



Corporate Parenting Panel

Date **Friday 19 May 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 28 April 2023 (Pages 3 - 8)
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. Proud Moments - Verbal update from Service Leads
8. Children in Care Council Update - Verbal update from young people of the Children in Care Council
9. Language Update - Verbal update from Head of Children's Social Care
10. Adopt Coast to Coast - Report of Head of Service, Adopt Coast to Coast (Pages 9 - 26)
11. The Pause Programme Durham - Report of Corporate Director Children and Young People's Services (Pages 27 - 40)
12. Care Leavers' Covenant - Report of Strategic Manager, Children in our Care (Pages 41 - 62)
13. Routes into Social Work - Report of Head of Children's Social Care (for information only) (Pages 63 - 72)
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 Aycliffe Secure Centre - Report / presentation of Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children (Pages 73 - 76)
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
11 May 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 representing 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 28 April 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor M Simmons (Chair)

Members of the Panel:

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

Co-opted Members:

Damon, J Gamble, Luke, S Neale and W Taylor

Also Present:

Jane Ayres – Strategic Manager, Families First
Sharon Davey – Strategic Manager, Children in Our Care
Rachel Harris – Service Improvement Manager
Jodie Henderson – Practice Lead, Children and Young People
Rob Johnson – Project Manager, Investing in Children
Rachael Riley – Operations Manager, Children Looked After and Care Leavers
Paul Rudd – Strategic Manager, Children's Homes
Mark Smith – Strategic Manager, Commissioning
Martyn Stenton – Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
Melanie Stubbs – Head of the Virtual School
Laura Turner – Interim Team Manager, Families First
Jayne Watson – Senior Partnerships Officer
Julian Wilson – Lawyer, Children and Adults Services

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Cochrane, O Gunn and T Henderson, from Co-opted Members J Bell and R Woods and from officer R Farnham.

2 Substitute Members

No substitute members were in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 31 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The following matters arising were reported:

- Members met on 20 April to discuss the Panel's response to the independent review of children's social care 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'. The agreed response will be submitted by 11 May.
- The 'Don't Forget Us' campaign video was presented to a meeting of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A meeting was held with the Marketing team to follow up the concerns raised by the Children in Care Council, however, as progress is now being made, a decision was taken that the video will not be shared more widely at this point in time.
- The Senior Partnerships Officer shared the Corporate Parenting Panel's good luck cards which were sent to those young people who are due to sit exams. The Panel congratulated all those involved in producing the cards at such short notice and it was agreed that good luck cards will be sent annually, at exam time.
- The Chair informed the Panel that an invite was sent to regional Chairs for an initial discussion meeting to set up a regional CPP Chairs / Vice Chairs network. The meeting will be held after the local elections and the Panel will be updated on progress.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Number of Children Looked After and Care Leavers

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children informed the Panel that the total number of children looked after stood at 1,076, including 28 young people placed for adoption, 59 unaccompanied asylum seeking young people (UASC) and 289 care leavers.

6 Ofsted Updates

It was reported that Hudson House is now fully approved as a new children's home and the new children's home at Meadowfield is expected to be approved in the near future. Anne Haigh has been appointed as the Centre Manager of Aycliffe Secure Centre and the transition home at Maple House is in the final stages of registration. An open event is planned to take place on the afternoon of Monday 15 May 2023 to which members of the Aycliffe Sub-Group will be invited.

7 Annual Summary Report of the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership (CLASP)

The Panel received the annual summary of the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership (CLASP) for March 2022 to March 2023, presented by the Strategic Manager for Children in our Care (for copy see file of minutes).

The Panel noted the approach is very much multi-agency and the eight strategic priorities are designed to align with the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel. Members were thanked for their support in the work undertaken to review foster carers' payments for skills. Future developments will include a project to increase health passports for young people and the launch of the second Mockingbird hub. In addition, the young people's scrutiny panel, which the young people have named 'Experts Through Experience With Ideas', will be embedded.

Sarah Neale, Designated Nurse for Children in Care, updated the Panel on developments in mental health support, explaining that the children looked after health needs assessment which had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is now being progressed and will link with Public Health work. The work will include input from children looked after, to inform the future plans.

In response to a question on the arrangements for sexual health advice and support, the Designated Nurse clarified that information is provided as part of the universal offer, the annual review health assessment process and support is also provided through the Care Leavers' Hub. A working group has been established to focus specifically on vulnerabilities and sexual health and this includes representation from the Designated Nurse. How to manage sexual health conversations is also part of foster carer training.

It was also noted that, in response to language discussions at Corporate Parenting Panel meetings, the Placement Team is now called the Home Finding Team and Disruption Meetings are now referred to as Next Chapter Meetings.

8 Proud Moments

The Strategic Manager for Children in our Care spoke of how proud she was of Damon who had been instrumental in driving the discussion on budgets and savings at a recent Children in Care Council meeting. It was also reported that Luke has gained a part-time job in hospitality with Newcastle United football club. Luke spoke of how the job will be perfect for him as it will add to his CV and the hours will fit in well with his university studies.

9 Children in Care Council Update

The Panel received a presentation from Investing in Children on recent activity by the Children in Care Council (CiCC) (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

Highlights included that additional funding had been granted for the Art and Wellbeing Café following the project receiving the High Sheriff award. Luke was pleased to report that he has been selected as a representative on the Children's Commissioner's Care Experienced Advisory Board.

Luke alluded to the discussion at the joint CICC /CPP meeting held the previous evening, at which the two proposed priorities for the coming year were discussed, namely life skills and savings. Investing in Children will discuss these proposals with wider groups of care experienced young people who were not at the event, or who do not link with the CiCC, to seek their views before a decision is made.

The Panel praised the amount of work undertaken by the CiCC and thanked Luke for the consistently high standard of his presentations.

10 Entry into Care Packs

The Operations Manager, Children Looked After and Care Leavers delivered a presentation on the entry into care packs (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

The Panel heard that the packs had been developed following a suggestion by the CiCC and Damon demonstrated one of the packs, which the young people have named 'Supply Packs'. The packs are age appropriate and are designed to provide young people with belongings which bring them comfort, particularly in emergency situations. The Operations Manager explained the ask of the Panel was for £7,600 to launch the pilot project to create 150 packs. The Panel congratulated the young people for their work on the project.

During the discussion, Members agreed that they would like to help to launch the pilot as soon as possible and the finance could be raised through the Corporate Parenting Panel Members' neighbourhood budgets, however, all Members as corporate parents, may wish to make a contribution. It was noted that Members may have committed their budgets as it was the end of the financial year. It was agreed that an approach would be made to all Members of the Council to request contributions to launch the pilot. Councillors Walton and Sterling offered to contribute the full amount in the event that the finance could not be raised.

The Senior Partnerships Officer agreed to make enquiries with regard to future funding, should the pilot project be a success.

11 Children Looked After with a Disability Annual Update

The Panel received a report and presentation from the Strategic Manager, Families First and Children with Disabilities Team on the work of the Children with Disabilities Team (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Panel received a summary of progress made since the ILACS Ofsted Inspection in September 2019, including changes to the service for children and young people with disabilities and the remodelling of the service to create a 0-18 children's service and transition arrangements for 14-25 year olds. Members were provided with information on the support offered to ensure young people have a voice and can express their views directly or through digital technology such as the Mind of My Own apps.

