



Care Leavers Strategy

2015 – 2018

August 2015

Contents Page

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Care Leavers Definition	1
3.	Purpose	1
4.	National Context and Guidance	2
5.	Local Context and Our Vision	3
6.	Our Promise	4
7.	Corporate Parenting and Governance	5
8.	Strategic Priorities	5
	(i) Physical Health and Mental Health	5
	(ii) Housing and Staying Put	7
	(iii) Education and Attainment	9
	(iv) Employment and Training	11
	(v) Access to ongoing advice and support	12
	(vi) Financial Assistance	13
	(vii) The Justice System	13
9.	Conclusion	14

Appendices

1.	Number of Care Leaver's – Table
2.	Our Promise to Care Leavers
3.	Corporate Parenting Panel Action Plan 2014-2016
4.	Young People Case History Statistics 2012-2015
5.	Performance Indicators and Analysis

1. Introduction

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

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

This Strategy is supported by a Care Leavers Action Plan (2014-2017) which outlines how the priorities within this document will be delivered.



2. Care Leaver Definition

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

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

Care Leavers can also be classified as 'qualifying' care leaver. This category applies to young people who:

- Left care after 1st October 2001, after they had turned 16, but who are not 'eligible' or 'relevant' because they did not fulfil the 13 week criteria.
- Were accommodated, but in residential education, mental/health provision private fostering or Special Guardianship.

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

3. Purpose

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

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

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

- Improved health and well-being of our Care Leavers;
- Emotional resilience;
- Improved placement stability, safety and quality;
- Better attainment at school / college / university for our young people;
- Young people leaving care on an educational or work route that meets their ambitions;
- The best use of available resources.

4. National Context and Guidance

Around 10,000 young people leave care in England each year aged between 16-18 years old. They leave home at a younger age and have more abrupt transitions to adulthood than their peers.

The Department for Education sets out its vision and strategy for Care Leavers in the Care Leavers Strategy 2013.

Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that other young people get from their parent(s). The strategy is based on the principles of good corporate parenting and sets out the government's commitment to remove some of the practical barriers that care leavers face as they progress into adulthood. The strategy wants to see 'holistic and quality support provided in all mainstream and specialist services; services should be integrated, simplified and should treat care leavers with respect and dignity'.

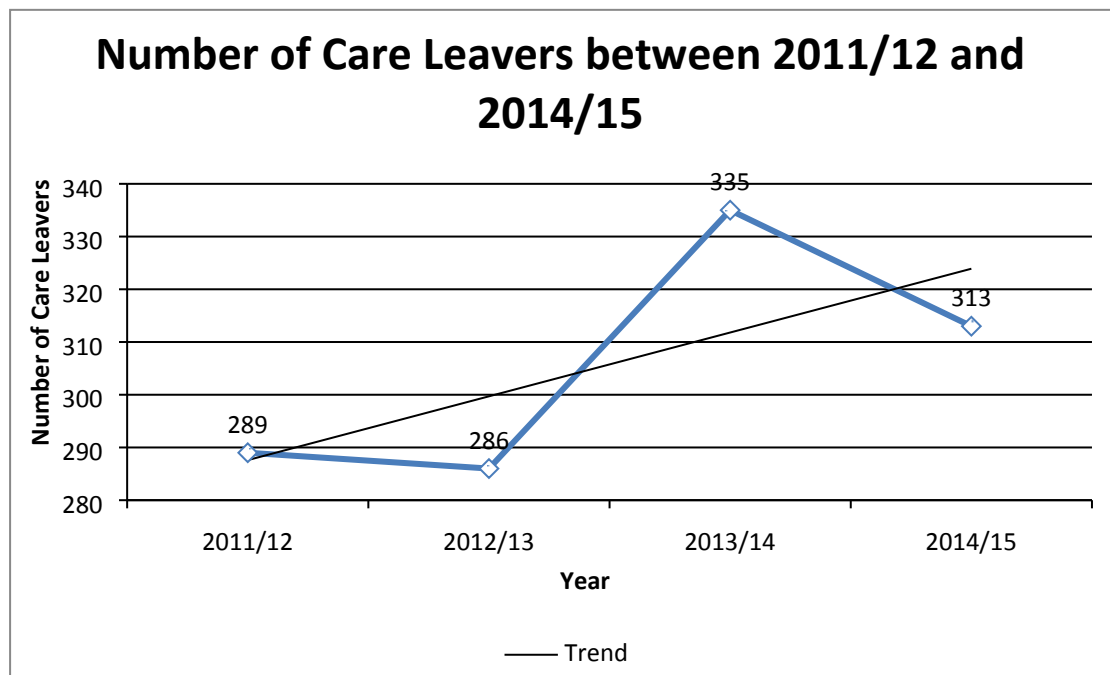
The broad areas of concern for care leavers in Durham which are also captured in the strategy are:

- Physical Health and Mental Health
- Housing and Staying Put
- Education and Attainment
- Employment and Training
- Access to ongoing advice and support
- Financial Assistance
- The Justice System

5. Local Context and Our Vision

Between 2011/12 and 2014/15 Durham has seen a 7.7% overall increase in the number of care leavers that it has. This upward trend is reflected in Graph 1 on page 3.

