



Corporate Parenting Panel

Date **Friday 28 April 2023**

Time **9.30 am**

Venue **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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 31 March 2023 (Pages 3 - 10)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Number of Children Looked After and Care Leavers -
Verbal Update from Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
6. Ofsted Updates - Verbal Update from Head of Early Help,
Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
7. Annual Summary Report of the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership (CLASP) March 2022 - March 2023 -
Report of Practice Lead, Children and Young People's Services and Strategic Manager, Children in our Care (Pages 11 - 18)
8. Proud Moments - Verbal Update from Strategic Leads
9. Children in Care Council Update - Presentation by the young people from the Children in Care Council (Pages 19 - 22)
10. Entry into Care Packs - Report of Practice Lead, Children and Young People's Services and Strategic Manager, Children in our Care (Pages 23 - 30)
11. Children Looked After with a Disability Annual Update -
Report of Head of Children's Social Care (Pages 31 - 52)
12. Progress report on Care Leavers' Strategy and Action Plan -
Report of Practice Lead, Children and Young People's Services and Strategic Manager, Children in our Care (Pages 53 - 70)

13. Ask for Angela Update - Verbal Update from Strategic Manager, Children in our Care
14. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.
15. 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)

16. Regulation 44 Visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Independent Children's Residential Homes - Report of Head of Integrated Commissioning Service (Pages 71 - 78)
17. 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
20 April 2023

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

Councillor M Simmons (Chair)
Councillor M Walton (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Adcock-Forster, C Bell, J Charlton, I Cochrane, B Coult, S Deinali, J Griffiths, O Gunn, T Henderson, C Hunt, B Kellett, J Miller, A Reed, I Roberts, K Robson, K Rooney, A Sterling, S Townsend and C Varty

Co-opted Members

J Bell, C Brown, J Gamble, S Neale, W Taylor and R Woods
Young persons representative of the Children in Care Council

Contact: Jill Hogg

Tel: 03000 269 711

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 31 March 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor M Simmons (Chair)

Members of the Panel:

Councillors M Walton (Vice-Chair), R Adcock-Forster, J Charlton, S Deinali, J Griffiths, C Hunt, B Kellett, K Robson, K Rooney, A Sterling, S Townsend and C Varty.

Co-opted Members:

J Bell, J Gamble, Luke and W Taylor

Also Present:

Laura Counce – Service Manager for Children and Young People
Sharon Davey – Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence
Rachel Farnham – Head of Children’s Social Care
Rachel Harris – Service Improvement Manager
Rob Johnson – Project Manager, Investing in Children
Deb Loraine – Service Manager
Melanie Stubbs – Head of the Virtual School
Michelle Summerbell – Team Manager, The Full Circle
Stephen Tracey – Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager
Jayne Watson – Senior Partnerships Officer
Julian Wilson – Lawyer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Bell, I Cochrane, B Coult, O Gunn, T Henderson, J Miller and A Reed, Co-opted Members Billie-Leigh, C Brown, S Neale and R Woods and from officers J Henderson and M Stenton.

2 Substitute Members

No substitute members were in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The following matters arising were reported:

- The Head of Children's Social Care invited Members to a separate meeting, to be arranged, to discuss views on the government's strategy and consultation on children's social care, 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'. Suggested dates for the meeting will be circulated to Members in due course.
- A progress update on the meeting with the Marketing team regarding the 'Don't Forget Us' campaign will be brought to the next Panel meeting.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Number of Children Looked After and Care Leavers

The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Panel that the total number of children looked after stood at 1,067, including 29 young people placed for adoption, 57 unaccompanied asylum seeking young people (UASC) and 293 care leavers.

It was reported that whilst the number of children looked after had increased, Durham's figures compare favourably regionally. Durham continues to receive a significant number of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people as part of the national transfer scheme.

6 Ofsted Updates

Ofsted rated The Manse as 'good' following the recent visit and outcomes were awaited in respect of two further inspections completed during the month. The Head of Children's Social Care thanked all those involved for their hard work to deliver the good outcome.

7 Proud Moments

The Service Manager for Children and Young People spoke of her pride in the progress of a teenager who was new to care. The young person had engaged well with staff and experts to receive help and during a recent Ofsted visit, the young person spoke to inspectors about how much they valued the care they received.

Members were delighted to receive a progress update on Caitlyn who is now in the first year of a social work degree and achieved 75% in her first assignments, which is equivalent to a first class degree.

The Mockingbird fostering hub recently supported a young person when their main carer was admitted to hospital. The young person, who has learning difficulties, had settled well in the care of another foster carer in the hub and had benefited from the familiarity which had helped to maintain routines.

It was reported that the Director of the Fostering Network in Scotland had visited Durham to gather information on Durham's Mockingbird model, with a view to replicating the model.

The Chair announced that Laura Counce, Service Manager, was leaving the Authority and the Panel placed on record their thanks to Laura for being instrumental in the transformation of children's homes and they wished her well for the future.

8 Children in Care Council Update

Luke of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) delivered a presentation on the Care Day event which took place on 17 February. The event was facilitated by the young people and celebrated the care experience (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

The Project Manager spoke of how proud he was of all the young people who had contributed to make the event a success and he recognised that some young people had overcome confidence challenges in order to participate in the day. One young person had written a particularly poignant piece about their social worker and this will be included in the weekly staff briefing by the Head of Children's Social Care.

The Panel discussed how much they had enjoyed the day and they asked Luke to thank all the young people who had made the event so special.

Luke then referred the Panel to previous discussions with regard to creating starter packs for young people on entering care, to remind them that they are cared for, noting these would be particularly useful in times when children and young people enter care in emergency situations. Examples of the care packs will be brought to a future meeting.

The Panel acknowledged the value of Care Day and suggested ways to raise funds for future celebrations and events.

9 Performance Report Quarter 3

The Panel considered the Performance Update presented by Stephen Tracey, Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager, which provided an overview of performance in relation to looked after children and care leavers to the end of December 2022 (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Panel noted the increase in the number of young people entering care aged 14-17 years and the impact of the national transfer scheme. It was reported that placement stability continues to be an issue, with fewer young people in long-term placements. A decrease in missing incidents was reported during the quarter and the number of care leavers not in education, employment and training continues to increase, following the Covid-19 pandemic, an issue which is reflected regionally and nationally.

With respect to Social Worker caseloads the Panel was pleased to see that the majority of Social Workers have a caseload fewer than 25 cases and none have more than 30 cases.

In relation to missing incidents, the Service Manager for Countywide Services explained that a dedicated team had been established to investigate missing incidents and to implement strategies and disruption plans.

The Head of the Virtual School informed the Panel that all young people looked after in year 10 are linked with DurhamWorks to provide support with pathway plans. In response to a question as to whether education, employment and training outcomes were better for care leavers who remain with their carers, the Head of Children and Social Care spoke of evidence to support the theory that young people who are safe and happy achieve better educationally. Members also referred to the importance of ensuring that young people are aware of key milestones such as deadlines for applications for college and university courses. Luke commented that the young people had discussed extending the care starter pack, to design a pack for care leavers which could include relevant information. The Head of Children's Social Care suggested that it may be useful to undertake a survey of care leavers to gather their views on the type of information that would be of benefit.

The Panel also discussed that care leavers may benefit from a care leaver mentoring scheme. Officers highlighted the role that Young Person's Advisers and Social Workers play in helping young people through the transition. The Care Leavers' Hub in Sherburn provides for care experienced young people to meet, socialise and access practical support and information on employment and training opportunities.