The Strategic Manager highlighted that the Children with Disabilities Team received the Gold Award for Investing in Children and the Panel viewed a video in which a Disabilities Team Social Worker expressed how much she enjoys her job and helping young people to develop communication skills.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

12 Progress Report on the Care Leavers' Strategy and Action Plan

The Panel received a report and presentation from the Practice Lead for Children and Young People on the strategy and action plan for care leavers (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

Information was provided on the support provided for care leavers in respect of finance, housing, physical and emotional health and education, employment and training. The Practice Lead was pleased to report that the majority of care leavers are in suitable accommodation and the service had worked with partners to respond to the needs of the increasing number of unaccompanied asylum seeking young people. The Practice Lead also highlighted the work done to prepare young people for adult living through pathway plans and the development of co-dependency skills. Plans for the future include the establishment of two further Care Leavers' Hubs.

In response to a question from the Panel as to the help available for UASCs who arrive with little knowledge of the language, the Practice Lead explained that the Home Office provides valuable information on their cultural needs.

An interpretation service is available 24 hours a day and many young people and their carers use translation apps on mobile devices. The Panel heard that many of the UASCs find that socialising and participation in team sports also helps them to integrate and to develop their language skills.

Luke pointed out that the young people have discussed extending the entry into care packs project, if the pilot is successful, to those leaving care and the packs would include useful information on issues such as accommodation and finance.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

13 Ask for Angela Update

The Strategic Manager for Children in our Care updated the Panel that meetings had been held with young people to progress the Ask for Angela campaign. The young people commented that they would like to target information to young people, by creating a poster to display how young people can raise awareness if they do not feel safe. They suggested that they would like to use some of their artwork for the poster, which could be displayed in public areas such as family hubs, schools and GP surgeries. Further information will be provided to the Panel as the work progresses.

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 Independent Children's Residential Homes

The Panel considered a report presented by the Strategic Manager for Commissioning which provided an overview of the Regulation 44 visits and regulatory body ratings of independent children's residential homes in which Durham children and young people are placed (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Corporate Parenting Panel

19 May 2023

Adopt Coast to Coast



Report of Paula Gibbons, Head of Service, Adopt Coast to Coast

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update on the second year of the Regional Adoption Agency, in respect of the activity for the Durham spoke.

Executive summary

- 2 Adopt Coast to Coast successfully established its branding across the North East and Cumbria.
- 3 Until the 31 March 2023, Adopt Coast to Coast was a partnership RAA with Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council and Together for Children who deliver children's services on behalf of Sunderland City Council.
- 4 From the 1 April 2023, Adopt Coast to Coast now has two partners, Durham County Council and Together for Children.

Recommendation

- 5 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to receive the presentation and marketing activity update, for the second year of operation from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Background

- 6 In this reporting year we have had some periods of time where we have been less-visible which has in-turn affected enquiry numbers. Marketing activity was reduced during the criminal trial of the prospective adopters following the death of Leiland-James Corkhill in Cumbria, when the verdict was announced and when the safeguarding review report was released. This was the appropriate action to take but the impact of this can be seen on the enquiry numbers.
- 7 We also faced challenges in the later part of the year, firstly due to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II where we were unable to do marketing activity at a key 'back to school' time.
- 8 Secondly, we believe the cost-of-living crisis has had an understandable detrimental effect on incoming enquiries. We are aware this is also the experience of other RAAs and VAAs across England.

Learning from marketing activity

- 9 Note the learning from marketing activity carried out to date:
 - Real stories resonate with people
 - Videos are engaged with the most
 - Profiles of real children increases engagement
 - Social media activity about post-adoption support such as events significantly helps engagement with adopters and target audience
 - Google ads are essential to maintaining incoming enquiries
 - Social media and digital activity support awareness raising
 - Sponsored content with local publications is successful
 - Our website remains our biggest recruitment tool
 - Targeted campaigns e.g. sibling adoption throughout the year works well
 - Adopter 'type' specific recruitment activity is well received e.g. LGBTQ+ and single parent adopters

Performance

- 10 The enquiry numbers across the RAA have decreased by 102, and though the Durham spoke's was a reduction of 38 enquiries to 178, the percentage of the enquiries referred to Durham remained consistent.
- 11 Across the RAA, the approval numbers increased by 8 to 86 and the Durham spoke increased their approvals by 1 to 41 prospective adoptive families. This is very positive performance and the conversion rate from enquiry to approval has increased to 23% for the Durham Spoke (from 19% the previous year).

- 12 The RAA already has a further 42 prospective adopters in stage 1 and 2 at the 1 April 2023.

Main implications

Marketing activity priorities for 2023/24

- 13 The change in partnership model could appear that we have access to less children and therefore prospective adopters will wait longer to be matched. We need to tackle this potential threat by counteracting it with positive stories, releasing figures on timescales for matching and using figures about the number of children waiting (to show there are always children available).
- 14 Stories about increasing costs continues to dominate the media and impacting families of all incomes. Whilst this may ease towards the latter part of the year, we need to reiterate messages surrounding the support available to adopters and remove any other perceived barriers which may add to uncertainty about applying. Some marketing activity could also be targeted towards higher earners.
- 15 There will always be groups of children who wait longer to be matched in their forever homes, targeted marketing activity needs to be run alongside general recruitment focused on recruiting prospective adopters for these children. To do this we need to continue to create video, profiles, press releases and website articles which show the reality of life for these children and take away some of the fear.

Conclusion

- 16 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will have an overview of the marketing activity undertaken in this reporting period and be aware of the next steps for Adopt Coast to Coast.
- 17 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will understand how they are able to support the service and be advocates for adoption.

Author

Paula Gibbons

Tel: 03000 265235

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Relevant legislation is adhered to within the spokes, in relation to adoption.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

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

None.

Appendix 2: Marketing Activity

Attached as a separate report

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Adopt Coast to Coast 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

Marketing Activity

In this year we have had some periods of time where we have been less-visible which has in-turn affected enquiry numbers. Marketing activity was reduced during the criminal trial in Cumbria, when the verdict was announced and when the safeguarding review report was released. This was the appropriate action to take but the impact of this can be seen on the enquiry numbers. We also faced challenges in the later part of the year, firstly due to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II where we were unable to do marketing activity at a key 'back to school' time. Secondly, we believe the cost-of-living crisis has had an understandable detrimental effect on incoming enquiries. We are aware this is also the experience of other RAAs and VAAs across England.

