



**The Right Side  
of Care**



A dedicated website  
for Looked After  
Children in Wirral

**Wirral Council  
Corporate Parenting Strategy  
2014-2016**

# Contents

<b>Background.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What are the simple things we need to get right? - Strategic Priorities .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Being healthy .....	7
Staying safe .....	7
Enjoying and achieving economic well being .....	7
<b>Standards for Corporate Parents.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Features of Outstanding Corporate Parenting .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>What do we want to ensure?.....</b>	<b>52</b>

## **Foreword by the Lead Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Councillor Tony Smith**

As Corporate Parents Wirral Council has a legal and moral duty to provide children who are looked after with the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give their own children to ensure that all aspects of their development are nurtured. This will be done by being powerful advocates for children and young people to ensure they receive the best of everything and to strive to help them to make a success of their lives

## Introduction

Most children live successful and happy lives within their families and have little need for external support other than that provided by universal services. For some children targeted and specialist support is needed in a planned and coordinated way to maintain the family as a unit.

For a small number of children such interventions are insufficient to ensure the child's safety and well being, and either through the request of parents or carers or through care proceedings we need to assume the parental responsibility for that child. The child then becomes looked after or a child in care and the local authority takes on the role as Corporate Parent

## Background

The concept of Corporate Parenting was first given prominence in 1998. The key Message was that Councillors should view the needs of children in public care and have ambitions for them as though they were their own.

On 21<sup>ST</sup> June 2007 the Government published the White Paper, Care Matters: Time for Change, which set out the steps the new Department for Children, Schools and Families, will take, together with local delivery partners to improve outcomes for children and young people in care. The White Paper set out key components for effective corporate parenting:

'The Director of Children's Services and Lead Member have overall responsibility for leading corporate parenting arrangements both across the local authority and with its partners in the children's trust.

Authorities may also appoint a group of senior officials with responsibility for the corporate parenting of children in care. The accountability and governance arrangements of these groups must be clear.'

## Principles at the Heart of Corporate Parenting

- Looked after children are entitled to the same care, support, stability, health and education as our own children ensuring that services are flexible enough to support children having high quality lives, and happy childhoods.
- Corporate Parenting does not cease at 18 and should involve the successful transition to adulthood
- Looked after Children will be at the heart of Wirral Council's decision making processes and will work with all relevant partners to encourage them to adopt the same principle
- In developing new practices, initiatives or policies Wirral Council considers the needs of looked after children and the principles identified in the promise.
- Looked after children are actively encouraged to participate in decisions made about their lives, so that their experiences influence policy and practice. Access for looked after children to universal services is actively promoted, encouraging young people's sense of community and belonging
- Service provision, communication and policies meet the needs of children with disabilities, and children from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Corporate Parents challenge negative perceptions and stereotypes and raise awareness at all levels of the Council.
- Corporate Parenting is about commitment and teamwork to bring about change.
- Corporate Parents need to ensure that all partners understand the importance of good education

Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the Local Authority and its partner's duties and responsibilities, to children and young people who are looked after. Its central principle is that the local authority and its partners should parent looked after children much as one would parent their own child or children in their family. In essence this means:

- Being aware of the Corporate Parenting role and the shared responsibility for ensuring that the needs of children in care and care leavers are met
- Having a knowledge of the profile and needs of children looked after by Wirral and how these might be changing.
- Understanding the impact on children in care of all council decisions.
- Receiving information about the quality of care and the quality of services that children are experiencing.
- Ensuring that action is being taken to address any shortcomings in the service and to constantly improve outcomes for children in care.
- Ensuring there is a direct, uninterrupted line of communication between you and the children you care for, so you hear and know what they are saying.
- Accepting responsibility for all children in the Council's care
- Making their needs a priority
- Having an absolute commitment and determination to deliver improved outcomes for all children in care.

As Corporate Parents we need to recognise that many looked after children are doing well with the support and opportunities they have. It is important that we don't make looked after children out to be completely different to other children. Looked after children want to feel like any other children. They do however have a special relationship with the local authority and have some common obstacles, which we can help them with.

## **What are the simple things we need to get right? - Strategic Priorities**

### **Being healthy**

We must ensure children and young people are not disadvantaged in their access to health assessment and treatment. We need to work to promote early identification and intervention particularly where there is a likelihood of emotional difficulties.

