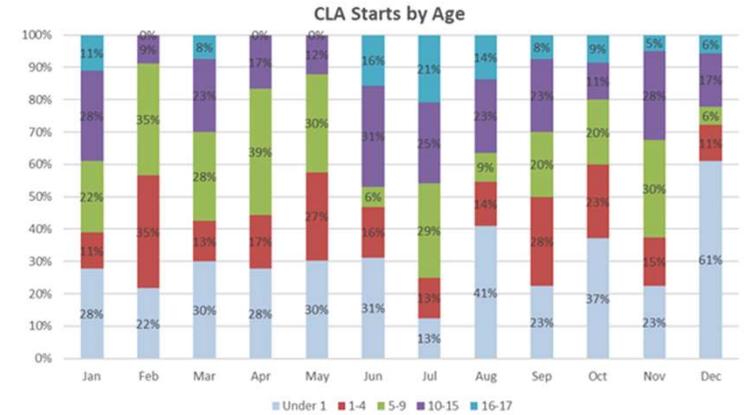
13 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Rate of CLA per 10,000 children (snapshot)

962 CLA currently looked after

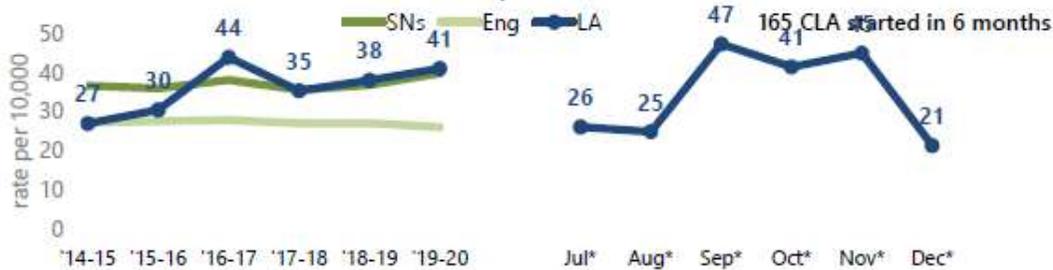


29% of CLA starts were u1s in 2020



Our CLA rate remains 3rd lowest in North East despite increase

Rate of CLA started per 10,000 children



165 CLA started

Rate of CLA ceased per 10,000 children

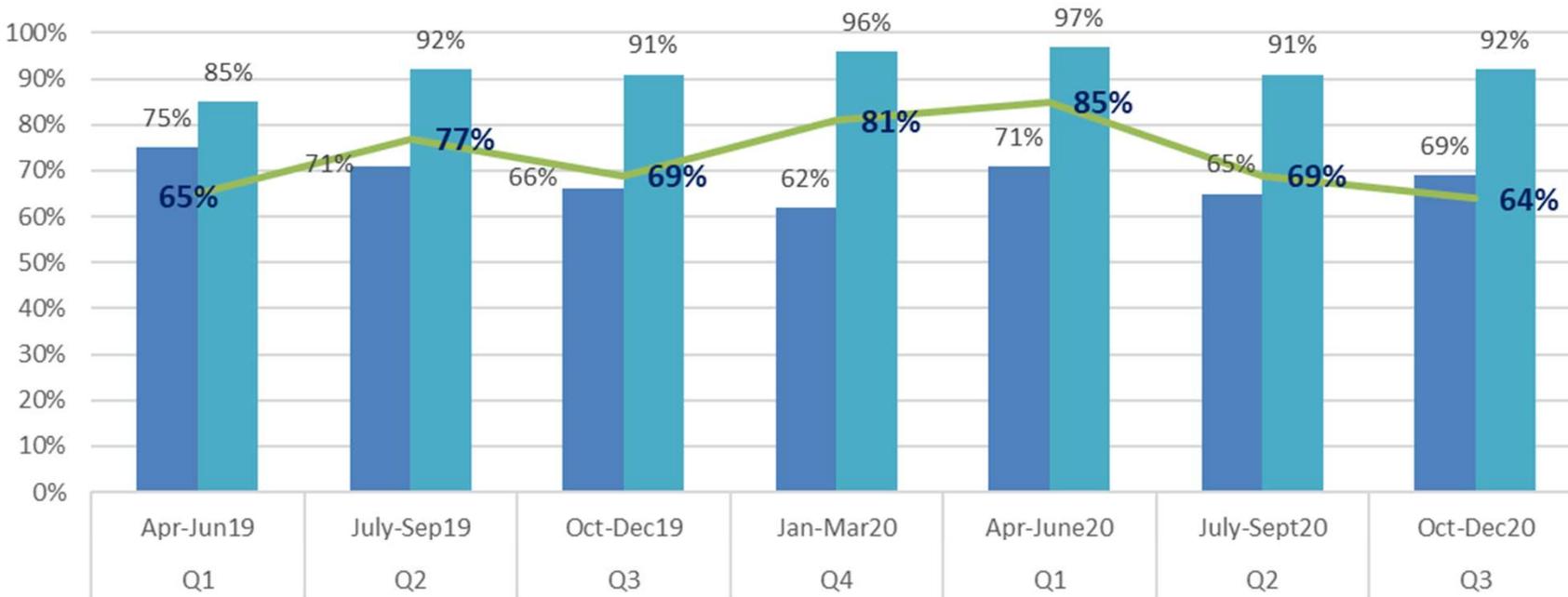


114 CLA ended



Initial Health Assessments

IHAs: Apr19-Dec20



■ LA Indicator: Coram BAAF paperwork and consent received from LA within 0-7 working days of child coming into care

■ CDDFT Indicator: Number of children offered an IHA appointment by CDDFT within 15 working days of health receiving correctly completed paperwork and consent from Local Authority

— Statutory Indicator: Of the number of children coming into care in the quarter; number of children seen by a Paediatrician within 20 working days of coming into care



CLA Placement Type Analysis										
Placement Type	09-Jan-20		11-Mar-20		06-Jan-21		No. change on last year	% change on last year	No. change pre-lockdown	% change pre-lockdown
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%				
External Residential	36	4%	38	4%	52	5%	16	44%	14	37%