Learning from marketing activity carried out to date

- Real stories resonate with people
- Videos are engaged with the most
- Profiles of real children increases engagement
- Social media activity about post-adoption support such as events significantly helps engagement with adopters and target audience
- Google ads are essential to maintaining incoming enquiries
- Social media and digital activity support awareness raising
- Sponsored content with local publications is successful
- Our website remains our biggest recruitment tool
- Targeted campaigns e.g. sibling adoption throughout the year works well
- Adopter 'type' specific recruitment activity is well received e.g. LGBTQ+ and single parent adopters

Going forward we will focus activity on the following areas and key messages (general themes listed below not exact content):

General recruitment

- We are here to support you to take the first step
- There isn't a set list of credentials for prospective adopters
- We are the RAA for Durham County Council and Together for Children (Sunderland)
- Adopt Cost to Coast offers early permanence and mainstream adoption
- We work within Government timeframes

We are the experts on adoption

- We have well established adoption services
- Adopt Coast to Coast is involved in regional and national activity
- We are innovative and always looking to improve

Children and families

- We find families for children who wait the longest
- Decisions are made at the best interest of children
- We support prospective adopters from enquiry, to approval, match and once a new family is formed
- Post-adoption support is tailored to family needs

Adopt Coast to Coast and spokes' performance

	Adopt Coast to Coast	Cumbria	Durham	Together for Children
Enquiries 2022/23	456	157 - *34%	178 - *39%	115 - *25%
(2021/22)	(558)	(186 - *33%)	(216 - *39%)	(156 - *28%)
Approvals 2022/23	86	18 - *21%	41 - *48%	27 - *31%
(2021/22)	(78)	(11 - *14%)	(40 - *51%)	(27 - *35%)
Matches 2022/23	125	34 - *27%	58 - *46%	33 - *26%
(2021/22)	(122)	(28 - *23%)	(65 - *53%)	(29 - *24%)
In year conversion from number of enquiries to approval 2022/23	19%	11%	23%	23%
(2021/22)	14%	6%	19%	17%

*percentage of RAA performance

Durham County Council's Adoption Performance

Children's Journey

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Analysis
Waiting with PO	14	10	11	This year has seen a reduction in the number of children who have waited over 6 months for a match and this is a very positive development. The adoption team are proactive in considering possible links utilising Link Maker.
Waited over 6 months	1	4	0	
Matched	60	65	58	
Interagency use	18 (30%)	34 (52%)	*17 (29%)	

*outside of RAA approved prospective adopters

Prospective Adopter's Journey

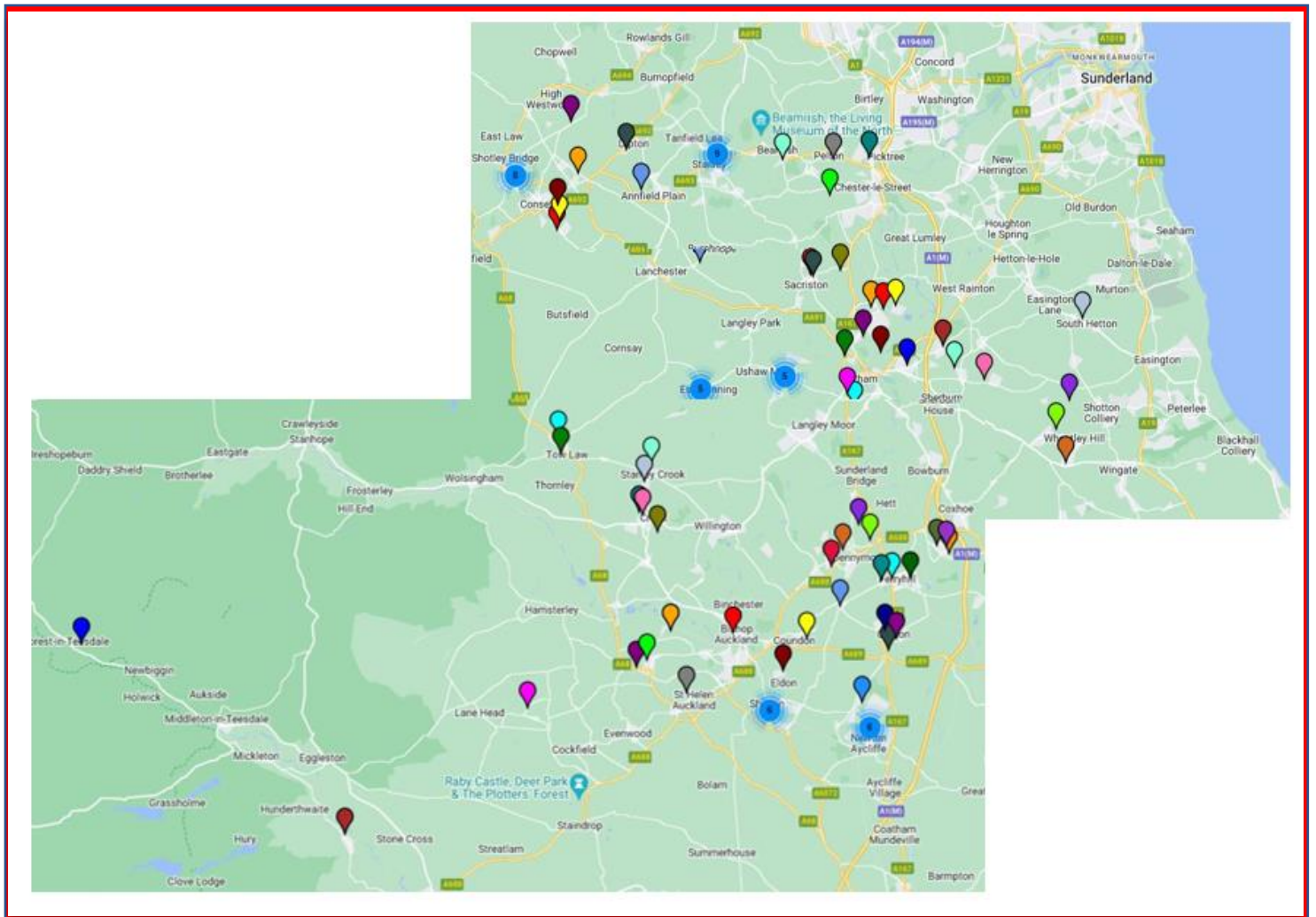
Durham's adoption team are responding to enquiries promptly. The team cover Durham and all areas South. Unlike other RAAs we do not operate within a geographical limit, rather all enquiries are dealt with on a case by case basis which ensures Adopt Coast to Coast does not exclude enquirers who may be wishing to adopt a child whose needs would result in it taking longer to secure a match. The attached maps show the enquiries and stage 1 applications received from within the areas covered by Durham County Council.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Analysis
Enquiries	141	216	178	Durham's adoption team continue to demonstrate strong and consistent performance. They work diligently to meet statutory timescales which both secures adoptive families for children with plans of adoption and supports recruitment messages.
Stage 1	*13	*17/**11	*14/**2	
Stage 2	*9	*8	*6	
Approvals	41	40	41	