### **Staying safe**

We are determined to give every looked after child a stable, high quality placement. Children are well matched to the best placement for them and supported in those placements based on care plans that are regularly reviewed;

### **Enjoying and achieving economic well being**

We must secure them a place in a school, help them to get the most out of it and support them to continue in training employment and education when they leave school.

Children and young people are supported in planning for their future, and engaged in education, employment and training opportunities that will support them in achieving future economic well being and success.

Children and young people are supported to improve their emotional well being, increase self esteem and confidence so that they can contribute and make positive contributions that mean they influence the development of services and policies / plans that impact on them now and in the future;

Within these three strategic priorities the voice of the child is paramount.

**“The smallest things done well can make the biggest difference”**

(Young person involved in Wirral Children in Care Council)

## Standards for Corporate Parents

Being a Corporate Parent involves:

- A full commitment to attending meetings of the Corporate Parenting Group and taking an active part in the responsibilities of its membership
- Membership of Fostering and Adoption Panels
- Commitment to professional development, for example through participating in appropriate training to carry out corporate parenting responsibilities
- Celebrating the success of our children and young people
- Making sure that all foster homes and children's homes come up to the standard of the best in terms of comfort, homeliness, friendliness and openness of carers and staff
- Having an understanding of the opportunities available to support children and young people and their carers
- Support and challenge to the work that supports the journey of the child to adoption
- Meeting with young people and listening to what they have to say!

## Wirral Council Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan

An action plan has been developed, which will focus the work of the group over the next 2 years. The majority of the actions have come from the Family and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee scrutiny review of outcomes for looked after children. This review was undertaken in August 2013 and made a number of recommendations to improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers. This group will therefore, oversee the council's progress in implementing these recommendations. Other actions have been included in the plan as they will also improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

## Corporate Parent quotes

Members of the Corporate Parenting group were asked how they would carry out their role for looked after young people in Wirral.

I will help whenever I can to support young people in care to have strong confident voices and the opportunity - at the appropriate times - to influence their own lives

I will do everything within my power to listen to what children in care tell me, and do everything possible to improve outcomes for them.

Personal coaching or a personal coach to be available if wanted.  
To support looked after children with their learning journey.

I want to ensure that the rights and needs of young people are at the heart of all decisions I take as a councillor.

Carry on prioritising the needs of looked after children within the council. To ask awkward questions and keep asking them to improve the outcomes for our children looked after.

The young people are so obviously committed to helping themselves and other looked after children. As councillors not on children's committees, it is difficult to know what we can do. As councillors, I believe we would always have an open door for any of the children and do our best in any way we can to help.

I loved their responsible attitudes and their ideas for apprenticeships and qualifications on leaving care.

No decision about children and young people in care without participation from children and young people in care.

To develop services in partnership with children and young people in care to delivering quality child and young person focused services.

It's brilliant to see and hear such confident young people from the CICC.

It will be good to have males involved again; imagination and hard work will be needed to motivate them to be active participants. They need to have positive examples of the achievements of the CICC.

Keep up the good work.

I will continue to do my best for the children in our care.

We will strive to improve the outcomes for Wirral's looked after children.

To ensure that from day one; children in care are treated as individuals and not statistics and schools make every opportunity to help them reach the goals they desire.

To give more times to LAC and listen to what they want, not what we think they should do. But not to exceed certain parameters.

## Features of Outstanding Corporate Parenting

Features of Outstanding Corporate Parenting	Corporate Parenting in Wirral
Knowledge and understanding of policy, guidance and practice issues.	Corporate Parenting Group members are provided with regular briefings and updates on practice and policies
Knowledge and understanding of the diverse needs of looked after children and young people.	Corporate Parenting Group members have a good and increasing knowledge of the needs of looked after children
Transparent and unbroken chain of communication between looked after children, their carers and the corporate parent.	Members meet with carers and young people.
Active promotion of best practice and high ambitions for all looked after children.	Wirral Council actively promote high expectations for children and young people
Strong and mature partnerships with established joint commissioning and performance management arrangements.	The Corporate Parenting Group provides this arrangement but needs to review its membership.
Good links to research bodies to inform practice developments.	There is an established link with Research In Practice and Benchmarking Group (ask Matthew its proper title who support Wirral's workforce development.
Clear framework for accountability and responsibilities at all levels.	The Children's Trust and Corporate Parenting Group structure is under review.
High level of investment in training for all including those with corporate parenting responsibilities.	Identifying the training required and ensure it is delivered widely to Councillors and other Strategic Leaders at a senior level in Wirral.
Promotion of a culture of continuous improvement that engages children and young people, carers and staff which values innovation.	Corporate Parenting Group members demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. The group challenges officers to drive improvements to improve service quality.
An inclusive and practice based approach to performance management.	Plans, strategies and performance information are shared regularly with the Corporate Parenting Group.
Willingness to hear and respond to difficult messages.	The Corporate Parenting Group need to consider a workshop to evaluate this.
Responsibility for Corporate Parenting is owned by the whole Council.	This needs to be addressed in the action plan for this year.

## Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan

### Listen to Children and Young People and Demonstrate that we Have Taken Action to Respond

Objective	Responsibility	Timescale	Action	Outcome	Progress To Date
Ensure that raising the aspirations of looked after children is at the heart of the Group's decision making principles  <b>*(Recommendation 1)</b>	Children in Care Services	June 2014 and annually	Refresh and raise the profile of the 'Promise' within the strategic planning of services	Services are developed in consultation with children in care, which reflect their wishes and feelings	
	Children in Care Services	August 2014	Members of the Children In Care Council to undertake Recruitment and Selection Training	and improve the services to them.	

Children in Care Services	March 2015	Recruitment and Selection Training to be offered to an additional 15-20 children in care
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Children in Care Services	November 2014	Arrange a 'Take Over Day' so children get the opportunity to see decisions being made and which will help raise their aspirations.
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14-19 Team	April 2015	Continue to develop the programme for looked after children to visit higher education facilities to raise their aspirations about continued learning	Obtain feedback and measure how many young people go on to attend
Pathway Team/ Service Manager, Looked After Children	October 2014	Evaluate the impact of the Care Leavers Charter.  Support and establish the 'New Belongings' project	Evaluate against an outcomes framework i.e. NEET going onto courses. Young people are aware of it.  Provide regular updates

	Senior Manager, Children in Care	July 2014	Members of the Corporate Parenting Group invited to meet with the Children In Care Council to speak to young people about their experiences in care, listen to their views and act upon them	Obtain feedback from the Children in Care Council
To improve communication with looked after children by updating the 'Right side of Care' website and greater use of other technology (i.e. apps & texts)	Children in Care Services	March 2015	Corporate Parenting Group regularly updated on the progress of the project  Greater monitoring and evaluation of the information looked after children are actually receiving	Increased mediums for sharing information with children in care and obtaining feedback on children's wishes and feelings on the services we provide

\* (Recommendation 8)

## Actions To Support Corporate Parents in Carrying Out Their Responsibilities

Objective	Responsibility	Timescale	Action	Outcome	Progress To Date
Corporate parents are actively engaged in identifying their training needs and participate in training	All	July 2014	Regular training to be identified for Corporate Parenting Group members.	Members are equipped to undertake their role effectively and hold Officers to account	
Corporate Parenting Group briefed on the work plan of the Children In Care Council over the next 12 months	Children in care Services	July 2014	Quarterly updates provided to the group	Services reflect the views of children in care and better support them	
Elected Members and Officers work together	All	Ongoing	The group meets regularly and is	The Corporate Parenting Support Plan	

to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Group members are supported

prioritised.

Reports are provided in advance of meetings.

leads to evidence of improved services and therefore, improved outcomes for looked after children

Corporate Parenting Group to appropriately challenge officers in relation to performance outcomes

All

Ongoing

Identify Officers to present reports to the Corporate Parenting Group to feedback performance in specific service areas

Officers are held to account and must demonstrate how services improve outcomes.

## Actions To Engage the Rest of the Council In Corporate Parenting

Objective	Responsibility	Timescale	Action	Outcome	Progress To Date
Raise awareness and keep Elected Members and Council staff aware of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities	Lead Member, Director & Heads of Service	September 2015	A Corporate Parenting Conference to be held for Council staff, Professionals and Elected Members	Increased understanding will enable services across the Council to be more joined up and increase the support available to care leavers.	
Council staff to be made more aware of their Corporate Parenting Responsibilities	Director & Heads of Service	March 2015	Training opportunities to be identified (including the possibility of having a mandatory e learning module put on the e-nable website)	Increased understanding will enable services across the Council to be more joined up and increase the support available to care leavers.	