There are plans to open similar hubs in other locations across the county and steps are being taken to identify suitable accessible buildings which are fit for purpose.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

10 Health Update

a Annual Health Report

The Panel received the Annual Health Report presented by the Designated Nurse for Children in Care, Jo Gamble (for copy of report and presentation see file).

The Panel noted information on local health indicators, the challenges faced during 2021-22 and key priorities for the future. Whilst the number of children looked after had continued to increase and figures for Durham remain above the national average, only 9% of children in care were placed beyond a 20 mile radius of Durham, which was below the national average.

One of the key challenges was the reduction in the number of children being seen by a dentist which was a trend reflected nationally, however the current position for 2022 -23 showed an improving picture with regard to dental checks. Data up to end of quarter three showed that compliance for the completion of health assessments had significantly improved. Other challenges reported during the period included the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of the national transfer scheme and the lack of specialist mental health provision. Areas for development include improving access to health assessments for those young people placed out of the county and supporting the local authority with recruitment of foster carers.

The Vice Chair referred to barriers with regard to carrying out initial health assessments within the required timescales. Officers responded that there had been challenges with regard to health providers obtaining appropriate consents however this had improved during the first quarter of the current year and when the appropriate paperwork was in place, approximately 80 to 93% of young people were offered an appointment within 15 working days.

Moving forward the quarterly performance reports provided by the Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager will include additional information in relation to Initial Health Assessments, Review Health Assessments and dental updates to ensure members continue to receive timely information.

b Full Circle Annual Report 2021-22

Michelle Summerbell, Team Manager of The Full Circle presented the Full Circle Annual Performance Report (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

Providing background, the Team Manager explained the therapeutic team had provided an integrated children's mental health service since 1995. In addition to providing therapeutic support to children and young people, advice and guidance is also provided to parents, carers and professionals on issues such as attachment and the impact of trauma.

The Team Manager explained that the young people of the CiCC worked on a design project for the Full Circle's new premises, which included using their artwork and poetry to decorate therapy rooms and include in the visitors' book. In the future, the service plans to increase the offer in respect of residential homes and offer more bespoke training sessions and develop drop-in sessions for care leavers. Outcome measures identified that 95% of young people who had been open to the Full Circle had improved outcomes and the Team Manager highlighted feedback from Ofsted in 2022 reported that the team provides highly effective support for young people's emotional needs.

The Panel commented that the report provided a valuable insight into the scope of the work and Members referred to anecdotal evidence from within their wards as to the benefits of the work.

Resolved:

That the report and presentations be noted.

11 Language Update

The Head of Children's Social Care referred to the powerful impact of words written by practitioners when recording information in young people's files, and how the choice of words may unintentionally misrepresent what young people are experiencing at the time.

Members recognised that language is constantly evolving and some words and phrases that were common parlance in previous years are no longer acceptable in the current climate. Officers spoke of the good quality social work practice in Durham and the steps taken to use less jargon and move towards a trauma-informed approach. The Service Improvement Manager explained that when access requests are made, those wishing to review their records are offered assistance and practitioners can help to explain why particular words and phrases were used.

Whilst records cannot be amended, discussions about records can be added to the file. The Manager commented that recordings are increasing being written to the young person, as opposed to writing about the young person.

It was agreed that the film from which the quotes were taken, will be shown as part of the next language update, depicting the young person's perspective of what they were experiencing at that time in their lives.

12 Protected Characteristics Update

The Head of Children's Social Care provided an update on the progress of the request made by the CiCC for Durham County Council to adopt care experience as a protected characteristic. The advice from the Monitoring Officer was that the process should go through a motion to full Council. The CiCC were asked to survey the larger group of young people for their views on what it would mean to them and what the implications would be of having care experience included as a protected characteristic, and for a report to be brought by the CiCC (supported by Investing in Children) to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, for discussion.

13 Such other business

The Panel agreed to send a 'good luck' card to all children looked after who are about to sit SATs and exams and it was suggested this should be done annually at exam time. It was agreed that the card would be printed from a design chosen from the artwork produced by the CiCC and the Head of the Virtual School agreed to progress this over the Easter holiday period.

The Chair suggested that consideration should be given to setting up a group of Chairs and Vice Chairs of local Corporate Parenting Panels to share ideas and good practice.

14 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.

15 Regulation 44 Visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Children's Residential Homes

The Service Manager for Children and Young People presented the monthly update on Regulation 44 visits and regulatory body ratings (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Corporate Parenting Panel

28 April 2023

**Annual Summary Report of the Children
Looked After Strategic Partnership
(CLASP) March 2022 - March 2023**



Report of Jodie Henderson, Practice Lead, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council, and Sharon Davey, Strategic Manager Children in our Care, Children's Social Care, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides a summary of the activity of the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership (CLASP) for the period March 22 to March 23.
- 2 Future developments are highlighted, and progress will be presented quarterly moving forward.

Executive summary

- 3 The CLASP was developed to improve the partnership working between services at a strategic level to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers.
- 4 The group meets bi monthly and consists of representatives from Children's Social Care, partner health authorities, youth offending, police, education, housing, and the Project Manager for Investing in Children.
- 5 To increase the influence of the group and to improve the connectivity of work with children in care and care leavers it has been agreed that the CLASP will provide update reports into the Corporate Parenting Panel on a quarterly basis with a full report on an annual basis.
- 6 The chair and/or vice chair of the CLASP meet with the Children in Care Council twice yearly to ensure that strategic priorities are developed with children and young people, they are updated on the work of the CLASP and their feedback is taken directly back to the partnership meeting.

Recommendation

7 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:

- (a) Note content of this report.

Background

8 The CLASP will have high aspirations for all Children In our Care and Care Leavers in Durham and will work to support them to achieve excellent outcomes in childhood and into adulthood through the delivery of the highest quality services across the partnership.

9 The CLASP will work to ensure that there is a shared understanding across the Local Authority and its partners about the needs of its Children In our Care and Care Leavers and provide the strategic direction for the development and improvement of services in line with the views and feedback from children and young people.

10 The CLASP have 8 Priority Actions as follows:

Priority 1) Ensure good multi-agency partnership work and integrated governance to meet the needs of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

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, or return to their families, where it is safe to do so.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Progress Update

- 11 Between March 2022 to March 23, the CLASP has regular performance presentations from the Local Authority to inform the partnership of any developments and areas of focus on a regular basis.
- 12 There has been a review of the timeliness of health assessments for children in care, the initial and subsequent health assessments, and the quality of these assessments is reported across the partnership.
- 13 Information sharing and developments of the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Team have strengthened the knowledge and working within the partnership.
- 14 CLASP has reviewed of the current workstreams and lines of reporting to the CLASP and how this will feed into the Corporate Parenting Panel for the 2023 workplan:
 - A marketing strategy for Foster Carers recruitment has commenced for cohorts of children under 'keeping children together', 'Children with disabilities', 'UASC' and 'fostering as your career'. This included a TV advert and radio appeal;
 - Review of Fostering Payments for skills and allowances;
 - Launch of the Mockingbird Model;
 - Developed a 'Staying Close' strategy and coordinator for the project moving forward;
 - Joint working with timeliness of Initial Health Assessments;
 - Tracking of health needs and trends for future planning with UASC;
 - Project group established to review Health Passports for care leavers.