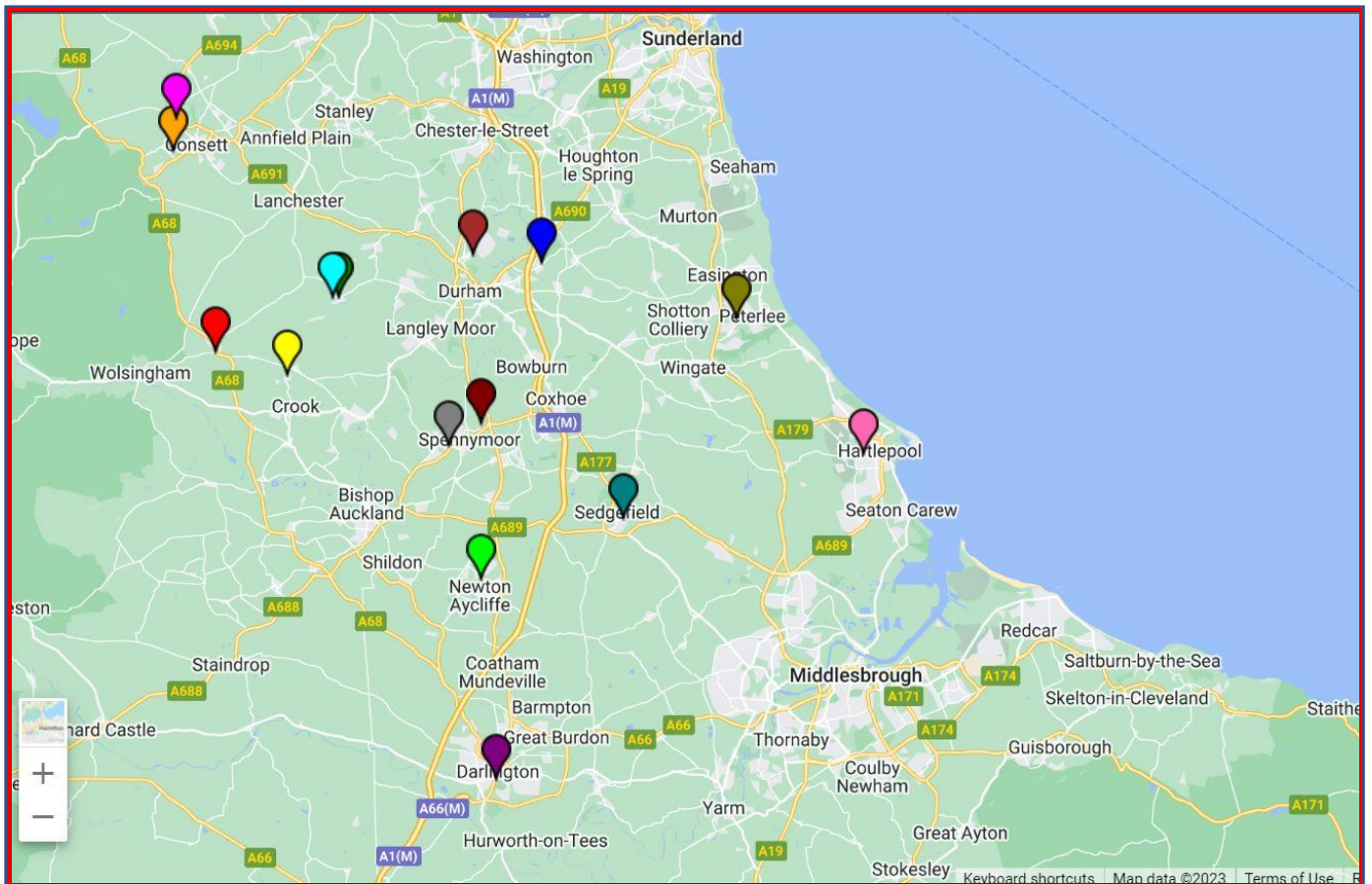
*at 31st March

**pending – successfully completed stage 1, yet to move into stage 2

Map of Enquiries received



Map of Commenced Stage 1



Prospective adopter journey

Natalie and Oliver adopted Reuben and Isaac now aged 6.

Unlike many people who start researching adoption, Natalie and Oliver always thought that they would like to adopt more than one child, with Natalie saying: “We chose to adopt siblings because it can be quite an onerous process to adopt. It was fairly painless for us because as adopters we were pretty straight-forward, but it’s still a process we had to undertake. We knew we wanted two children and we thought that if we could keep two children together by adopting them together, then that would be the best thing for them, and the best thing for us. At one point I remember us saying that our ideal scenario would be to have twins. It really was because they would do everything at the same time, and they’d always have their closest family member with them too which was important to us. We were very lucky in that we were matched with twins, and it was a bonus that we only went through the process once.”

Oliver added: “Going from zero children to multiple children is something that’s probably more challenging for the first couple of years, but once they start to interact and play with each other the tables turn and you feel like you’re having an easier time.”

Like all brothers Reuben and Isaac have their small fall outs. When asked what the most annoying thing about his brother was, Reuben was quick to say: “He fights with me”, and Isaac was just as quick to reply with “He fights with me too”. But when asked about their favourite thing they do together the boys really lit up and were quick to reel off a collective list of “Football, rugby, tennis, basketball, canoeing, paddleboarding – lots of sports. We like baking in the house together – we like chocolate brownies, biscuits, and cookies. Mummy is better than daddy at cooking, but rugby is daddy’s favourite sport.”

For parents, Natalie, and Oliver they couldn’t agree more. “The best thing about having the two boys is the way they play together and the way they entertain each other, and just the fun that they have. The way they make us laugh. It’s great.” said Oliver.

Even the boys agree, with Isaac said: “I like having a brother because I like playing games and sport with him. I love my family.” Echoing his brother Reuben added: “I love my family because they play with me and because I love my mummy and daddy, and I love Isaac.”

Natalie noted, “They settled in very quickly. With retrospect it took a little longer for one of the boys, but the other settled in immediately. We didn’t realise it at the time because they slept 12 hours the night we brought them home, but a lot of that was probably down to the fact that they were together. They had always slept next to each other in cots and even though one-year olds don’t interact very much, they are taking comfort from having the presence next to them. I really hope their closeness lasts.”

Speaking about the impact of adoption on their lives, Oliver said with a smile: “It’s made me realise that all of those times that you thought you were busy, was actually free time. It’s been great adopting kids – there’s a lot of rushing, toing, and froing, buying food and doing the laundry but it’s all great. It opens your perspective to a new kind of enjoyment. They are bundles of energy – with good appetites and grazed knees – all of that good stuff.”

“To sum it up – we’ve never been busier, but we wouldn’t change it for the world.” Concluded Natalie.

Final word goes to the boys who summed it up perfectly, by saying: “If I didn’t live with my brother, I would be sad. Really, really sad.”



Marketing activity priorities for 2023/24

- The change in partnership model could appear that we have access to less children and therefore prospective adopters will wait longer to be matched. We need to tackle this potential threat by counteracting it with positive stories, releasing figures on timescales for matching and using figures about the number of children waiting (to show there are always children available).
- Stories about increasing costs continues to dominate the media and impacting families of all incomes. Whilst this may ease towards the latter part of the year, we need to reiterate messages surrounding the support available to adopters and remove any other perceived barriers which may add to uncertainty about applying. Some marketing activity could also be targeted towards higher earners.
- There will always be groups of children who wait longer to be matched in their forever homes, targeted marketing activity needs to be run alongside general recruitment focused on recruiting prospective adopters for these children. To do this we need to continue to create video, profiles, press releases and website articles which show the reality of life for these children and take away some of the fear.