Graph 1 – Care Leaver Trend



As soon as a looked after child turns 15 years old the Young People’s Service works closely with the Looked After Service, becoming involved in the young person’s pathway plan and providing ongoing support to develop independent living skills. When the young person reaches the age of 18 they are assigned a Personal Advisor, unless the young person is a young parent or has complex needs then the case remains with the Social Worker. The Personal Advisor will support the young person in their life choices and providing practical support. If a former relevant young person chooses to remain in further education they can remain in supported lodgings until the age of 25 with the support of a Personal Advisor.

Our vision is that:

“All care leavers are in appropriate accommodation, feel supported and are able to maximise their potential”

Durham’s Highlights:

- 49% of our Care Leavers in 2014 were in education, employment and training (EET), in comparison to the England Average of 45% and the regional average of 50%.
- In 2014, 74% of our Care Leavers were in suitable accommodation, below national rates at 77.8% and statistical neighbour rates of 84%.

- Between 2011-2013 (a three year average), 20% of our Care Leavers looked after continuously for 12 months achieved 5+ A* - C grades at GCSE and equivalent in English and Maths, which is greater than the England average of 15% and our statistical neighbour Wakefield at 15%.
- We were in the final of the 'Local Government Chronical (LGC) Award' for our model of holistic temporary accommodation.
- We participated in the 4 year peer research study which focuses upon 'Corporate Parenting'. Catch22 led on this study.

Please refer to Appendix 5 of this document for further performance information.

6. Our Promise

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



Our 'promise' to all children and young people in care is:

- To treat you with respect and as an individual;
- To help find you the best available home where you feel safe, cared about and treated well for as long as needed;
- To help you stay in touch with family and friends like other young people not in case where it is safe and appropriate;
- To take what you say seriously by listening to you and trying to act on what you say;
- That you will have a Social Worker who will get to know you well and who will keep in contact and listen to what you say;
- To really listen to things you would like to change about the care system to make your daily life better where there are problems;
- To work in an open and honest way and share any information or changes with you;

- To involve you in any decisions, plans and changes that affect you and your future and your Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and carers will make sure that this happens;
- To make sure we offer you the opportunities, guidance and support needed in placement, in education and all other areas of life;
- To help you be the best that you possible can at school, college, training and employment;
- To give you all the support and help you need to make a success of moving on from care to adult life;
- To work together and support you during every transition in your life while you are looked after, for example during placement moves, when you are leaving care and similar situations.

See appendix 2 – Our Promise

7. Corporate Parenting and Governance

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

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

We will:

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

8. Strategic Priorities

We have outlined 7 key strategic priorities for the local authority over the next 3 years. These are in line with those prioritised outlined in the National Care Leaver Strategy.

(i) Physical Health and Mental Health

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

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

We will continue to:

- *Support the emotional wellbeing of care leavers so they are able to reach their full potential. Ensure that each Looked After Child and Care Leaver has an up to date statutory health assessment and a plan that outlines how their physical and emotional health needs will be met. These will be of high quality and will be timely.*
- *Make sure that health plans include personal and family health histories in order to enhance the value of health plans and facilitate better awareness of health needs, including when children return home.*
- *Ensure that all Care Leavers have access to and understand their full health history. They will have access to all key documents such as birth certificate, passport, national insurance number and NHS number.*
- *Ensure that Care Leavers receive advice and support from health services to enable the transition into adulthood.*
- *Ensure that Care Leavers have advice on health matters prior to moving onto independence or semi-independence and have ongoing support. This will provide knowledge of their health history so that Care Leavers are empowered to manage their own health needs.*
- *There will be an emphasis on partnership working between the young person and their personal advisor, and the designated doctor and nurse who will be involved in the young person's health assessment.*



- *Ensure that personal advisers have access to information and training about how to promote physical and mental health.*
- *Make sure that the last statutory health assessment before a child leaves care includes a discussion between the nurse and the young person about their overall health needs and future health prognosis, based on assessment of their health chronology and assessment that have been undertaken.*
- *Ensure that a young person health plan and pathway plan enables looked after children and care leavers to understand how they can promote their own health in the future by adopting healthy lifestyle choices e.g. diet, substance misuse, risk taking behaviours and emotional well-being, pregnancy, keeping safe, sexual health and the benefits of sport and exercise.*
- *Ensure that commissioning arrangements for health provision addresses inequality for care leavers and ensure they are a priority group.*
- *Continue to provide the Full Circle Service which is joint-funded with CAMHS that provides services to support and promote the emotional and psychological wellbeing of Looked After Children, young people and their carers.*

We will:

- *Explore potential options for extending referral criteria to include access for all Looked After Children and Care Leavers to emotional health and wellbeing services. This will prioritise short term placements, new placements, placements which may be at risk of breakdown and care leavers. The difficulties faced by Care Leavers in receiving mental health services has been highlighted by young people and their needs will be addressed within this review.*
- *Develop policy and guidance so that all children, young people and care leavers can have access to support and specialist services to help them understand their past and reasons why they became looked after e.g. through life-story work, revisited at key stages as they grow up.*

(ii) Housing and Staying Put

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

Securing better placement stability and increased choice will enable young people to stay safe. Young people are discouraged from leaving their final placement until they are ready to manage on their own, with ongoing support as required. We aim to secure placement stability through increased placement choice.