Lines of reporting to CLASP

- 15 The Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Group will report quarterly into the CLASP moving forward.
- 16 The Child Exploitation Group (CEG) will report outcomes for Children In our Care and Care Leavers who are missing and / or at risk of CSE quarterly moving forward.
- 17 The Children Looked After Health Needs Operational Group will report quarterly.
- 18 The Virtual School will report quarterly to the CLASP.

Future Priorities of CLASP

- 19 CLASP is aware of the placement sufficiency issues nationally and in care in Durham. The group intend to consider the challenges and actions that can be taken to improve this picture across the partnership:
 - Ensuring the needs of children from County Durham who are placed Out of Area (OOA) meet the statutory requirement for completion of their health assessments;
 - Strengthen the Health Passport uptake;
 - Launch of Second Mockingbird Hub;
 - Understand the needs of those children and young people who are not in Education, Training or Employment, how we measure the outcomes for these children and young people and further develop the multi-agency approach;
 - Review of the outcome and productivity of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Group;
 - Strengthen the offer within the Care Leavers Hub.
- 20 Further priorities set by the Children In Care Council of new projects for the forthcoming year have commenced. These include:
 - Embed the Young People's Scrutiny Panel;
 - Entry into Care Packages;
 - Development of Pathway Planning Training with social workers;
 - Expansion of the Care Leavers Hub.

Conclusion

- 21 The work of the CLASP continues and seeks to improve how services work together to identify and meet the needs of children in care and care leavers.
- 22 The CLASP operates as the link into understanding practice between the frontline practitioners, subgroups and systems allow for a direct line of sight for Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 23 The CLASP is hoped to be the golden thread of the partnership and report back as a corporate parent.

Authors

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

There are no financial implications linked to this report.

Consultation

The work of the CLASP is co-produced with children and young people although no additional consultation has taken place in the preparation of this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

The risk of failing to develop productive working relationships and practices to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers would pose a risk of failure to meet statutory responsibilities to these groups.

Procurement

None.

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Presentation by Billie-Leigh and Luke CiCC CPP representatives and Robert Johnson ~ Investing in Children

Durham Children in Care Council- Update April 23

- IIC Art & Wellbeing Café has secured additional funding after winning the High Sheriff award and this will continue to benefit several care experienced young people who are connected with it through CiCC.
- Another Artstops project is finalised and will be launched in June, 12 new CiCC members are being supported to connect with the project .
- An IIC volunteer is leading their own project called Thermal Aid 2023. Funding for packs was received, 20 of which are bespoke packages for care leavers aimed at reducing energy costs for them. The care leaver's service are supporting this project – 10 packs have been distributed so far.



Promoting the Rights of Children and Young People



Durham Children in Care Council- April 23

- CICC roadshows have been taking place out in the communities for younger children. The first one was held at Crazy Kingdom and children and carers were able to come together and share ideas and find out more about CICC. The development of the Freedom Card was a topic of conversation- further roadshows will be developed by the younger CICC group this year .
- Both CICC groups have shared ideas and opinions about the 'Care Packs' received by young people coming into Care, including what should be included and what is important.
- Both CICC groups agreed and developed themes for the joint meeting with CPP.





Durham Children in Care Council- Update April 23

- Both CICC groups continue to review Education Fun Fund applications .
- Applications are beginning to come in from Families First Teams, which the groups are reviewing and making the decisions regarding awarding funding.
- CICC members have been jointly involved in interviewing for the Strategic Manager for Countywide Specialist Services.
- The ask this month of CPP is to think through the themes discussed at the joint meeting with CICC members.

Promoting the Rights of Children and Young People



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Corporate Parenting Panel

28 April 2023

Entry into Care Packs**Report of Jodie Henderson, Practice Lead, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council, and Sharon Davey, Strategic Manager Children in our Care, Children's Social Care, Durham County Council****Electoral division(s) affected:**

None.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present the Entry into Care packs, for consideration for funding and support form elected members of Corporate Parenting Panel.

Executive summary

- 2 The Children in Care Council have requested that the Corporate Parenting Panel consider funding Entry into Care packs, for those children and young people who enter into care in emergencies. They explained they would like to create care packages to be distributed to children and young people when they first come into care in unplanned ways. The packs would be age-appropriate and would include small tokens which would be relevant to the individual young person, to provide them with reassurance that they are supported and care about. The young people explained the packs would be particularly useful when emergency protection measures are required or when children come in to care in unplanned ways.
- 3 We are asking for funding of £7,600 to assist with the creation of the packs and ask that members consider this request from their neighbourhood budgets.

Recommendations

- 4 Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:
 - (a) Note the contents of the report
 - (b) Agree the proposed packs content
 - (c) Agree funding for the Entry to Care packs

Background

- 5 Discussions have taken place at previous Corporate Parenting Panel meetings in relation to the Children in Care Council requesting that the Corporate Parenting Panel consider funding Entry into Care packs, for those children and young people who enter into care in emergencies
- 6 Discussions took place with the Children in Care Council outside of the CPP meetings and it was identified that various packs will need to be purchased dependent on the ages of the young people and their circumstances they have come into care. These can be broken down as follows:
 - (a) Children under the age of 6
 - (b) Children aged 6 -12 years old
 - (c) Young people aged 12 years old and over
 - (d) Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people
 - (e) Young people in residential accommodation/children's homes
- 7 A working group of managers and practitioners has explored all options and have created a pack that provides essential items that will offer comfort to children and young people, as well as provide information about children services and the wider roles of professionals and partners.
- 8 The working group has gathered feedback from Children In our Care Council and children and young people within the Children In our Care service. Foster Carers have also been consulted through their Foster Care Support Network.
- 9 The feedback was positive, and they were able to give insight into children needs, at such a sensitive and traumatic time. The children in Care Council have suggested that the name of the pack is changed and potential name of 'Supply Pack' (this is taken from the popular online video game 'Fortnite')
- 10 The feedback has highlighted a reflection of how our children and young people feel when they come into our care and how we can make improvements to this
- 11 Suggestions for the pack have also included, blankets, soft toys, nightlights, books, journals, and pens.
- 12 Within these packs we will also include guides to the IRO service, guides to Children's homes and services, welcome to Durham booklet (UASC) and a who is who guide.

Costings

13 It is anticipated that we would require funding for 150 packs, to support young people who come into care on an emergency basis. We have projected that we would need:

- (a) 40 packs for UASC
- (b) 40 for children under the age of 6
- (c) 30 for children aged 6 – 12
- (d) 40 for young people in residential care

We have created a Demo pack that cost £44.58; however, we anticipate that we can work with procurement to buy these items in bulk, and therefore reduce the costings. There is an additional cost to the UASC young people as we would like to provide them with a Prayer Mat and Quran, £20 each (projected £800 additional cost).

14 Initial projected costings stand at £7,600 for the 150 packs.

15 The costings for the design and print of our guides for young people will be covered by the CIC Service budget.

16 These packs will be kept within our Fostering service, UASC team, Families First and EDT for out of hours access.

Future Developments and learning

17 We will gather feedback on the pilot of these packs following their introduction and feedback to corporate parenting panel on the benefits of the packs and the impact they have had on children.