Paula Gibbons
Head of Service - Adopt Coast to Coast

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Adopt Coast to Coast Annual Report

April 2022 – March 2023

Paula Gibbons
Head of Service



Adopt Coast to Coast Performance 2022-23

	Adopt Coast to Coast
Enquiries	
2022/23	456
(2021/22)	(558)
Approvals	
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(2021/22)	(78)
Matches	
2022/23	125
(2021/22)	(122)
In year conversion from number of enquiries to approval	
2022/23	19%
(2021/22)	14%

Durham County Council's Adoption Performance

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Analysis
Enquiries	141	216	178	Durham's adoption team continue to demonstrate strong and consistent performance. They work diligently to meet statutory timescales which both secures adoptive families for children with plans of adoption and supports recruitment messages.
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Stage 2	*9	*8	*6	
Approvals	41	40	41	

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Analysis
Waiting with PO	14	10	11	This year has seen a reduction in the number of children who have waited over 6 months for a match and this is a very positive development. The adoption team are proactive in considering possible links utilising Link Maker.
Waited over 6 months	1	4	0	
Matched	60	65	58	
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Marketing activity priorities for 2023/24

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Corporate Parenting Panel**19 May 2023****The Pause Programme Durham****Report John Pearce, Corporate Director of Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council****Electoral division affected:**

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Pause Durham.

Executive summary

- 2 Pause aims to reduce the number of children being taken into care and improve the lives of women who have had two or more children permanently removed from their care. Pause provides intensive, ongoing practical and emotional support. It is unique in targeting adults who have had engagement with children's social care as mothers but are no longer eligible for support due to their children being permanently removed from their care.
- 3 The women who are eligible have some of the most significant and complex needs in our population. Findings from national evidence qualitative and quantitative data suggest that Pause generally had a positive and significant impact on the women engaging with the programme, many of whom had complex, multiple, and mutually reinforcing needs.
- 4 In order to participate, women must agree to take effective contraception. Pause then offers them an intensive, flexible programme of support, to tackle destructive patterns, develop new skills and avoid further trauma in order to build a more positive future for themselves. The Pause programme is delivered with each woman over a period of 18 months.

Recommendation

- 5 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the contents of the report.

Background

- 6 Office for National Statistics data identifies that approximately 1% of the County Durham population are aged under 1. More than 8% of the total children open to Durham Children Social Care (DCSC) are under one. 20% of all children that come into our care are under 1, the next largest group is 16-year-olds at 9%.
- 7 Of contacts into First Contact, it is noted that 45% of unborn born babies and 34% of under one's go straight to a statutory referral. This is in comparison to 23% of the overall contacts of other age groups. A higher proportion of unborn and under one contact's are also triaged in the MASH than for other age groups.
- 8 A higher proportion of children who are and become children in our care (CiC) in Durham are aged under one than in comparators. In 2020/21, Durham had the 5th highest under one CiC starts in the country with 29% of all CiC starts in Durham. In 2021/22, Durham dropped to 23rd highest under one of CiC children in the country, which was 24% of all CiC starts in Durham. This has reduced again to 50th highest in the country, which is 21% of all CiC starts in Durham.
- 9 A reduction in the under one CiC starts has been a strategic priority and led to implementation of the Pre-birth and Under One development group. Strategies have included the mapping and review of universal services, introduction of pre-birth clinics chaired by strategic manager and Pause intervention.
- 10 Barnardo's were initially commissioned to deliver a regional Pause model for an 18-month period which ended April 2020. During this period the scope was limited to women who lived in the east of county. Given the success DCSC were keen to look at ways to enable women to access the service to women across the county.
- 11 Barnardo's were commissioned to deliver the Pause model county wide in November 2020. At this point funding was split between Durham County Council (DCC) and Pause, who were successful in achieving match funding from a DfE grant. The agreement was that Pause would deliver one cohort of women and at the end of that period Pause would support DCC bring the model inhouse, working closely with the Pre-Birth Intervention Service.
- 12 Pause moved over to DCC on 1st August 2022. Pause have agreed to fund the licence cost for 20 months which will ensure the programme will continue. This allows an opportunity to develop a tailored programme to meet the needs of women in Durham.

- 13 To enable the women, assess the support and intervention they need, pathways have been established with sexual health, domestic abuse services and housing. The next step is to establish a pathway with mental health services.

Pause Durham – Previous Cohort

- 14 There were 22 women who completed the Pause programme who graduated in July 2022. The 22 women on the programme had a total of 83 children removed from their care (an average of 4 children per woman). The women range in age from 22 – 40 years old, with an average age of 29 years. It is noted that 38% of the women where care experienced. To date there has been no pregnancies of the women who are currently working with Pause for those who have graduated.
- 15 The feedback from the women showed an improvement in all areas, particularly domestic abuse, housing, self-esteem and recovery from loss. The women also reported benefits in confidence, self-worth, coping mechanisms and help with the day-to-day challenges and trauma.
- 16 Although reunification is not the aim of Pause, we are aware that sometimes children have returned to women following positive engagement with the Pause program. One Pause Durham who graduate in the summer of 2022 has sustained so much positive progress she has recently had her two children returned into her care.
- 17 18 of the women who graduated continue to link in with the Pause practitioners, this helps to evidence long term impact of the service.

One Woman's Story

- 18 When A first became involved with Pause she was having very little contact with her children and the relationship had broken down between her and her parents (who were caring for two of her four children). She was drinking around two bottles of wine a day and using hundreds of pounds on cocaine each week. A was not paying her gas, electricity or rent – so her tenancy was at risk - and she was in large amounts of debt. She was being financially exploited by local drug dealers, who were lending her money with 400% interest. They would vandalise her home and threaten her when she could not repay. When she did manage to abstain for short periods, dealers would post drugs through the letter box to tempt her back to using. A was extremely socially anxious, and cancelled many meetings before her first successful visit, preferring to chat on the phone or via text. She did not attend any Pause group activities but did get into a rhythm of meeting her Practitioner weekly.

- 19 During her time working with Pause, A was granted a dept relief order, paying off most of her debts. This paid off her rent arrears and allowed her to move away from the drug dealers who were harassing her at her previous address. She is now paying her rent, gas and electricity bills each month and is enjoying having money for food and self-care activities.
- 20 Since graduating from Pause, A has continued to take steps toward her goals. A has been absent from drugs and alcohol for over 7 months. She is completing a course at Humankind, to become a volunteer. A has recently had a positive assessment and is now having unsupervised contact with her youngest son. A is positive and hopeful for the future.

Durham Pause Women – Current Cohort

- 21 Pause Durham currently working with 21 women (11 who are on the program, 10 who are in the engagement phase). The 11 women on the programme have had a total of 33 children removed from their care (an average of 3 children per woman). The women range in age from 19 – 38 years old, with an average age of 26 years. 73% of the women have care experience.
- 22 The main area of need for the women currently on the programme is mental health, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, learning needs and homelessness.
- 23 The true Pause Model works with women who have had 2 or more children removed permanently from their care during care proceedings. Durham Pause are actively working with younger women who have had one child permanently removed. It is hoped that earlier support will enable the women go on and achieve better outcomes and prevent further children removed from their care.

Conclusion

- 24 Pause is a service for women who do not have children in their care. The vision is of a society where no family experiences the removal of a child more than once. That women who experience, or are at risk of, the removal of children into care are given the best possible support.
- 25 There is strong evidence from national data that those issues addressed through the Pause programme results in harm reduction in areas such as domestic abuse, substance & alcohol misuse, mental health, housing etc. It is important to note that the research mirrors the outcomes of the women who have graduated from the Durham Programme. Pause intervention in Durham has resulted in improvements in the women's confidence and self-esteem which has

led to secure homes and engaging in education and employment, which would not likely have been achieved if it was not for Pause intervention.