In 2013/14, 74% of Care Leavers (aged 19, 20 and 21) in Durham lived in suitable accommodation, in comparison to the England average of 77.8%. In 2014/15 we have set a target of 95%. This target will be supported by our 'Staying Put Policy', which was implemented in 2014, enabling young people to leave stable and secure homes when they are ready and able to make the transition to independence. It also helps young people enter adult life with the same opportunities and life prospects as their peers.

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

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

Durham is part of the 'New Belongings Project', which is led by the Care Leavers Foundation and supported by a grant from DfE. This will enable us to access resources and expertise. The aim of the project is to improve radically the lives of care leavers, not just through the initial transition, trauma and adjustment of leaving care, but by enabling care leavers to become citizens, participants, and full members of their communities and wider society. The project will support us to embed key principles and the Charter of Care Leavers into local services and communities. A project group has been established to drive forward this area of work.



We will continue to:

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

- *Use a 'Pathway Plan' for young people in care which provides a range of support and different types of semi-independent living accommodation which supports different levels of independence and transitions to adulthood.*
- *Commission a range of placements to meet the needs of young people who have come through the care system and are moving towards independence, including those young people who come into care as 16 or 17 year old Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.*
- *Increase and improve the capacity for Supported Lodgings for the 16-19 year group. This will provide accommodation and support to young people who cannot 'Stay Put' or who wish to move. This will include provision of placements for vulnerable young people and young people with complex needs/behaviours that preclude them from mainstream supported accommodation options within County Durham.*
- *Apply a zero tolerance approach to the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people involved with our service. Only in an extreme emergency will bed and breakfast accommodation be used (for a maximum of 2 days).*

We will:

- *Develop a 'no eviction policy' with HTASS and Supported Housing Schemes within County Durham, which will result in improved placement stability.*
- *Implement the 'New Belongings Project' which will deliver a range of benefits and improved outcomes for Care Leavers.*

(iii) Education and Attainment

There continues to remain a gap between the educational achievements of care leavers and their peers. In 2014, 5% of Durham's former relevant young people were in higher education (6% England average), in comparison to 31% of 'all' young people in Durham in higher education (Department of Business, Innovation and skills).

Care leavers are less likely to achieve 5 A*-C GCSE's. In 2013, 20% of Durham's children continuously looked after for 12 months achieved 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including English and Maths (15% England average), in comparison to 63.1% of all children in Durham achieving this.

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



We will continue to:

- *Ensure that Personal Advisors engage with future care leavers from Year 9.*
- *In line with Section 23 of the Children's Act 1989, ensure that young people eligible for leaving care services resume a programme of education or training after the age of 21.*
- *Provide care leavers with a Personal Advisor where they wish to resume education and training up to the age of 25.*
- *Encourage care leavers to attend further and higher education and give them specialist advice and support and careers advice when applying for further education or higher education.*
- *Support young people fully in their transition to higher education or further education, employment and training. The future life-chance of Care Leavers are dramatically improved if they can be supported effectively.*
- *Ensure that all partners are aware of a young person's potential from the end of Year 9 to enable them to receive the right support in a timely manner.*
- *Have a post 16 PEP in place for all year 11's from July 2014 in line with Improving Progression legislation.*
- *Ensure that the Virtual School Head will take on the responsibility of education for care leavers over 16 years old.*
- *Ensure that foster carers, social workers and teachers will work in partnership having an acting role in supporting transition into education, employment and training.*
- *Increase the proportion of young people aged 16 who get qualifications equivalent to 5 GCSEs (A*-C).*

(iv) Employment and Training

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

In 2013/14, 49% of Durham's Care Leavers aged 19-21 were in education, employment and training, in comparison to an England Average of 45% (see appendix 4 for further information). In 2014/15 38% of Durham's Care Leavers between 16-18 years old were in education, employment and training compared to a rate of 95% for all Durham 16-18 year olds. As a lower proportion of Care Leavers are participating in education, employment and training, it is essential that they receive additional support to enable to progress through learning and into sustainable employment. Therefore through focused action and support and in partnership with other agencies and Council departments, we will strive to increase the number of care leavers in Durham who are in employment, education and training. This will include targeted support to pregnant care leavers and single parents.