Friends and Family	131	15%	126	14%	149	15%	18	14%	23	18%
Unapproved Carers	17	2%	10	1%	22	2%	5	29%	12	120%
IFA	146	16%	159	18%	160	17%	14	10%	1	1%
In House Foster Care	426	47%	430	48%	407	42%	-19	-4%	-23	-5%
In House Residential	27	3%	26	3%	26	3%	-1	-4%	0	0%
Independent Living	8	1%	8	1%	7	1%	-1	-13%	-1	-13%
NHS/Health Trust	2	0%	1	0%	1	0%	-1	-50%	0	0%
Placed For Adoption	25	3%	23	3%	47	5%	22	88%	24	104%
Placed With Parents	60	7%	62	7%	68	7%	8	13%	6	10%
<i>Full Care Order</i>	49	5%	47	5%	45	5%	-4	-8%	-2	-4%
<i>Interim Care Order</i>	11	1%	15	2%	23	2%	12	109%	8	53%
Residential School	2	0%	2	0%	1	2%	-1	-50%	-1	-50%
Secure	2	0%	1	0%	1	0%	-1	-50%	0	0%
Supported Lodgings	15	2%	15	2%	24	2%	9	60%	9	60%
YOI/Prison	2	0%	1	0%	2	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Grand Total	899	100%	902	100%	967	100%	68	8%	65	7%

Together we can do
GREAT THINGS

Health assessments

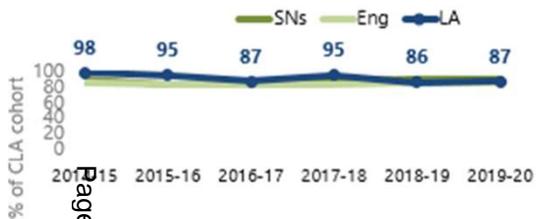
Current open CLA who have been looked after for at least 12 months with an up to date health assessment (in the last 6 months for CLA aged under 5, and in the last 12 months for CLA aged 5-plus)



88
Latest snapshot

Dental checks

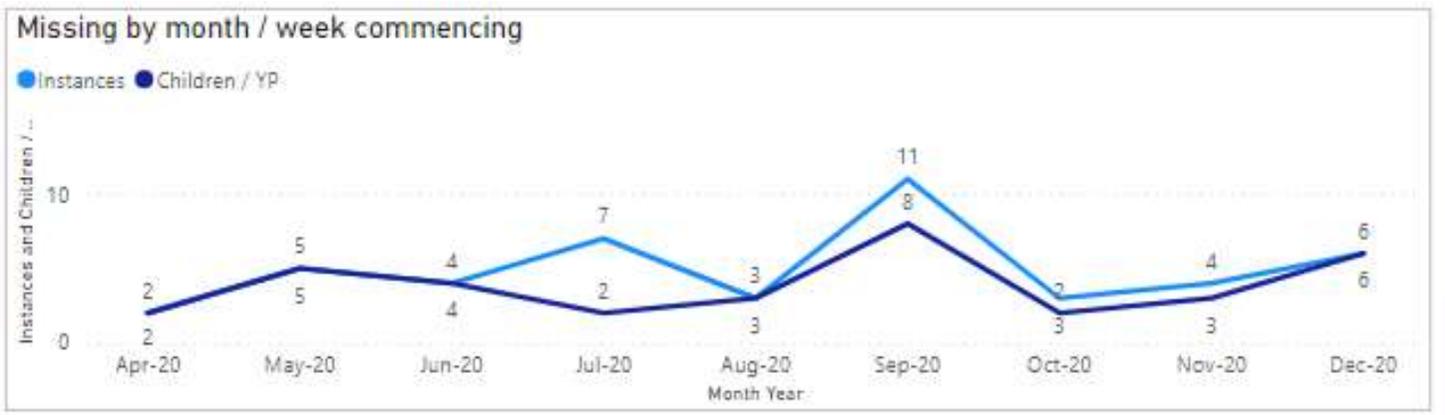
Current open CLA who have been looked after for at least 12 months who have had a dental check in the last 12 months.