Use every opportunity to raise the profile of looked after children and care leavers – set targets to regularly share positive messages about good practice

Director and Heads of Service

October 2014

Information is included in the Families and Wellbeing newsletter and One Council magazine.

Increased understanding will enable services across the Council to be more joined up, raise awareness of the challenges facing care leavers and increase the support available to care leavers.

Performance information relating to care leavers is routinely shared with the group.

**Being Healthy**

Objective	Responsibility	Timescale	Action	Outcome	Progress To Date
Improve early identification and support for children in care with medical, developmental and/or emotional difficulties  *(Recommendation 22)	Designated Doctor and Nurse for Looked After Children	Ongoing	Ensure initial and review health assessments are completed within a timely manner in keeping with statutory timescales     Quality Assessment of Initial and Review	Continued improvement in proportion of health assessments completed within statutory timescales       Improvement in identifying and meeting health, development	Initial improvements in timescales. Procedures between local authority and health being reviewed and developed       Quality Assurance of initial and

			Health Assessments	and wellbeing needs of children	review health assessments commenced and on-going
		April 2015	Review and develop use of SDQ questionnaire including introducing use after 6 months of being in care	Improved early identification and support for children in care with emotional and behavioural difficulties	Discussions with Partnership CAMHS team and Local Authority in initial phases
To improve the health outcomes for looked after children	LAC Service Manager	October 2015	Extend the success of the Healthier Homes initiative beyond the Independent residential homes sector by supporting	Health outcomes for looked after children are further improved with clear standards in place for children in foster care. Care	

and training Foster Carers to implement the Healthier Homes Fostering Standards

leavers between 18-21 are provided with additional support

Foster Carers are briefed on the programme

Training programme for Foster Carers is developed and implemented

Clear standards are in place which can be assessed at Foster Carer Reviews

			Consider jointly with health how best to support young people age 18-21 who have left care in managing their health needs	Care leavers provided with lifestyle advice More health support is available
Ensure that health information for looked after children is shared in a timely manner to ensure their health needs are met	Senior Manager, Children in Care and designated health professionals	April 2015	Designated Nurses for LAC to have access to CYPD's new IT system to improve the timeliness of referrals for Initial Health Assessments	Health Assessments are completed in statutory timescales and are quality assured to allow services to be accessed at the right time
			Designated Nurses to complete an annual report on the health of Looked After Children, identifying any gaps in	The overall health needs and outcomes for Looked after children will be assessed annually.

the system/services  
and make proposals  
for addressing them

<b>Staying Safe</b>					
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Progress To Date</b>
Additional Support for young people who have been in care after their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday	Pathways Team Leader and Children in Care Services	December 2014	Complete a 12 month 'Staying Put' Pilot	More young people are able to stay on with their Foster Carers post 18.	
<b>*(Recommendation 10)</b>					
		July 2014 and ongoing	Introduce more one to one support sessions and 'drop in' facilities for care leavers		

<p>Ensure there are sufficient and appropriate placements to meet the diverse needs of Wirral children</p>	<p>Senior Manager, Children in Care</p>	<p>September 2014</p>	<p>Sufficiency Strategy is revised</p> <p>Needs assessment refreshed and any gaps in provision identified</p>	<p>Children and young people's needs are met by a range of placements/ accommodation based on an assessment of the needs of the looked after population</p>
<p>Ensure foster carers are supported, trained and skilled to meet the needs of all looked after children in foster care as set out in Regulations and national standards.</p> <p><b>*(Recommendation 2)</b></p>	<p>Fostering Service Team Leader</p>	<p>March 2015</p>	<p>Engage with foster carers to amend the guide to Foster Carers Payments so that the payment of fees will be linked to meeting training requirements.</p>	<p>Ensuring the continuous professional development of Foster Carers will ensure Foster Carers are equipped to meet the diverse needs of looked after children and given</p>

March 2015 Identify ways to further encourage Foster Carers to attend training (i.e. childcare facilities, venue, times, etc). Actively involve Foster Carers. the best possible opportunities to achieve their potential.

March 2015 Existing training is reviewed and a revised training strategy is developed to enhance the skills of Foster Carers. Consult with Foster Carers. The number of foster carers attending training is measured.

Ensure foster carers have access to meaningful support systems

**\*(Recommendation 4)**

Fostering Service  
Team Leader

March 2015

Review and evaluate the current support groups/ processes available to Foster Carers.

Improved access to and quality of support will have a positive impact on placement stability.