18 Review our coming into care guide with the CICC

19 Continue to develop guidance for young people around fostering and residential homes, which can be shared with our children and young people within their care journey

Conclusion

20 It is clear that there is valid need to support our children and young people who come into care on an emergency basis. These packs that have been suggested by our children and young people, demonstrate that these items will hopefully give comfort at a time when children feel lost and are in crisis, and provide vital information to support their transition, knowledge and understanding.

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 Sharon Davey Tel: 03000 262 214

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

To progress with the entry to care packs additional finance of £7600 is required. If this is not available from members efforts would need to be made to identify this from within current budgets. Due to restrictions in budget this may mean the project could not take place.

Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the working group of young people to identify what should be included in the packs

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

Procurement guidance will be adhered to in the sourcing and purchasing of the contents for the packs

Entry into Care Packs

March 2023

Co-produced Project Group



What we have done

- Coproduction between practitioners and the Children In Care Council have developed Entry to Care pack known as “Supply Packs’ targeted at the following ages-
- Children under the age of 6
- Children aged 6 -12
- Young people aged 12 and over
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people
- Young people in residential accommodation

Suggestions for the pack have also included, blankest, soft toys, nightlights, books, journals, and pens.

Within these packs we will also include guides to the IRO service, guides to residential homes and services, welcome to Durham booklet (UASC) and a who is who guide.



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Corporate Parenting Panel

22 March 2023



**Children Looked After with a Disability
Annual Update**

**Report of Rachel Farnham, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham
County Council**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will receive a summary of the work of the Children with Disabilities Team with Children and Young people who are Children in our Care (CIC) and Care Leavers, for information.
- 2 To inform members of the Corporate Parenting Panel of the remit and the number of children currently open to the Children with Disabilities Service (CWD) who are in our care.
- 3 The report outlines the progress made since the ILACS Ofsted inspection (September 2019) when Ofsted told us the Quality and performance of social work practice was too variable.
- 4 The report also seeks to update the panel on the outcome of the ILACS Ofsted inspection in May 2022 and to highlight some excellent practice examples collaborating with our children and families.
- 5 The report provides an update of the Transition's arrangements for 14 - 25 years and their preparation for life as a young adult, which are provided by the 14-25 Navigation Team (Adult Services) alongside the CWD team.

Executive Summary

- 6 We know that a comprehensive programme of improvement work within the children with disabilities team is continuing to have an impact on practice and this was reflected back in our ILACS Ofsted inspection May 2022:

- 7 There have been significant changes to services for Children and young people with disabilities since 2019 which includes additional investment in front line staff as well as a remodelling of the service to create a 0-18 children's service and a 14-25 navigation service within adult social care services, focused on supporting the transition for these young people from children's to adults' services.
- 8 Whilst there are clear criteria for the children and young people receiving support from these services, the team collaborates with partners to ensure that children are signposted to other appropriate services and sources of support where appropriate. This means families are held to receive the support that is right for their children.
- 9 Ofsted told us during the May 2022 ILACS inspection that the Children with Disabilities team complete "*Comprehensive assessments in the disabled children service which led to clear recommendations for services. There is evidence of creative direct work with non-verbal children and good evidence of sensitive partnership work with parents.*"
- 10 Work has developed with a wide range of partner agencies to support these practice improvements to ensure the needs of our children and young people are met and they are in receipt of high-quality support and services.
- 11 We have strengthened the voice of our children so they along with their parent/carers are informing their care plans and reviews. This means they influence the development of the services they receive and can be more confident that they are the right services for the child.
- 12 All our children have up to date assessments which are reviewed yearly. The CWD team see our children regularly.
- 13 The CWD team procedures and guidance has been updated and is reviewed annually.
- 14 Improvements in the service can be evidenced by the increase in compliments from families and professionals and a reduction in complaints.
- 15 We have managed some of the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic by reviewing services and working with our commissioning colleagues to think differently about service delivery for families.
- 16 We have responded to this feedback from Ofsted in relation to the capacity of our short breaks service and there is a comprehensive action plan in place (as you will see in our commissioning partners who work with the CWD team section of this report).

- 17 We can provide assurance that our assessments of children with disability continue to be of high quality and that where necessary they inform commissioning activity, particularly in relation to the need for short breaks.

Recommendation

- 18 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of this report.

Background

- 19 The functions (including powers and duties) of the local authority to children who are looked after by us are set out in the 1989 Children's Act as principally amended by the children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Adoption, Children Act 2002 and the Young Persons Act 2008.
- 20 The associated Regulations and guidance in relation to those functions. Section 22 (3) of the 1989 Act sets out the general duty of the local authority looking after a child to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. This duty underpins all activity by the local authority in relation to our children in care.
- 21 A child is looked after by us either by reason of a Care Order or is being provided care by us under Section 20 of the 1989 Act for more than 24 hours with the agreement of their parents or carers with parental responsibility, or if the child is over 16 years old or over (section 22 (1) and (2) of the 1989 Act).
- 22 The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (**DoLS**) are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. This piece of legislation aims to make sure that young people in care homes and hospitals are looked after and safeguarded in a way that does not inappropriately restrict their freedom. A consideration of this legislation is key in planning for the safe care of our children and young people.
- 23 We undertake Parent/Carer assessments using Children Act 1989 section 17ZD (10). The Parent carers assessments are to support and understand the well-being of the parent / carer, and the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the disabled child who is cared for and any other child for whom the parent carer has parental responsibility. This parent/carer assessment can lead to the provision of services which support families, including short breaks.
- 24 Criteria of the CWD service is to offer support to the following children and young people who identify as having:
 - (a) Substantial physical disabilities that significantly impact on the child's wellbeing.
 - (b) Substantial learning disabilities.
 - (c) A diagnosis of Autism with a substantial learning disability.
 - (d) Multiple or substantial disability.
 - (e) Substantial sensory impairment in conjunction with a substantial learning disability.
 - (f) Complex physical disability and health needs, this would usually involve support from the continuing health care team (health

services). There might be an assessment from the Continuing Children's Care service if required (health needs).

- 25 There are a total of 262 (As at the end of March 2023) children open to the Children with Disabilities Team.
- 26 Twenty-eight of these children are Children in Our Care.
- 27 The remaining children receive social work support and services under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (two children are presently on a child protection plan). Many receive packages of respite support to enable them to meet and socialise with other young people in the community and to enable their parents/carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities.
- 28 There have been clear and sustained improvements both in performance and quality of practice within this service since the Ofsted ILACS inspection of children's social care services in 2019 and further evidenced in the ILACS Ofsted inspection 2022.
- 29 The Navigation team do not case hold children 0 -18 as they previously did. The Navigation Team work with Care Leavers. The CWD team and the Navigation Team ensures effective joint working between Children and Adults Services and support the children's teams to support transition to independence in a planned way for our children and young people.

Staffing in the CWD Team

- 30 The Team structure has expanded as the service has been reviewed and strengthened within the last twelve months and received additional investment to increase social work capacity.
- 31 We have an established team, and this means our children in care with a disability have stability and get to know their social worker really well. (You will see a clip from one of our social workers in the team on the day of corporate parenting panel)

Support that the Children with Disabilities Team offer

- 32 We aspire to support families to care for their own children, and we do this by promoting the local offer www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer
 - (a) All our children who are children in care, have regular meetings with annual health and dental checks and regular multi-agency care team meetings.
 - (b) Each child has an independent review officer. Children with a disability or who have a special educational need will receive support from the IRO to help ensure these needs are identified,

assessed, and met. They will read the Education Health Care Plan and the Personal Education plan and use this to influence the care plan alongside the CWD team.