Author

Jac Tyler

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Pause programme assists the authority to comply with the duty in Schedule 2 Paragraph 7 Children Act 1989 to take reasonable steps to reduce the need to issue care proceedings in respect of children in this area.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

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

None.

Pause Durham

What data tells us

- In 2020/21 Durham had the 5th highest under one CiC starts in the country, with 29% of all CiC starts in Durham.
- In 2021/22 this reduced to 23rd highest in the country, with 24% of all CiC starts in Durham
- In 2022/23 Durham were 50th highest in the country, with 21% of all CiC starts in Durham

What have we done

- Pre-birth & Under 1 development group
- Mapped out universal offer for pre-birth and under 1
- CSC introduced pre-birth clinics
- Pause

Pause Durham

- Pause aims to reduce the number of children being taken into care and improve the lives of women who have had one or more children permanently removed from their care
- Pause is unique in targeting adults who have had engagement with children's social care as mothers but are no longer eligible for support due to their children being permanently removed from their care
- The women who are eligible have some of the most significant and complex needs
- Pause offers them an intensive, flexible programme of support, to tackle destructive patterns, develop new skills and avoid further trauma in order to build a more positive future for themselves

The Pause programme is delivered with each woman over a period of 18 months.

Durham Pause Journey

Barnardo's were initially commissioned to deliver the Pause programme in the east of the county, which came to an end in April 2020.

Apr. 2020

Pause were then commissioned to deliver a county wide programme in Nov 2020, this was jointly funded by DCC and Pause, who had been successful in achieving match funding DfE grant

Nov. 2020

Funding was secured and Pause moved over to Durham in August 2022. Pause have agreed to fund the license for 20 months

Aug. 2022

Pause Durham – Previous Cohort

- Pause Durham actively worked with 22 women
- The 22 women on the programme had a total of 83 children removed from their care
- The women range in age from 22 – 40 years old
- 38% of the women are care experienced
- The 22 women graduated from Pause in July 2022
- The feedback from the women has highlighted a number of positives; grown in their confidence, access to sexual health, domestic abuse services, housing and education
- None of the women have had any further pregnancies during or following intervention
- One woman has had her 2 children returned to her care

Pause Durham – Current Cohort

Page 38

- Pause Durham are actively working with 21 women in total – 11 who are fully on the programme
- The 11 women have had a total of 33 children removed from their care
- 73% of the women are care experienced
- The main area of need for the women currently on the programme is mental health, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, learning needs and homelessness

One Woman's Story

Before Pause

- 4 children removed from her care
- Chronic alcohol and drug use
- Financially exploited by drug dealers
- Substantial drug debts
- Risk of eviction
- Poor relationships with her family
- Isolated
- Socially anxious
- Low self esteem & self worth

During & After Pause

- Granted a dept relief order
- Secured housing away from drug dealers
- Paying bills regularly
- Abstinent from drug and alcohol for over 7 months
- Rebuilt relationships with her family and children
- Working towards drug & alcohol, support volunteer
- Unsupervised time with her children
- Grown in self confidence and self work
- Positive about her future

Pause Graduation – July 2022

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzI0sg-ltE4>



Corporate Parenting Panel

19 May 2023

Care Leavers Covenant**Report of 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 This report outlines the statement of purpose regarding the Care Leavers covenant.

Executive summary

- 2 The Covenant is a promise made by the private, public, or voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently.

The Covenant have five core outcomes:

- (a) Independent living;
 - (b) Employment, Education and Training;
 - (c) Safety and Security;
 - (d) Health;
 - (e) Finance.
- 3 The covenant is a nationwide organisation who work with business, social enterprises, and local authorities to promote the rights of care leavers and build structures around them that can promote and strengthen their journey into adulthood. The aim of working with the covenant is to build value to our local offer within Durham.

Recommendations

- 4 Members of the corporate parenting panel are recommended to:
 - (a) Note the contents of this report;
 - (b) Consider if DCC will become a signatory to the care leavers covenant.

Background

- 5 The care leavers service has been working with the covenant for approximately six months – we have established a positive working relationship, through this we have been establishing out key priority areas, such as enhancing our offer around education, training, and employment, ensuring that our young people have the financial offers that are available.
- 6 A report from the covenant is attached as Appendix 2, outlining further details.

Conclusion

- 7 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will understand the covenant, their values, and their resources.
- 8 We are proposing that Durham County Council become signatory to the covenant so that we can continue to develop those relationships and utilise their expertise in working with partners and business, so that we can expand our offer to our care experienced young people.

Authors

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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: Title Care Leavers Covenant

Attached as a separate document



CARE
LEAVER
COVENANT

READY WHEN YOU ARE

Durham County Council
Corporate Parenting Board



What is the Care Leaver Covenant?

The Covenant is a promise made by the **private, public or voluntary** organisations to provide **support for care leavers** aged 16-25 to help them **to live independently**.



We have five core outcomes:

INDEPENDENT LIVING

Care leavers are better prepared to live independently.

EMPLOYMENT EDUCATION TRAINING

Care leavers have improved access to opportunities.

SAFETY + SECURITY

Care leavers feel safe, secure and stable in their living situation.

HEALTH

Care leavers have improved access to health & emotional support.

FINANCE

Care leavers are financially capable and independent.



OUR 250 SIGNATORIES HAVE CREATED OFFERS INCLUDING:
PRO-BONO LEGAL AID, EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING, FREE COUNSELLING,
TAILORED BANKING PROCESSES AND MORE.





NHS

**Sandwell and West
Birmingham Hospitals**

NHS Trust



**EMPLOYMENT
EDUCATION
TRAINING**

Live & Work Apprenticeships



CARE LEAVER COVENANT

2. WHOLE COUNCIL APPROACH



ADDED VALUE TO THE 'LOCAL OFFER'

ALL LOCAL AUTHORITIES COULD 'BUY IN' TO THE CARE LEAVER COVENANT AS A MECHANISM FOR ENHANCING THEIR 'LOCAL OFFER'.

Some local authorities are leading the way in changing the membership and focus of the Corporate Parenting Board to increase its effectiveness in improving outcomes.

As part of their review of current practice, local authorities are strongly encouraged to engage with the Covenant. This is a voluntary indication of a desire to do their utmost to fulfil their role as a corporate parent to care leavers.

The Covenant encourages local authorities to follow good practice in offering additional discretionary services in line with the recommendations of the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers.



1# AWARENESS RAISING

Both staff and care leavers within your Council.

All local authorities could ensure that staff working with care leavers are aware of the Covenant and the benefits offered.

Local authorities could ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the Care Leaver Covenant website, app & Connects.

Some local authorities are building this into their pathway planning.



With a single point of contact at Essex Council the Covenant has been able to share relevant opportunities, which are disseminated to participation leads and PA's who then support Care Leavers to access offers & opportunities from our signatory network.

Connects Portal for Care Leavers

Life skills, discounts,
employment opportunities...

A direct way of reaching young people
with offers and opportunities that
matter.

Personal Advisors & Leaving Care
Teams can also register to receive the
same offers and support young
people in accessing them.

Incentivised through giveaways and
experiences.