We will continue to:

- *Work collaboratively with DCC's Regeneration Economic Development Service to sustain the work that was implemented through the 'From Care2Work' programme. This brought national and local employers and local authorities to enable care leavers to benefit from new employment opportunities by increasing internal and external career taster days, through apprenticeships, work placements, work experience and internships.*
- *Continue to build good working relationships with colleagues from One Point:*
- *To promote the EET Protocol for 16+ looked after children and 18-19 year old former relevant young people, which will support our aim to increase the number of Care Leavers in employment, education and training.*
- *Promote the Work Programme (a European Social Fund Project) to Care Leavers so that they can benefit from tailored, locally-appropriate employment support as early as possible if they are making a benefit claim and work with colleagues from across the local authority to promote any other Youth Employment Initiatives to our Care Leavers.*
- *Enhance the quality of pathway planning in relation to EET by ensuring that the Young People's Service has a greater awareness of advice, information and guidance.*

We will:

- *In line with new data collection requirements we will collect data from April 2015 about care leavers who are 18+ who are not in education, employment and training.*
- *To ensure that additional advisor support is provided by One Point up until the age of 19 and then through adult learning and beyond.*

(v) Access to ongoing advice and support

Care leavers require support and guidance before and after they turn 18. The Department for Education have issued regulations and guidance, 'Transitions to Adulthood' which sets a clear expectation that local authorities continue to stay in touch and support young people when they leave care through pathway planning until the young person reaches 21 and up to 25 if he or she stays in education. As an authority we have signed up to the Care Leaver Charter which is a set of principles that capture the aspirations and needs of young people. This Charter endorses the principle of staying in touch with young people when they are no longer anybody's statutory responsibility.



We will continue to:

- *Provide a range of services to meet the needs of older Looked After Children aged 16 to 25 through our Young People's Service.*
- *Ensure all that Providers support young people with transition to independence in line with the young person's pathway plan e.g. providing guidance and support to find permanent housing, accessing education, employment and training, practical living skills such as financial management, budgeting and claiming benefits.*
- *Encourage care leavers to access advice and support from independent advocates when required and to continue accessing Independent Visitors until they no longer feel the need to.*
- *Offer advice and support care leavers who are pregnant or who are young parents through the Young People's Service. Additional support will be offered through the Family Nurse Partnership.*
- *Make sure that Care Leavers know how to make a complaint if they need to.*

We will

- *Develop new processes to ensure that we stay in touch with care leavers aged from 16 to 25 (in line with new performance requirements).*
- *We will explore links with Stronger Families to identify where additional mentor support may be required and that care leavers are perceived as a priority group.*

(vi) Financial Assistance

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

We will continue to:

- *Provide information to Care Leavers so they understand how to access support from Durham's assigned DWP worker. DWP will ensure that Care Leavers claiming Universal Credit, who need help to manage their money and pay bills, have access to personal budgeting support.*
- *Give care leavers a Higher Education Bursary of £2,000 if they are attending a university.*
- *Support care leavers so that they can make an advance claim to DWP to ensure early release of benefits, one month prior to their 18th birthday.*
- *Provide a 'Setting Up Home Allowance' (up to £2,000) to care leavers.*
- *In line with DfE guidance, support care leavers aged 16-19 attending a Further Education course to access a £1,200 Further Education Bursary (Educational Maintenance Allowance replacement).*
- *Ensure that care leavers have an understanding of their rights and benefit entitlement.*

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

(vii) Justice System

We recognise that young adults who have been in care can be particularly vulnerable as they transition into adulthood, particularly if they are in the criminal justice system. They are also a particularly vulnerable group that are at risk of being drawn into crime. Care leavers can also be particularly

vulnerable to becoming a victim of crime, including in some cases falling victim to grooming and exploitation online or offline.

We will continue to:

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



9. Conclusion

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

Delivering this strategy requires a coordinated and sustained effort across Children's Service, other council departments and our partner agencies which will continue to improve service standards and everyday practice, and to be able to meet the challenges that the current economic climate brings.

This Strategy will be reviewed annually and an update against the key priorities within this document will be provided.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Number of young people know to the Young People's Service

Appendix 2: Our Promise

Appendix 3: Corporate Parenting Panel Action Plan (2014-2016)

Appendix 4: Young People's Service Case History

Appendix 5: Performance Indicators

APPENDIX 1

Current number of young people known to the young people's service

As of the 18 February 2015 there were 313 young people known to the young people's service. This consisted of:

- 47.92% of young people aged 15-17 years
- 51.78% of young people aged over 18 years; and
- 0.3% of young people aged 10-14 years

Please refer to Table 1 below for a further breakdown

Table 1: Young people known to the Young People's Service, based on age.

Team & Age Group	Cases as at 18.2.15		
	Monitoring	Open	TOTAL
Young Peoples Service North	0	159	159
Aged 15 – 17	0	71	71
Aged Over 18	0	88	88
Young Peoples Service South	5	149	154
Aged 10 – 14	0	1	1
Aged 15 - 17	3	76	79
Aged Over 18	2	72	74
TOTAL	5	308	313

This leaflet has been written for children and young people who are looked after by Durham County Council. Your Social Worker should talk to you about these promises and what you can expect from your care. *Their details are below.*

Social Workers Name:.....

Tel:.....

Address:.....

.....

Useful Contacts:

Investing in Children

Supports the Children in Care Council

Telephone: 0191 3729200

Website: www.investinginchildren.net (you can also contact us through the website)

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

If you feel that you need help, advice, support or information.

Helpline: 0300 330 3131 Web: www.nyas.net

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

The NSPCC aims to protect children from cruelty, support vulnerable families, campaign for changes to the law and raise awareness about abuse.

Helpline: 0800 800 5000 Web: www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline

Childline deal with any issues you have – no problem is too big or too small. If you feel scared, out of control or just want to talk to someone, contact:

Helpline: 0800 1111 Web: www.childline.org.uk

Talk to Frank

A confidential helpline for anyone concerned about drug use.