- (c) Our children express their views through observations, one to one work and play. They have access to an advocate from NYAS, an opportunity to have a Young Carers assessment and to use Mind of My Own (you will hear more about this on the day of the Corporate Parenting panel).
- (d) Our children can be some of the most vulnerable children therefore strong multi-agency working is critical to ensuring children are safe and there is good evidence of this in the work of the service, both within child protection strategy meetings, child protection conferences and care planning.
- (e) The CWD team ensure our children's voices are heard using direct work. One of the ways we have done this is by investing in digital technology this is call Mind of My Own and referred to by our children as MOMO.
- (f) We believe that young people should always be able to participate fully in their lives and it should be easy for them to speak up anytime they want. The Mind of My Own app was designed with young people for young people.
- (g) Our children in the team use MOMO Express. Momo Express helps them share their views, wishes and feelings in a fun way that is easy for workers to understand and evidence. Express is for very young children or those with additional needs. Express helps children express their views, wishes and feelings.
- (h) The design and function of MOMO enables children's participation in to create one-page profiles for placement matching, before health checks, assessments to build rapport and gather crucial information, our statutory visits, foster care reviews, Looked after reviews, Education, health and care plans, Transition planning, CIN reviews, short break services and Communication passports. The CWD team have all now completed their MOMO training and moving forward we will see our children's voices strongly represented within all conversations.
- (i) An example of this is a young girl who used Express with her residential worker she took immense pleasure in filling out a statement, which was lovely to see. 'All about me' starts off with basic questions that workers sometimes stop asking, such as 'What do you like to eat' and this young person gave so much

detail it was lovely for the worker to see. She gave loads of details about what she liked and what she did not and then what makes her happy and what makes her sad and how workers should communicate with her. She took a long time to complete this profile of her but what was also interesting is that Express asks 'What you would like for tea,' she talked about a worker, Michael, who cooks Sunday breakfast and how that was her favourite food. What was evident is that the young girl was so appreciative of the care her home was providing and that these are the things she will remember.

- (j) Our children have access to services – In addition, the Local Authority delivers a short break respite service for children, young people, and their families. The work in these services is delivered in partnership with the wide range of agencies who support children with disabilities and complex needs.
- (k) Community support services are available to them.
- (l) Our children looked after are monitored through children in care procedures. Statutory visits take place and children are regularly seen by school and health professionals.
- (m) All aspects of safeguarding are completed by the social workers on the team.
- (n) Our children have a pathway plan to ensure a smooth transition to adulthood, this is done with the 14-25 years Navigation team and by looking at what the needs of the children are into adulthood.

Partners We Work With

- 33 There is close joint working between the CWD team and the Families First Safeguarding Teams, Navigation team, Countywide services, and our front door colleagues. we have open dialogue with our partners in Education – special schools, Health i.e., Occupational Health services, Continuing Care Services, Police, Local Authority Commissioning Teams, Health Commissioners, Early Help colleagues and the voluntary services, Advocacy service and the Carers centre.
- 34 We work closely with the Durham Virtual School Head, and she describes that her team works closely with the CWD team to support CIC into the best provision to meet the child's needs. They provide advice to social workers and attend meetings to ensure the education provision the child attends are the right one. In consultation with the SEND caseworker, they are part of discussions when a child's care arrangements change, and a school placement is required. The Post 16

CLA Personal Education Plan caseworker supports the young person into Post 16 and is part of the initial conversations with Durham Works in supporting the young person into adulthood.

- 35 We work together with all our partners to identify the needs of families and listen to family's aspirations for the care of their family members and the children's voice for their wishes and feelings to determine demand and gaps in provision and consider what provision can best meet needs and achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

Our Commissioning partners who work with the Children with Disabilities team

- 36 We have a commissioner who is dedicated to working with Children's Services to understand the needs of children with disabilities and their families to ensure there are services that can be accessed to allow 'short breaks' from caring when needed to improve outcomes and prevent family breakdown.
- 37 We are working in partnership with providers of services to help them recover from Covid. This includes working together to help attract staff who want to work with disabled children and young people and ensure they are trained to provide specialist care and support to meet the needs of our most complex children.
- 38 Our commissioning colleagues have developed a Short Breaks Sufficiency Strategy and action plan including new governance and monitoring arrangements.
- 39 They have reviewed and revised the short breaks statement with an emphasis on a graduated response and made this clearer for families including introduction of visual short break offer and an animation clip.
- 40 They have created a single point of contact 'SEND Empowering Inclusive Communities - SENDEIC which consists of two new posts who work directly with families, professionals, and providers to grow capacity and increase access to universal community activities, expand the offer and remove any barriers to access.
- 41 They have developed promotional material for SENDEIC and visited a number of teams, settings and events across County Durham focused on providing information too hard to reach families on the offer.
- 42 They have set up new systems and processes to support the graduated approach and capture needs and unmet needs of families which feeds in to needs lead commissioning of services to fill gaps.
- 43 They have commenced mapping of all existing community provision for SEND in order to help grow capacity, promote, and fill any gaps as required.

- 44 Set up a regular weekend session for a cohort of children and young people with challenging behaviours and communication difficulties in the Seaham of the county to be able to take part in a regular positive activity with the right support to allow carers a break.
- 45 An exercise to analyse all usage of specialist short breaks packages and further understand the true need by separating these out into positive activities, short breaks for carers, and intensive support/ crisis intervention.
- 46 A regional group has been set up to develop future commissioning arrangements for over-night short breaks and specialist hospice care.
- 47 A re-commissioning exercise has been initiated working with the market to include all support services for children and young people's social care including positive activities, short breaks for parent carers, and intensive support/ crisis intervention.
- 48 Our commissioners have secured additional resource to assist with re-commissioning, growing the market and supporting providers to be able to respond to the needs of children and young people and fill gaps in meeting needs for those with complex and challenging behaviours (not yet in post).
- 49 Professionals and social work teams report that they feel more knowledgeable about short breaks and able to support families to get the right support to prevent escalation of needs
- 50 Providers report the impact is that they have been supported to recover from the pandemic to improve their service delivery and capacity.
- 51 Commissioning also supports the team's statutory assessment of family need for specialist services and direct payments Outreach services, community hubs, home care, overnight respite care. We have worked across the region to develop a framework of providers who can provide over-night short break care for children and young people within residential settings to enable over-night short breaks for parent/carers.
- 52 We appointed a short breaks solutions officer – who is working to research what is already on offer for families and help signpost to these. Collaborating with Voluntary Community Sector and providers to develop this offer. Work with families to understand what the barriers are to accessing community activities
- 53 We have worked jointly with Adult Commissioners to re-commission an all-age Domiciliary Care Support Framework.

Respite provision for our Disabled Children in Durham who live with Parent Carers

- 54 Park House is a short break provision based in Sherburn Village, in Co Durham. Park House offers Durham's young disabled people, between

5 years & 18-years short breaks. A short break is defined under Section 20 Children Act 1989, where the short breaks exceed a total of 17 days per placement/75 days per 12-month period and/or take place in more than one setting.