CONNECTS
Sign up to Connects to access Covenant opportunities with these partners and more!

itv amazon

REED TALENT SOLUTIONS ACCOR

CHELSEA FOOTBALL CLUB FOUNDATION L.F.C. Foundation THE CLUB'S OFFICIAL CHARITY

ENGIE KIER

CARE LEAVER COVENANT

CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP NOW!



2# TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Opportunities within the Council – leading by example.

Local authorities (in partnerships with their providers and their supply chains) aim to offer up to 12 apprenticeships, internships or work experience (ring-fenced) opportunities for care leavers over a year.

This also includes positive recruitment procedures to support care leavers.



Utilising the Kickstart scheme Telford & Wrekin Council are looking across their organisation to become a gateway for 100 opportunities 10% of which would be protected for Care Leavers.



Birmingham Children's Trust will be one of the first to adopt a new ringfencing protocol to guarantee opportunities across the family firm.





3# POLICY PARTNERSHIP

Care Leaver proofing policy and governance.

Reclaiming VAT on the setting up home grant to fund free broadband and digital devices when young people move into their first home.

Multi-agency partnership between NHS Trusts and leaving care teams to develop a core offer for care leavers. This includes free prescriptions up until the age of 25.



The role of elected members as champions and advocates cannot be underestimated. Members have been asked to identify an employer or business from within their ward to become a Covenant signatory.



4# THE SOCIAL VALUE TOOLKIT

Transforming your Social Value action plan, to improve outcomes for care leavers.

Local authorities could revise their Social Value Policy to ensure that meaningful offers of work, apprenticeship, internships and work experience for care leavers are a standard part of procurement practices.

The Toolkit launched in March 2020 and is being used by over thirty Councils across England.



Leeds City Council was the first to adopt the Toolkit alongside thirty other Councils. This partnership with procured services, has in the case of ENGIE, enabled the renovation of properties to support care leavers as they make their transition to independent living.



IMPROVED LIVING SPACES WITH ENGIE



I hated my flat up till now and really didn't want to live here with my baby, now that [the Covenant and Engie] have been able to help me with everything it finally feels like home! I absolutely love my bedroom, its so beautiful! I really can't thank you enough"

Ciara, young person, London

Procurement & Employment Opportunities

Service providers & social value

Organisations working with local authorities on significant contracts are becoming smarter with their social value contributions.

Many within construction have signed the Care Leaver Covenant and developed unique offers for care leavers. Including pre-employability training and accreditation, alongside guaranteed careers.

Local Authorities are using the toolkit to hold organisations accountable and create clear outcomes for their young people.





5# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Taking advantage of your Council's local partnerships & connections.

Local authorities could work with SMEs, local employer groups and other partners to set and meet ambitious targets to increase the number, range and take up of employment, education and training opportunities.

Building a network of local Covenant signatories, supporting care leavers with opportunities, support and offers.



Following the launch of Coventry City Council's 'Local Offer', with the support of the Covenant, they invited local businesses, partners and employers to an event where they'd also develop offers for care leavers.

Following this event Severn Trent Water developed a social tariff for care leavers reducing bills by 70%.



FINANCE

Discounted Tariffs 70% off Water Bills





DEVELOPING A 'WHOLE COUNCIL APPROACH'

Strategic buy-in and support across the Council

This means accepting that the responsibility for being a corporate parent does not solely reside with those people and departments that have Care Leaver in their job title.

This strategic partnership involves both the political leadership and Directors from across the Council.



Herefordshire Council's Cabinet adopted their own Covenant with the intention for the Care Leaver agenda to be adopted across the Authority.

Following this they've adopted a strategic 'Care Leaver Board' made up of elected members and senior officers and external partners who'd champion those priorities in each respective work program.



READY WHEN YOU ARE



@careleavercov



careleavercovenant

#ReadyWhenYouAre

Corporate Parenting Panel

19 May 2023

Routes into Social Work**Report of Rachel Farnham, Head of Children's Social Care, Durham County Council****Electoral division(s) affected:**

None.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report aims to share information about routes into social work with members of the Corporate Parenting Panel for information.

Executive summary

- 2 Holding a degree in social work was made a requirement to work as a social worker by the Care Standards Act of 2000.
- 3 There are 3 categories of qualification which enable graduates to work as social workers on successful completion. These are:
 - (a) Traditional routes offered by universities. These are publicly available routes where applicants pay fees, and potentially receive a small bursary to contribute to costs. Employers provide work-based placements to students on the programmes.
 - (b) Fast track routes which are run in partnership between employers and providers. These are very intensive programmes aimed at recent graduates and graduates changing careers. Tuition is rapid and supported by significant time in practice. These programmes are free to participants, and normally attract a bursary for living costs.
 - (c) Social work apprenticeships which allow employers to fund the fees for the social work degree for their employees through the apprenticeship levy. Employees complete a 3-year social work degree while they work with approximately 1 day of their time protected for study. Employers provide work-based placements to the apprentices.
- 4 We support all three types of route with the aim of supporting as many child and family social workers as possible to join the workforce.

Recommendation

- 5 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to note the contents of this report.

Background

- 6 Holding a degree in social work was made a requirement to work as a social worker by the Care Standards Act of 2000. The same Act made 'social worker' a protected title, which means that it is illegal for a person to use the title in England unless they have completed the required training and are registered with the social work regulator (currently Social Work England).
- 7 Social work qualifications which were recognised before the change in legislation are still recognised, but no new social workers can qualify through those routes. Our most experienced social workers often hold qualifications like the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW), Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) and Certificate in Social Service (CSS).
- 8 Social Work England also assess the qualifications of social workers who have qualified overseas to enable social workers from overseas to register and work in England.

Routes to social work qualification

- 9 There are 3 categories of qualification which enable graduates to register with Social Work England on successful completion. These are traditional routes, fast track routes and apprenticeships. We support all three types of route with the aim of supporting as many child and family social workers as possible to join the workforce.
- 10 All these programmes:
 - (a) Are approved by Social Work England.
 - (b) Require include significant experience of practice during the programme (a minimum of 170 days).

Traditional routes

- 11 Universities offer traditional routes to social work qualification. A list of programmes available in the North East is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 12 These are normally publicly available routes. Anyone who is able to meet the entry requirements, demonstrating their fitness to undergo social work training, and pay the fees can attend. The Open University has 1 further requirement, that applicants have the support of an employer to provide the practice placements required.
- 13 Fees for these programmes range from £8,260 to £27,750.

- 14 A contribution to the cost of these programmes is often available through means tested social work bursaries administered by the NHS Business Services Authority. Undergraduate students in the North East are most likely to receive £4,862 for undergraduates plus a placement travel allowance in years 2 and 3 of the course. Post graduate students are likely to receive £3,362. Additional allowances can be available for students with adult dependents, childcare costs, and for students with disabilities.
- 15 We are active members of the North East teaching partnership (North East Social Work Alliance), a partnership which brings together all the local authorities in the North East and all of the Universities in the region which offer social work qualifying programmes. The partnership aims to ensure the quality of these programmes is high. A key piece of work for the partnership currently is to carry out an analysis of supply and demand for qualifying social workers in the region.
- 16 We normally offer over 50 practice placements of 70 and 100 days to students on these programmes each year.
- 17 We are currently working on adjusting our recruitment processes so that it is much easier for final year students on placement with us to take up social work roles in Durham on completion of their programmes.