Helpline: 0800 77 66 00 Web: www.talktofrank.com

4Real

A service for children and young people aged under 18 years who are concerned about their drug or alcohol abuse, contact:

Telephone: 03000 267567 Web: www.4realcountydurham.co.uk

Durham City Centre Youth Project

Aims to contact with young people in their own environment e.g. on streets, in bus shelters, at youth clubs etc.

Telephone: 0191 3868564

Our Promises to YOU



Our Promises To You:

Durham County Council have 'corporate responsibility' for all looked after children and young people. This means that we have a shared responsibility for you while you are in our care and up until you are 21 years old and we take seriously the fact that children and young people have rights too.

This leaflet explains the promises which Durham County Council are making to you to ensure you are happy, safe and supported while in our care.

- 1.** We promise to treat you with respect and as an individual.
- 2.** We promise to help find you the best available home where you feel safe, cared about and treated well for as long as needed.
- 3.** We promise to help you stay in touch with family and friends like other young people not in care (for example, sleepovers at your friend's homes).
- 4.** We promise to take what you say seriously by listening to you and trying to act on what you say.
- 5.** We promise that you will have a Social Worker who will get to know you well and who will keep in contact and listen to what you say.
- 6.** We promise to really listen to things you would like to change about the care system to make your daily life better where there are problems (where it is appropriate to do so).
- 7.** We promise to work in an open and honest way and share any information or changes with you.
- 8.** We promise to involve you in any decisions, plans and changes that affect you and your future, and your Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and Carers will make sure that this happens.
- 9.** We promise to make sure we offer you the opportunities, guidance and support needed in placement, in education and all other areas of life.
- 10.** We promise to help you be the best that you possibly can at school, college, training and employment.
- 11.** We promise to give you all the support and help you need to make a success of moving on from care to adult life.
- 12.** We promise to work together and support you during every transition in your life while you are looked after, for example, during placement moves, when you are leaving care and similar situations.

If you have something which you would like to talk about or feel that these promises are not being kept by your Social Worker, Foster Carer, Residential Worker, Young People's Advisor, etc. please contact the Children in Care Council who will talk to you about this.

What do the words mean?

Care System

The care system is the name given to all of the services that support looked after children and young people, for example health services and children's services.

Children in Care Council

All children and young people in care in County Durham are automatically members of the Children in Care Council and have the right to attend meetings to talk about what's good about being in care as well as what needs to change.

Corporate Responsibility

This is when the Council takes responsibility for your care because your family cannot look after you properly without their help.

Corporate Director

Rachael Shimmin is the director of Children's and Adults Services and she is the most important person to you in Durham County Council as she is the overall person responsible for making sure that people do their jobs properly in caring for you.

Elected members

These are Councillors, people who live in your area who have been voted by the community to work on your behalf in Durham County Council.

Foster Carers & Residential Workers

Children and young people may live with foster carers in their own homes as part of their plan. Residential workers work with children and young people in children's homes but do not live there full time.

Independent Reviewing Officer

Your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO for short) is responsible for checking how the Council is looking after you and that you are listened to when decisions are being made about your care.

Social Worker

Every child or young person in care must have a Social Worker who is responsible for your overall care, such as your education, health and other parts of your care plan.

Young People's Advisor

When you are 16 years old, a worker called a Young People's Advisor will start to work with you to help you think about and plan for when you leave care.

Contact Us:

Investing in Children supports the Children in Care Council. Please contact Darren or Ellie for more information Tel: 0191 3729200 Email: info@investinginchildren.net or visit the Children in Care Council website www.standtogether.info

Karen Robb Strategic Manager for Looked After Children, Lead Officer for Corporate Parenting Direct Line 03000 265759 Email: karen.robbs@durham.gov.uk

If the above people cannot help you, you can contact Rachael Shimmin Corporate Director, by emailing her at rachael.shimmin@durham.gov.uk

Corporate Parenting Panel Action Plan 2014 - 2016

Young lives. Positive futures.



Corporate Parenting Panel Top 3 Priorities 2014 / 15

Employment, Education & Training – Page 4

- To engage Durham County Council in providing increased opportunities for looked after children to access work, training and apprenticeships.
- To ensure looked after young people are afforded additional educational support to prepare them for work interviews within the organisation.
- To ensure the council understands it's corporate parenting responsibilities as a whole in respect of creating a level playing field for looked after children
- To engage young people from the Children in Care Council to better understand the barriers to EET

Placement Stability – Pages 5 &6

- Members want to understand the roles adoption, fostering and residential care placements play in the lives of looked after young
- Members want performance information on placement stability for LAC
- Members want to understand what a stable placement looks like.
- Members want to know the barriers to improving placement stability.
- Members want to know about young people living in County Durham from other local authorities.

Increasing Understanding of Professional Roles – Pages 7 & 8

- Understanding the role and function of a Looked After Social Worker, Fostering Officer, Adoption Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, etc
- Members want to improve their understanding of the role of adopters, foster carers, supported lodgings providers.
- Members would like to increase their understanding of all accommodation / placements utilised by Durham County Council.
- Members want to know the long-term outcome of those who leave our care.