- 55 Park House provides short break care for young people who have a learning disability, but may also have complex physical or health needs, who may require specialist equipment, specific communication needs and a sensory impairment. In emergency situations Park house is registered and can support children in the longer term whilst alternate placements are identified.
- 56 Park House provide overnight short break to children and their families, giving children the opportunity to have a “sleep over” make new friends and hopefully gain new experience and independent skills in an enjoyable, safe, and caring environment. This allows parents and carers to spend time with their other children or just have time to sleep and recharge their batteries which is often needed to support them in their caring role.
- 57 Park House currently has thirty-three children accessing the service with another five young people currently being considered, the age range is from 5 to 17 with young people leaving us the day before their 18th birthday. They have one emergency bed.
- 58 We maintain close working relationships with our health professionals who help to provide the specialist individual training that our children often require.

14-25 Navigation Team (Adult Services)

- 59 The Navigation Team is an adult services team which responds to the needs of disabled children and young persons aged between 14 – 25 years during their transition from children to adulthood. The team reflects the requirements of the 2014 Care Act, 2014 Children’s and Families Act, Special Educational Needs (SEN) 2014 reforms and Mental Capacity Act (2005) so that young people and their families receive appropriate support to plan for adulthood with the care, health, and education services they need.
- 60 The teamwork with children (from the age of 14 years) and young adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory needs, mental health, autism and acquired brain injury and will require a statutory intervention in adulthood i.e., commissioned service.
- 61 Where there is no formal diagnosis of a learning disability the 14-25 Navigation Team can support with arranging an initial screening assessment.
- 62 The Navigation team structure is an integrated team with expertise in social work, learning disabilities and mental health.

63 The ethos of the team is to:

- (a) Avoid unnecessary delays and duplication
- (b) Deliver appropriate care and support plans
- (c) Develop a sustainable pathway into adulthood.
- (d) Embed shared understanding between Children and Adults Services
- (e) Provide continuity between Children and Adults Services
- (f) Provide appropriate and cost-effective services for the long-term future.
- (g) They will support and lead on Education, Health, and Care Planning for young people with special educational needs, promoting the use of personal budgets so that young people have more control over the type of support and services they need and want.
- (h) Undertake core legal work e.g., Care Act, Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act and consider the need for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and applications to the Court of Protection
- (i) Consider the needs of Parent carers and Young Carers.
- (j) They assist children's services in both health and social care to navigate complex adult provision and establish whether the young people will require an adult provision in the future.

Over 18 years

64 Individuals prior to their 18th birthday will be assessed in accordance with the national eligibility criteria set out in the Care Act 2014. This states that an adult meets the eligibility criteria if.

- (a) Their needs arise from or are related to a physical or mental impairment or illness
- (b) As a result of the adult's needs, they are unable to achieve two or more specified outcomes
- (c) Therefore, there is or is likely to be a significant impact on a person's wellbeing.
- (d) Pathway plans are in place for all children looked after with the Navigation team which support them into adulthood. The Navigation team work jointly with the Young Peoples service where they are care leavers. Children's services would be responsible for completing documentation related to this but with input from the 14-25 Navigation Team

Practice Improvements

65 We continue to improve practice/quality in Children with Disabilities team by the implementation of an improvement action plan alongside a team plan. A thematic audit of children's cases is completed yearly

alongside collaborative audits these are showing a consistent improvement in practice.

- 66 We continue to implement the Signs of Safety practice model. All current members of the Disabilities Team have completed their 2-day SOS training and are able to complete their Advanced training. This has meant that we have been able to focus on practice developments to improve the quality of service and outcomes for our children and families within the team using this practice model.
- 67 The CWD team has its own audit programme where we can identify themes of practice improvement and celebrate good practice within the team.
- 68 Our partners and parents report improved relationships, and the team were nominated for a national social work team of the year award (2022) and were also nominated for the Durham Inspiring People Awards.

Conclusion

- 69 The CWD team will continue to embed the service improvement plan within the team and develop and identify themes of practice improvements to do this we will continue to use direct feedback, audits, thematic audits, complaint outcomes, and the child's voice to direct this work.
- 70 The CWD team will continue to collaborate with our partners to create the best services with and for our children and families.
- 71 The CWD team will continue to work with commissioning regarding the recovery from the pandemic and this will be a focus for us and our families so that our families have the support they tell us they need. This will also bring new opportunities to how we work with families and deliver service.
- 72 In the next year, the CWD team priorities are to continue to develop the work identified in this report and to develop co-production with our children and families.
- 73 The CWD team will ensure the voice of the child will continue to grow and influence the practice improvements within the team.
- 74 We will champion the use of all our direct work tools including Mind of My Own, so we see our children influencing all the information and decisions made with them.
- 75 The CWD team will continue to complete yearly assessments for all the children in the team so that they know the children well. When we cannot offer a service, we will support the family to find someone or a

service who can. The CWD team will ensure the children's needs are understood and regularly discussed by people who know them best.

Author

Jane Ayres

Tel: 03000 26597

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are legal duties on the Local Authority to implement the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. As Corporate Parents, there is a legal duty to care for our Children in care under the Children Act 1989.

Also, The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The safeguards aim to make sure that people in care homes and hospitals are looked after in a way that does not inappropriately restrict their freedom.

Finance

No direct financial implications.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Local Authority under Equalities Legislation and the Children's Act have a duty to provide access to services for Children and Young People with SEND. The needs of all young people are considered on an individual basis

Climate Change

Wherever possible we seek to provide services and support close to where families live, and this seeks to reduce travelling.

Human Rights

Children and young people with disabilities have the same right to a family life (HRA S8) as any other young person whom CYPS deliver services and support.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

CWD service is suitably staffed, to ensure that the service offers appropriate staffing levels based on current need.

Accommodation N/A

Risk N/A

Procurement

We work with Commissioning Services and follow the agreed procurement procedure if specific service is required.

Children with Disabilities Team

**What our children and their families tell us we need to do
more of and what we have done!**

April 2023



Ensure we have a voice

- Improve our voice, hear our wishes and feelings, know and understand our day-to-day experiences.
- Access to advocacy via NYAS - we are passionate about encouraging parents to work with NYAS to ensure children's views are advocated.
- Use Mind of My Own Express and One App.
- We are using more creative ways to gather wishes and feelings including photos, social stories, picture exchange communication, signed supported English, Makaton and commissioned specialist signs when needed.
- Access to Young carers support for brothers and sisters. Alongside Parent Carers assessments.
- That our Independent Reviewing officer asks us what our wishes are and check everyone is doing their best for us.