Fast track routes

- 18 Fast track routes are very intensive programmes which lead to rapid social work qualification aimed at recent graduates and graduates changing careers. A list of programmes available in the North East is attached as **Appendix 3**. Step Up to Social Work and Frontline are programmes which aim to develop child and family social workers and Think Ahead is a similar programme which aims to develop adult mental health social workers.
- 19 These schemes are run in partnership between employers and providers, and high-quality teaching is paired with a significant amount of time in practice.
- 20 These programmes do not require participants to pay any university fees, and there is a small bursary for living expenses. However, participants in recent cohorts are finding it more challenging to manage on the bursary due to the rising cost of living.
- 21 These routes are currently experiencing a lower level of interest than in previous years, and all have recently lowered their entry requirements from a degree at 2.1 to a degree at 2.2.

- 23 We are currently part of a partnership between the North East local authorities and Manchester Metropolitan University to deliver the Step Up to Social Work programme. We guarantee the participants we support a social work post on successful completion, and of the 7 we supported in the last cohort who completed in March 2023 all have taken up posts in Durham. 6 are now working in social work teams in Children's Social Care and 1 is in working in the Navigation team in Adult and Health Services. We are aiming to support up to 10 participants on the next cohort of the programme commencing in January 2024 and ending in March 2025.
- 24 We have previously partnered with Frontline. However, we found that few participants continued to work as social workers in Durham on completion, and as a result our last partnership arrangement ended in 2018.
- 25 Our colleagues in Adult and Health Services have an active partnership with Think Ahead.

Social work apprenticeship

- 26 The social work apprenticeship standard was approved in 2018, and the first programmes commenced in 2019.
- 27 The standard allows employers to use the apprenticeship levy (0.5% of our annual pay bill which we can only use to support apprenticeship training) to cover the tuition fees of employees working towards the social work apprenticeship.
- 28 Employees working towards the apprenticeship complete a social work degree while they work with approximately 1 day of their time protected for study. Employers also provide work-based placements to the apprentices.
- 29 To date the standard has supported apprentices to complete a 3-year social work degree, but we expect shorter masters level programmes to become available from 2024.
- 30 We have until now supported a small number of our own practitioners to complete the programme annually. 4 of our employees qualified in 2022, and a further 6 are expected to qualify in Summer 2023, 3 in Summer 2024 and 5 in Summer 2025.
- 31 Apprentices who successfully complete the programme are guaranteed a social worker role in Children's Social Care. In our initial cohort of 4 who completed in 2022, 2 have taken up social worker roles, and 2 have remained in their original services. In our cohort of 6 completing in 2023, all have social worker roles in place for the time they graduate.

- 32 We have invested in a new way of supporting apprentices for 2023 to allow us to increase the number of social work apprentices we can support. We are currently expecting to support 12 people employed as social work trainees funded from a mix of our staffing underspend and potential additional funding from the Department for Education. These new posts are proving very attractive, 3 weeks into a 4-week job advert we have already received 217 applications.

Raising awareness of routes into social work

- 33 Our web pages focusing on working in child and family social work are available at: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/childrensocialwork>. The pages are still being actively developed, and we expect to publicise them through social media when we think they reflect work in Durham sufficiently well.
- 34 To support people with an interest in a career in social work, a section on routes into social work is expected to be added to the web pages by the end of May 2023.

Routes into social work/social care for our care experienced young people

- 35 We are keen to do more to support our care experienced young people who would like to develop careers in social work and social care.
- 36 A task and finish group has been set up to progress this work, which is at a very early stage. The group is expected to consider:
- (a) How we can better support our young people studying health and social care, and those considering and undertaking traditional routes into social work, for example by providing shadowing, work experience or mentoring.
 - (b) How we can better support young people who are not yet ready for university or study at that level, and want to gain greater work experience and/or qualifications linked to social care/social work.
- 37 Working with our young people will be a key part of this work.
- 38 We are also exploring the creation of a staff network for care experienced people of any age working for Durham County Council. Other groups have found this approach supportive.

Conclusion

- 39 There are 3 categories of qualification which enable graduates to work as social workers on successful completion. These are:

- (a) Traditional routes offered by universities. These are publicly available routes where applicants pay fees, and potentially receive a small bursary to contribute to costs. Employers provide work-based placements to students on the programmes.
- (b) Fast track routes which are run in partnership between employers and providers. These are very intensive programmes aimed at recent graduates and graduates changing careers. Tuition is rapid and supported by significant time in practice. These programmes are free to participants, and normally attract a bursary for living costs.
- (c) Social work apprenticeships which allow employers to fund the fees for the social work degree for their employees through the apprenticeship levy. Employees complete a 3-year social work degree while they work with approximately 1 day of their time protected for study. Employers provide work-based placements to the apprentices.

40 We support all three types of route with the aim of supporting as many child and family social workers as possible to join the workforce.

Author

Hazel Ostle

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Finance

Financial implications linked to all routes to social work qualification have been well explored and there are good oversight arrangements in place.

Consultation

Consultation arrangements with students on all routes to social work qualification, and the experienced social workers who support them are in place.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no equality and diversity / public sector equality duty implications.

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications.

Human Rights

There are no human rights implications.

Crime and Disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications.

Staffing

By supporting routes to social work qualification, we hope to increase the number of child and family social workers in the workforce in Durham and in the North East region.

Accommodation

Accommodation implications for the students we support on all routes have been considered.

Risk

By supporting routes to social work qualification, we hope to reduce the risks created by challenges recruiting and retaining child and family social workers in Durham and in the North East region.

Procurement

There are no procurement implications.

Appendix 2: Traditional Routes into Social Work Available in the North East

University	Programme	Level	Length of Course	Total Fees
Durham	MSW	Postgraduate	2 years full time	£17,000
New College Durham	BA (Hons)	Undergraduate	3 years full time	£27,750
Northumbria	BSc (Hons)	Undergraduate	3 years full time	£27,750
	MA	Postgraduate	2 years full time	£13,500
Sunderland	BA (Hons)	Undergraduate	3 years full time/6 years part time	£27,750
	MA	Postgraduate	2 years full time/4 years part time	£10,000
Teesside	BA (Hons)	Undergraduate	3 years full time	£27,750
	MA	Postgraduate	2 years full time	£13,420
Open University	BA (Hons)	Undergraduate	3 years full time/6 years part time	£20,772
	Postgraduate Diploma	Postgraduate	17 months	£8,260
	MA	Postgraduate	2.5 years	£11,980

Appendix 3: Fast Track Routes into Social Work

	Step Up to Social Work	Frontline	Think Ahead
Target group	Graduates with a degree at 2.2 or above		
Delivery	Teaching and placements	Short residential programme followed by teaching and learning in a unit model	
Length of programme	14 months	1 year to qualification 1 further year employed as a social worker	
Qualification	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work in year 1 Masters following qualification in year 2	
Bursary paid to participants	£19,833 over 14 months	£18,000 in year 1 Paid a salary in year 2	
Funded by	Department for Education	Department for Education and donations	Department of Health and Social Care
Frequency	Every 2 years	Annual	
Delivered by	Regional partnership of employers with a University	Frontline	Think Ahead (Middlesex University)

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

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