Employment, Education and Training

Areas to Action	Work Required (How)	Lead Person	Timescales	Outcome
<p>The Corporate Parenting Panel wants to engage Durham County Council in providing increased opportunities for looked after children to access work, training and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Promote support for university graduates to seek placements / employment within the council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect in the Care Leavers Strategy Report to be completed for the corporate management team, requiring the council and associated partners to provide protected work opportunities to looked after children. Including work experience in Years 10 and 11. 	<p>Cllr Brookes Karen Robb/Lindsey Herring Selwyn Morgans</p> <p>Gill Palin</p>	<p>April 2015</p> <p>May 2015</p>	<p>More work opportunities Increased employability. Target figures : T2W – 10 Extended T2W - 5 Apprenticeships - 16 (not necessarily solely within the council)</p> <p>Council to offer placements for university graduates e.g .law student Target figure – 16</p>
<p>Members want to support more creative ways of engaging the hard to reach young people in gaining employment by understanding current performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young parents programme NEET protocol ESF provision / Youth employment provision Figures of current group Figures of emerging groups 	<p>Selwyn Morgans YPS Managers</p>	<p>Quarterly Updates</p>	<p>Increase knowledge of statistics and current guidance</p> <p>Champion the success of care leavers obtaining their degrees</p>

Increasing Understanding of Professional Roles

Areas to Action	Work Required (How)	Lead Person	Timescales	Outcome
<p>Members want to improve their understanding of the role of Adopters, Foster Carers and Supported Lodgings providers.</p> <p>Members would like to increase their understanding of all accommodation / placements utilised by Durham County Council.</p> <p>Increasing member involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite relevant professionals to CPP to discuss their roles. • Presentation to Members at Member Seminars / CPP meetings. • For members not engaged in Reg 45's a rota of shadow visits will be organised. 	<p>Dorothy Alexander Selwyn Morgans</p> <p>Sarah Thompson</p>	<p>April 2015</p>	<p>Increase Member understanding. Generate more interest in panel membership. Actively promote adoption.</p> <p>To increase Member involvement in Reg 45</p>
<p>Members want to know the long-term outcome of those who leave our care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YPS to attend Corporate Parenting Panel meetings each month. • Care Leavers Strategy to be presented at the Corporate Parenting Panel. • Investing in Children Council to conduct the same workshop from Corporate Parenting with social work staff from the YPS. 	<p>Sharron Pearson Lesley Grieveson</p> <p>Selwyn Morgans Karen Robb</p> <p>Selwyn Morgans Ellie Seed</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2015</p> <p>July 2015</p>	<p>To ensure young people's views are incorporated into service development</p> <p>Members informed of key points</p> <p>Increase young people's input into leave care services.</p>

<p>Reg 45 Visits</p> <p>Clarify role and expectations of Members so that everyone is confident in engaging naturally with young people and they would like to receive some guidance</p> <p>Develop handover process between Councillor to Councillor when identified leads are changed for Regulation 45 visits for each home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members to discuss the appropriate length of attachment to homes for Regulation 45 purposes. Currently it is 3 months. Young people recommended a longer period. Increase period of time to 6 months/12 months* Protocol / guidance to be established for Members. Previous report to be sent to new Councillor prior to the 1st visit. 	<p>Cllr Brookes Selwyn Morgans</p> <p>Selwyn Morgans Steve Percival</p> <p>Sarah Thompson</p>	<p>April 2015 (?)</p> <p>February 2015</p> <p>January 2015</p>	<p>Councillors strengthen relationships with children and young people</p> <p>Smoother arrangements for arranging visits. Clarity of requirements for Member and Reg 45 Officer.</p> <p>Greater understanding of the needs of Looked After Children in residential care</p>
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Underpinning Area's

Areas to Action	Work Required (How)	Lead Person	Timescales	Outcome
<p>Engagement with Young People Corporate Parenting Panel wish to increase their engagement with children and young people. To ensure that the young person remains at the centre of policy development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop regular meetings with the Children in Care Council. The Chair of the Corporate Parents Panel to be invited to agreed Children in Care Council meetings to provide opportunity for children/young people to question Councillors Ensure the Young People's Promise is promoted and ensure decisions are made in line with the promise. Reg 45 visits to take place at times when young people are present but not to interfere with their daily lives. Seek Investing in Children's status for Corporate Parenting Panel 	<p>Cllr Brookes Karen Robb</p> <p>Cllr Brookes</p> <p>Cllr Brookes Karen Robb</p> <p>Steve Percival</p> <p>Working on this with ICC</p>	<p>22nd May 2015 30th October 2015</p> <p>Twice per year</p> <p>Achieved, ongoing</p> <p>Achieved</p> <p>In progress</p>	<p>Increase Councillors knowledge of issues/problems from the young people's perspective</p> <p>Active participation in CPP through Children in Care Council.</p> <p>Young people's views are represented in Reg 45 feedback</p> <p>Use EET as the example, evidence of impact</p>
<p>Financial Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPP to become familiar with the financial entitlement to young people in placement i.e. comparisons between fostering and residential e.g. pocket monies, clothing allowance etc 	<p>Karen Robb</p>		