That you know us well. When you can't help you help us to find someone who can

- Ensure that team culture promotes building good relationships with us , our families and our carers.
 - That we will where possible have the same social worker throughout our childhood.
 - When you cannot help us as we do not meet the criteria you will endeavor to provide advice, support and guidance to help to meet our needs.
-

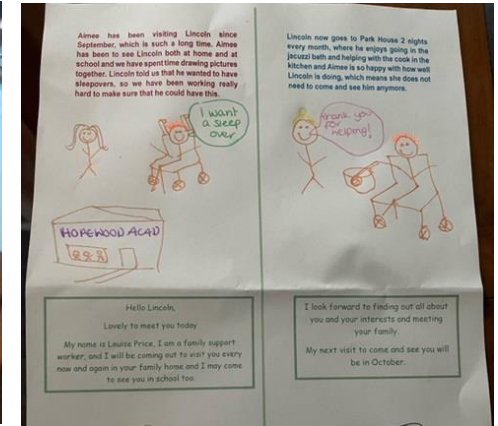
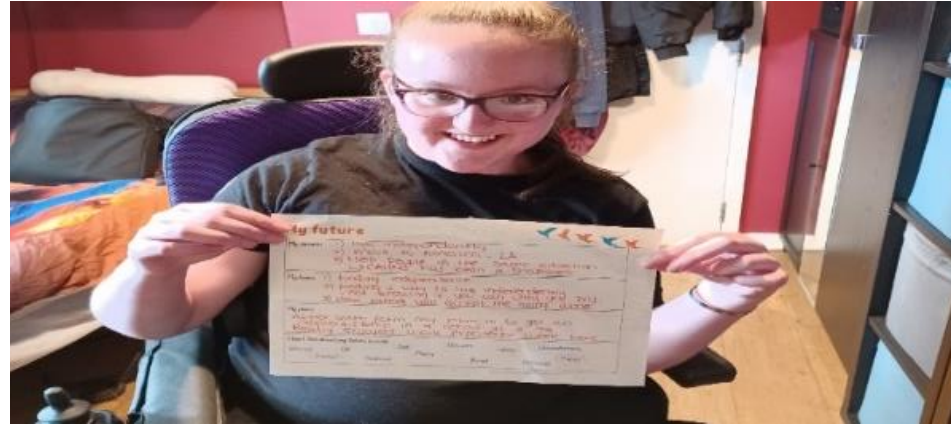




Ensure our needs are understood and regularly discussed by people who know us best

- We are visited regularly by our named social worker.
- Annual assessments focusing on what's working well for us and our families/carers, what we are worried about and what needs to happen to meet our needs.
- Ensuring we have a robust plan to meet our needs and/or keep us safe. That these are reviewed and updated regularly by us, our families and our carers.
- Our parents/carers have access to carer's assessments.
- When we are ready to think about preparing for adulthood, we work closely with the Navigation team, they are colleagues in adults' services who can work when is most appropriate to support with the transition to adulthood. We recognise for all young people the transition from children to adults' services is a worrying time, and we work hard to ensure this is done in a planned way.

Improving how we capturing young peoples voices with direct work and showing in pictures how we review outcomes with our children and young people



social Story Emma .docx • Last Modified: 17 October

Emma Robertson ER

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1 of 2

53%

09:36 30/11/2022

- A young person enjoying a commissioned care package 'surfing'
- A young person completing some PECS work on a choice board.
- Direct work around a young persons plans.
- Social Workers explaining to children what their monitor and Review package looks like.



We want to influence the help you give us

Page 50

Making our services be the best they can be for all the children and young people

Specialist community hubs (short breaks) and improving the offer for our families

We are currently going through the investing in children process and we achieved a gold

CICC development

Mind of my own feedback

Family Satisfaction Surveys

[Department for Education on Twitter: "Children's social workers provide essential support to our communities. Aimee told us about her role, and the life-changing help she gives to children and young people with disabilities in County Durham https://t.co/6sbjZT8fP5" / Twitter](https://t.co/6sbjZT8fP5)





FEEDBACK FROM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

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Corporate Parenting Panel

28 April 2023

Progress Report on the Care Leavers Strategy and Action Plan



Report of Jodie Henderson Practice Lead, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council and Sharon Davey, Strategic Manager Children in our Care, Children's Social Care, DCC

Electoral division affected:

None.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report outlines the progress of the Care Leaving Service Action Plan and Strategy.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Children Act 1989 places duties on Local Authorities towards 'looked after' and previously 'looked after' children as they exit the care system. The service to young people who have been in the care of Durham Children's services is delivered to all young people aged between 16 and 25 who fall within the eligibility criteria. This criterion includes:
 - (a) **eligible child**, who is a child aged 16 or 17 and is currently Looked After or has been looked after by the Local Authority for 13 weeks since the age of 14;
 - (b) **relevant child**, who is a child aged 16 or 17 who has been Looked After for 13 weeks since the aged of 14 or who has been looked after since the age of 16 but is no longer Looked After;
 - (c) **former relevant child**, who is a young person aged 18-25 who has been an eligible or relevant child prior to becoming 18;
 - (d) **Or other qualifying care leavers**, who is young person who was Looked After for a period of less than 13 weeks since the age of 14 or was Looked After since the age of 16.

Recommendation

- 3 Members of Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to:
 - (a) Note the content of this report.

Background

- 4 The offer from the leaving Care service is published in the Local Offer to Care Leavers which provides details of how support will be provided to young people with regards to:
 - (a) Where young people live; this includes all options, staying put, supporting lodgings, supported accommodation, living alone and university accommodation as well as advice to avoid homelessness and support for any housing issues;
 - (b) Money: help with managing money, help with benefits, setting up home money, and all other types of financial advice;
 - (c) Looking After themselves; Physical and emotional health advice and support, sexual health, drug and alcohol support, domestic abuse and healthy relationship advice, someone to talk to, smoking cessation and opportunities to get involved in things;
 - (d) Education employment and training; advice when thinking about leaving school, sixth form or college, work experience and part time jobs, learning to drive, apprenticeships or traineeships, going to university, getting a job.

Service Developments

- 5 The service continues to grow and develop, and we have recruited young persons advisors into the role to support with working with our young people from the age of 16.
- 6 The service is resourced to work with approximately 300 young adults at any one time with 2 teams of Young People's Advisors supported by 2 team managers and a Social Work Consultants and a service manager, to support the service with continuous improvement planning.
- 7 The staff group continue to report the structure working well and aiding them to focus on the needs of this group of young people. We have positive links with the community, partners, and young people. We have seen improvements with accommodation and education, training, and employment.
- 8 The service has as an established care leavers hub in the Sherburn Hill area of Durham. This is a well-used space which young people have taken a lead with determining what activities and groups will be provided. We are continuing to expand are care leavers hub, and there are plans to open a further two hubs within the next 12 months.

- 9 We have now developed a working participation group and scrutiny panel. We have also established a parents and child group and are currently developing a job shop to support young people into work.

Care Leavers Action Plan

- 10 Co-production of the Care Leavers action plan was identified as an essential aspect of the planning and a group of young people met to assess the DCC Local Offer to Care Leavers against national Local Offers and to develop the renewed action plan for 2023/2024
- 11 The action plan produced includes several areas of focus. The progress of these is recorded in detail in the plan but include
- (a) Pathway Plans and pathway plans needs assessments;
 - (b) Education, Employment, and training;
 - (c) Suitable accommodation;
 - (d) Improved health outcomes;
 - (e) Preparation for adulthood;
 - (f) Co-production;
 - (g) Training and development of young person advisors.

Continued Learning

- 12 Durham County Council care leavers service, is now an established member of the regional board for care leavers and we are committed to working with our partners to ensure that all care experienced young people have parity across the region, and explore all areas of best practice
- 13 The service is committed to the development of a Care experienced scrutiny group and is working with young people, Investors in children and participation and engagement support to develop this.
- 14 The Care Leavers are working with the care leavers covenant to understand and expand our local offer and ensure that our young people have access to a wide range of resources and activities that will enhance their lives and choices

Conclusion

- 15 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will have an oversight and understanding of the Care Leaver Service and will be aware of the continuous developments within the service to ensure we strive to meet the needs of young people.

Authors

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Sharon Davey Tel: 03000 265759

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

We are bound by duties under the Children & Social Work Act / Children's Act to act in the best interests of children and young people.

Finance None.

Consultation None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Young People's Service provides care and support to young people who identify as transgender, this forms 1% of the overall service group.