27
Latest snapshot

Missing Episodes:
45

Missing Children:
21



Almost three-quarters missing episodes were less than 8 hours (33)



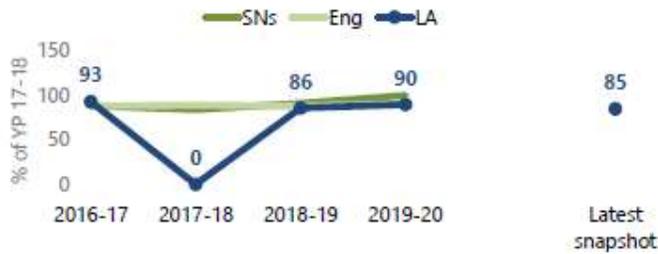
272 Care Leavers (aged 17-21)

Accommodation suitability of 17-18 year olds

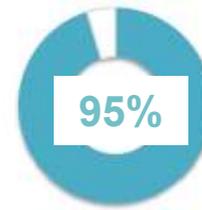


■ Suitable accom
■ Not suitable
□ No information

ChAT	Aged 17	Aged 18	Total
Numbers in cohort	8	78	86
In suitable accommodation	88%	85%	85%

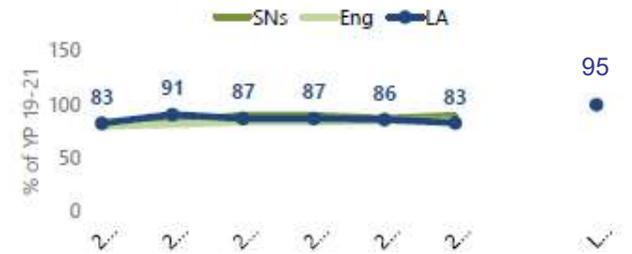


Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds

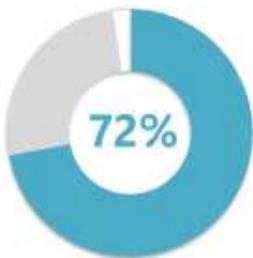


■ Suitable accom
■ Not suitable
□ No information

ChAT	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Numbers in cohort	60	62	26	148
In suitable accommodation	97%	92%	100%	95%



Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 17-18 year olds

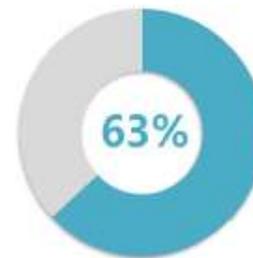


■ YP in EET ■ NEET
□ No info

ChAT	Aged 17	Aged 18	Total
Numbers in cohort	8	78	86
In EET	75%	72%	72%

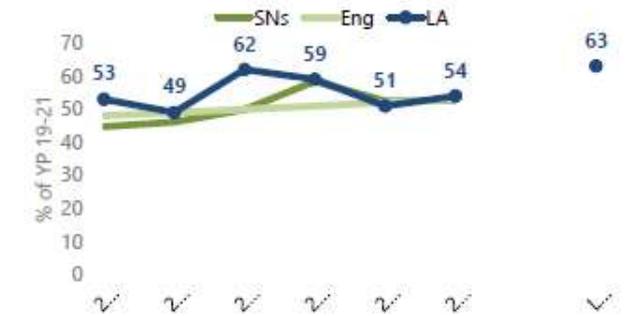


Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 19-21 year olds



■ YP in EET ■ NEET
□ No info

ChAT	Aged 19	Aged 20	Aged 21	Total
Numbers in cohort	60	62	27	149
In EET	58%	63%	74%	63%



By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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