Training and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions on attachment theory, child sexual exploitation, basic counselling, improved ways to communicate with young people, planning regulations, Ofsted developments. All Members to be invited for these items • Opportunities to understand the role and function of a Looked After Social Worker, Fostering Officer, Adoption Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and others • Induction training 	Karen Robb / Selwyn Morgans Karen Robb Gill Palin	Ongoing over a period of 12 months	Members better informed and knowledgeable.
Strategic Issues affecting service changes	Financial impact on delivery of service.	Carole Payne	Ongoing	Members kept informed of these issues at the panel Reports to always reflect financial implications.
Promoting the achievement of young people in the looked after system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good news stories. • Members want to be able to promote the positive achievements of children in the looked after system. • Celebration of looked after children events • Consider separate celebration of care leavers annual events 	Selwyn Morgans Clive Horton Karen Robb	Ongoing	More positive view if both LAC and CPP

<p>Promoting the children's promise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all appropriate DCC buildings are displaying the Promise posters • Documentation sent out for monthly Corporate Parents meeting to include the Children's Promise • Members to ask staff members / young people on Regulation 45 visits on their understanding of the Promise. Document to be amended as a prompt question. • Members to ensure that all council members are aware of their Corporate Parenting roles and how the Promise applies to them. • All Councillors to made aware of Children's Residential Care Homes within their ward or locality (not just those who are on the Corporate Parents Committee). Map of homes and location including the council homes and private homes. 	<p>Karen Robb</p>	<p>November 2014</p>	<p>Greater understanding of the Children's Promise</p> <p>Greater awareness of all Councillors on their corporate parenting responsibilities and needs of looked after children</p>
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The Corporate Parent Panel Action Plan represents a 3 year programme of work, which identifies targets to improve the quality of life for the young people within the Looked After System of Durham County Council. The 3 year plan fits with the remaining political cycle and provides realistic opportunities to engage with young people and professionals using the political awareness of the panel to create change.

APPENDIX 4

YPS case history 2012-2015 (snapshot at point in time)

Team	Cases as at 20-FEB-12					Cases as at 18-FEB-13					Cases as at 17-FEB-14					Cases as at 18-FEB-15				
	Monitoring	Open	Opened To Duty	Review	TOTAL	Monitoring	Open	Opened To Duty	Review	TOTAL	Monitoring	Open	Opened To Duty	Review	TOTAL	Monitoring	Open	Opened To Duty	Review	TOTAL
Young Peoples Service North	0	147	0	1	148	0	143	0	0	143	0	177	0	0	177	0	156	3	0	159
Young Peoples Service South	9	132	0	0	141	5	136	2	0	143	8	150	0	0	158	5	148	1	0	154
TOTAL	9	279	0	1	289	5	279	2	0	286	8	327	0	0	335	5	304	4	0	313

- 289 in 2011/12
- 286 in 2012/13 (a 1.2% reduction since 2011/12)
- 335 in 2013/14 (a 13.8% increase since 2011/12)
- 313 in 2014/15 (a 7.7% increase since 2011/12)

APPENDIX 5 - Performance Indicators and Analysis

(i) Number of Care Leavers in employment, education and training in 2014

Source: SSDA903

Rank	LA Code	LA Name	% three age groups combined	Percentage of former relevant young people who were in education, employment or training and who on 31 March 2014 were			Number of former relevant young people who on 31 March 2014 were			Number of former relevant young people who were in education, employment or training and who on 31 March 2014 were		
				aged 19	aged 20	aged 21	aged 19	aged 20	aged 21	aged 19	aged 20	aged 21
	ENGLAND		45	52	45	39	9,090	9,210	8,840	4,740	4,130	3,440
80	841	Darlington	45	42	x	55	25	10	10	10	x	5
59	840	Durham	49	47	53	48	60	45	50	30	25	25
31	390	Gateshead	57	48	64	59	35	35	30	15	20	20
104	806	Middlesbrough	40	30	56	x	35	30	15	10	20	x
80	391	Newcastle Upon Tyne	45	45	46	42	65	65	55	30	30	25
75	392	North Tyneside	46	64	58	24	25	25	35	15	15	10
47	929	Northumberland	53	68	52	33	25	30	20	15	15	5
9	807	Redcar and Cleveland	65	79	79	x	15	20	15	10	15	x
16	393	South Tyneside	63	75	58	61	25	35	35	20	20	20
91	808	Stockton-On-Tees	42	41	40	45	20	35	20	10	15	10
75	394	Sunderland	46	42	50	45	50	50	45	20	25	20
114	384	Wakefield	38	56	33	29	35	55	50	20	20	15

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was five or fewer, or the denominator was 10 or fewer, they have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x).