Climate Change None

Human Rights

Children and young people have access to the DCC complaints process

Crime and Disorder None

Staffing

The authority has a statutory duty to provide personal advisors to care experienced young people.

Accommodation

Should children and young people come into the care of the Local Authority, there is a need to ensure there is sufficient suitable placements

Risk

The risk of not providing the services and supports required by young people who have care leaver status is that they could be at risk of harm, either immediately or as a result of a failure to identify their needs and best support them to achieve their potential.

Procurement None

Appendix 2: Summary Presentation of Progress of Care Leavers Action Plan

Attached as a separate document

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CARE LEAVER SERVICE ACTION PLAN

2022-2023

1 b	To evaluate the use of the Hub	Establish a user group of young people and partners to review the effective use of the hub and identify development.	28 th February 2022 Monthly meetings thereafter	Lindsey Dodds Tracy Shaw	
1c	Identify next Hub location and progress to an opening.	Use feedback from usage to inform future need. Make a request for a venue.	30 th August 2022	Jodie Henderson	
2a	Pathway plan assessment document to be reviewed.	TS,LD and LB to meet to review the document from Darlington Meet with A.GS re the option for LL to support the document	1/2/2022 11/2/2022 To be in place APRIL 2022	LD,TS &LB TS&LD	
2b	All staff to be trained in pathway plan assessment / SOS	Development day to focus on staff's training needs	11/2/2022 6 months (July 2022)	Hazel Ostle TS& LD Elaine Smiley	

	All documents to be written in a way that is aimed at the young person, strength based and ambitious	All staff to have done SOS training and network/mobility mapping Further training to be completed around assessing Training offer to be developed for YPA's	6 months (July 2022) April 2022		
2c	Risk Assessment document to support post 18 work to be developed in partnership with adult services.	New document to be designed and implemented within LL. Staff to be trained in risk assessment	3 months April 2022	Service Manager Hazel Ostle Tracey Joicey	
3	Transfer protocol – -how YPA's will be allocated, -what age they will be allocated - Transfer process/ handover at 18	-Monthly allocation meeting to look at young people who are 17 -In tray needed for cases transferring at 18	3 months April 2022	TS,LD,LB	
4	Monitoring tray to be deleted from LL	- Tracy and Lindsey to review cases in the in tray and close the cases that do not require a service and allocate the cases where a	3 Months (April 2022)	Service manager LD&TS	

		<p>service is needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service Manager <p>Develop a process with systems and first contact for re referrals</p>	Meeting to be arranged with systems in 3 months (April 2022)		
5	New name for the service	<p>Meet with young people and staff on the development day to come up with 4 options</p> <p>Meet with IIC to give the 4 options for them choose</p> <p>Write out to everybody once decision is made to launch the new service.</p>	<p>11/2/2022- new name options</p> <p>Within 1 month to go to next IIC meeting. (March 2022)</p> <p>Within 1 month to launch (April 2022)</p>	All of care leaver service and IIC	
6	Consent base for work post 18 to be reviewed.	Consent forms to be completed for all 18+ cases that also needs to include consent to contact Jobcentre	31.03.2022	SWC TL/Lead YPA	
7	Home starter packs- every young person to receive a home hamper from the YPS when they move into their new home	Link in with VCS and welfare assist for funding	28 th Feb 2022	LD&TS	
8	Summer celebration event to be arranged for all care leavers	Young person's group to be established to lead on this supported by YPA's and managers.	To be in place and event arranged for July 2022	Group of Young People and YPA's to be established	
9	CLASP panel to continue each month	All care leavers accommodation to be	Monthly	JH/Service manager	

	(multi agency meeting to include care leaving team, Lauren Burns Accommodation and support co Ordinator , Jane Bateson Supported lodgings, Dave Ridley Housing)	reviewed, RAG rated and where young people are at risk of homelessness management scrutiny of plans. To be recorded on LL			
10	EET /NEET panel	All care leavers E,T,E to be reviewed, RAG rated and where young people are at risk of homelessness management scrutiny of plans. To be recorded on LL	Monthly	JH/Service manager	
11	MASH panel to be set up (Multi agency meeting to review all high risk cases, to include police, Harbour, humankind, housing, FF, to be added to)	Monthly meetings to be set for YPA' to present high risk cases for a panel to have oversight and scrutiny off Threshold criteria to be developed	April 2022	JH/Service manager	
12	Financial procedures to be reviewed	SUHA needs to be reviewed. University payments needs to be reviewed.	September 2022	Service manager JH	
13	Staff profiles	Develop a profile for each staff member and team manager that can be given to a young person by their SW to	11 th Feb 2022 staff to write up profiles 11 th March 2022 for profiles to be written	All of the service	

		introduce their YPA and the care leaving service	into a document that can be shared .		
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Care Leavers Action Plan Update

Corporate Parenting Panel

28th April 2023



Planning for young people leaving care

Pathway planning

- Pathway Plan expectation is now clear
- We have carried out an audit to look at the quality for consistency. (This will be repeated quarterly.)
- Language changed to 'writing to the child' and including the child in the co-production of Pathway Plans.
- **Next Steps.....**
- Improve on needs of young people to prepare for education, employment or training.
- Ensure that young people understand their rights and entitlements
- Young people to create bespoke training around what pathway planning means to them

Health

- Work closely with the ICB around the needs of care experienced young people including GP pilot
- Identify health needs as a priority and ensure that young people have bespoke support around them
- Looked after nurse attend the care leavers hub to offer support
- Ensured that our UASC have their health reviews and access to services and that they have the support in place
- Explore bespoke emotional/mental health support for care experience young people in Durham
- Work regarding all young people having access to their health passport
- Training with health partners regarding care experienced young people and parents

Care planning

EET

- We continue to work with partners including Durham works and the virtual school
- Expand family business with apprenticeships
- Job shop for all care leavers age 16 +Work within the core offer regional board to develop a joint response to TEE
- Work with 16/17 year olds to look at needs and next steps for young people, and planning is clear
- Develop links with care leavers covenant to expand opportunities with employers within Durham
- Continue to work with universities and colleges to ensure that that care experienced young people have bespoke support

Accommodation

- Undertake audits of intentionally homelessness and developed plans to address this
- Worked closely with external agencies to develop packages of support for young people
- Developed our staying close offer
- Worked with young people to understand their needs around accommodation and continue to offer support and opportunities
- Continue to support young people through the local offer, which includes SUHA and support regarding benefits Review joint housing protocol
- Develop pathway plans needs assessment regrading analysis of accommodation needs

Service improvement

Preparation for adulthood

- Joint Training carried out on “Preparation for Adulthood”, with Families First, CIC, Care Leavers and Children’s Home staff .
- Audit focuses on aspirations for leaving care
- Session with IRO Service regarding the review of Care Planning prior to 16 years of age.
- Session with IRO Service regarding the review of Care Planning prior to 16 years of age.
- Preparation for inspection – Be our Best (BOB) meetings held within the service to drive performance and service improvement

Voice and influence of our care experienced young people

- Review of the local offer with care leavers.
- Shaping the Regional approach to a local offer.
- Working with the Care Leavers covenant on new opportunities.
- Establishing 2 more Care Leavers Hubs.
- Establishing a Scrutiny Committee.
- Entry to Care Packs being designed by young people.
- Exit from Care Packs being designed by young people.
- IIC Membership to be reviewed in all teams

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