- In 2014, 49% of Durham's Care Leavers were in employment, education and training. This is higher than the England average of 45% and our statistical neighbours EET rate of 38%. The average Care Leavers EET rate across the region is 50.09%

(ii) Number of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation in 2014

Source: SSDA903

Rank	LA Code	LA Name	% three age groups combined	Percentage of former relevant young people who were in suitable accommodation			Number of former relevant young people			Number of former relevant young people who were in suitable accommodation		
				aged 19	aged 20	aged 21	aged 19	aged 20	aged 21	aged 19	aged 20	aged 21
	ENGLAND		78	83	79	71	9,090	9,210	8,840	7,550	7,270	6,300
117	841	Darlington	72	77	x	64	25	10	10	20	5	5
112	840	Durham	74	68	79	78	60	45	50	40	35	40
3	390	Gateshead	97	100	94	97	35	35	30	35	30	30
81	806	Middlesbrough	81	88	88	53	35	30	15	30	30	10
91	391	Newcastle Upon Tyne	78	80	78	75	65	65	55	55	50	40
35	392	North Tyneside	90	92	88	91	25	25	35	25	20	30
1	807	Redcar and Cleveland	100	100	100	100	15	20	15	15	20	15
10	808	Stockton-On-Tees	96	95	100	91	20	35	20	20	35	20
131	394	Sunderland	67	66	74	62	50	50	45	35	35	30
112	384	Wakefield	74	88	67	71	35	55	50	30	35	35

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was five or fewer, or the denominator was 10 or fewer, they have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x).

- In 2014, 74% of Durham's care leavers were in suitable accommodation, which is on par with our statistical neighbour (Wakefield), but less than the England average of 78%.

(iii) Percentage of children looked after continuously for 12 months who achieved 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent in English and Maths in 2013

Rank	LA Code	LA Name	Indicator value for the 3 year average in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (%)	Percentage of children looked after continuously for 12 months who achieved 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including English and mathematics					Number of children looked after continuously for 12 months who were eligible to sit GCSEs					Number of children looked after continuously for 12 month who achieved 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including English and mathematics				
				2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	ENGLAND		15	11	12	14	15	15	4,560	4,960	5,020	4,850	4,850	500	620	680	730	750
37	841	Darlington	18	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	15	20	15	0	x	x	x	x
46	840	Durham	17	x	27	15	17	20	30	25	45	45	35	x	5	5	10	5
30	390	Gateshead	19	37	x	x	x	30	20	20	30	30	20	5	x	x	x	5
122	806	Middlesbrough	10	0	20	x	x	x	15	35	20	30	30	0	5	x	x	x
113	391	Newcastle Upon Tyne	11	x	x	x	14	10	35	35	45	55	60	x	x	x	10	5
14	392	North Tyneside	23	x	x	x	x	x	20	10	15	15	20	x	x	x	x	x
26	929	Northumberland	20	x	x	43	x	x	20	20	15	25	25	x	x	5	x	x
17	807	Redcar and Cleveland	22	x	x	x	x	x	10	10	10	10	10	0	x	x	x	x
72	393	South Tyneside	14	x	x	x	x	x	25	15	20	20	15	x	x	x	x	x
30	808	Stockton-On-Tees	19	x	x	x	x	x	20	20	15	15	20	x	x	x	x	x
101	394	Sunderland	12	x	x	x	x	x	35	30	35	40	25	x	x	x	x	x
65	384	Wakefield	15	x	x	25	0	x	30	25	30	30	20	x	x	5	0	x

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was five or fewer, or the denominator was 10 or fewer, they have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x)

- In 2013, 20% of Durham children looked after continuously for 12 months achieved 5+ A*-C grade at GCSE and equivalent including English and Maths, in comparison to 10% of looked after children in Newcastle and 30% of looked after children in Gateshead.

(iv) Percentage of former relevant young people who were in higher education in 2014

Rank	LA Code		% three age groups combined	Percentage of former relevant young people who were in higher education			Number of former relevant young people who were in higher education			Number of former relevant young people who were in higher education		
	LA Name			aged 19	aged 20	aged 21	aged 19	aged 20	aged 21	aged 19	aged 20	aged 21
	ENGLAND		6	6	7	7	9,090	9,210	8,840	510	610	620
4	841	Darlington	15	x	x	0	25	10	10	x	x	0
79	840	Durham	5	x	x	x	60	45	50	x	x	x
NA	390	Gateshead	x	0	x	0	35	35	30	0	x	0
NA	806	Middlesbrough	x	0	x	0	35	30	15	0	x	0
20	391	Newcastle Upon Tyne	10	x	19	x	65	65	55	x	10	x
NA	392	North Tyneside	x	x	x	x	25	25	35	x	x	x
NA	929	Northumberland	x	x	x	0	25	30	20	x	x	0
NA	807	Redcar and Cleveland	x	x	x	x	15	20	15	x	x	x
20	393	South Tyneside	10	x	x	x	25	35	35	x	x	x
NA	808	Stockton-On-Tees	x	x	0	x	20	35	20	x	0	x
65	394	Sunderland	6	0	x	x	50	50	45	0	x	x
48	384	Wakefield	7	x	x	x	35	55	50	x	x	x

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers but where the numerator was five or fewer, or the denominator was 10 or fewer, they have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x).

- In 2014, 5% of former relevant young in Durham were in higher education, in comparison to the England average of 6%. Durham's statistical neighbour, Wakefield, reported 7% of former relevant young people in higher education. The table above also provides some regional comparisons.

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