Consult with Foster Carers on what they want and think will work best. Develop a scheme whereby higher banded Foster Carers provide mentoring to other Foster Carers

Re-design the support groups if required and also consider on-line forums

Care placements for looked after children with special educational needs and behavioural needs have appropriate training and support

Fostering Service  
Team Leader

March 2015

Review current training available to Foster Carers and Social Workers in relation to supporting the special educational needs and behavioural needs of looked after children in foster care

Children and young people will be placed with Foster Carer's who have the appropriate skills to support them with their special needs or behavioural needs

**\* (Recommendation 5)**

	January 2016	Devise and implement new training if required.	An enhanced training strategy and workforce development plan is in place
Fostering Service Team Leader	March 2015	Identify children in foster care with special education needs and ensure the respective foster carer is aware of how to support and promote their learning. Provide training as appropriate	

Fostering Service Team Leader	March 2015	Strategy to be further developed to increase the number and range of Foster Carers in Wirral based on unmet need
Fostering Service Team Leader and Adolescent Support Team Manager	February 2015	Further develop and evaluate the Placement Stability Model to prevent placement breakdown

Ensure the organisational structures within children's social care prioritise the needs of looked after children, keeping transfers to a minimum and contribute to a stable workforce.

Head of Specialist Services

March 2015

Future Council and service re-design to be implemented to raise the profile of looked after children, implement new social worker progression policy and implement the new social worker supervision policy

Improved focus on outcomes for looked after children and better trained social workers who are able to spend more time with children and families.

Subject to Future Council

**\*(Recommendation 6)**

Explore multi-functional teams to reduce case transfers

Advice for looked after children in relation to financial entitlements to be made available, consistent and timely

\*(Recommendation 7)

Senior Manager,  
Children in Care

August 2014

Information is provided to social work staff, foster carers and professionals to provide greater clarity regarding the financial entitlements for children in care and care leavers

Looked after children know what they are entitled to, which means they are able to request services and support themselves, which will help to promote their independence skills.

Children in Care  
Services

August 2014

Information is provided to children when they enter care and they are also kept up to date of any changes through greater use of IT i.e. website and apps

Benefit and financial support entitlements are clearly set out and are available in young people friendly versions

Children In Care Council to be consulted on their views

Ensure transition to the Pathway Team is timely and based on individual need.

Senior Manager,  
Children In Care

December  
2014

Analysis to be undertaken to understand the resource implications of the service taking young people prior to age 16 and how this could be resourced.

Greater flexibility around the timing of transition to the Pathway Team based on each young persons individual needs. Fewer disruptions enabling young

\*(Recommendation 9)

people to focus on their GCSE's etc.

A report is produced and shared

A report is provided on the number of young people accessing the service and overall effectiveness of the service

Raise the profile of the Independent Visitors Service

Inclusion Team

July 2014

Identify additional methods and forums in which information about the Independent Visiting Service can be communicated to children, Social Workers, Foster Carers and Professionals

\*(Recommendation 11)

Ensure young people understand their Pathway Plan and are given every opportunity

Senior Manager, Children In Care

March 2015

Social Workers and the Pathways Team to work together to identify ways to

Increased ownership will result in increased engagement and

to engage in the  
process

**\*(Recommendation 12)**

ensure that young  
people are more  
involved and take  
ownership of their  
Pathway Plan.

therefore a better  
chance of the targets  
in the plan being  
achieved.

Care leavers to be  
consulted on what  
would increase their  
ownership of the  
Pathway Plan.

Report provided on  
the quality of plans  
following  
implementation of  
the Liquid Logic IT  
system  
Feedback from  
young people is  
collated and  
responded to, with  
the support of the  
Inclusion Service

<p>Ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and their own tenancies</p>	<p>Sheila Jacobs (Regeneration) and Pathway Team Manager</p>	<p>July 2014</p>	<p>Housing Division &amp; CYPD to work collaboratively to undertake an analysis of Care Leavers currently accommodated in supported housing and to develop and implement an accommodation pathway for LAC</p>	<p>To improve access to accommodation and to ensure that there is sufficient quantity of good quality accommodation that meets the needs of Care Leavers</p>	<p>Proposal and Terms of Reference drafted</p> <p>Initial process map developed</p>
<p><b>*(Recommendations 23, 24, 25)</b></p>					

April 2015	<p>Housing Division &amp; CYPD to work collaboratively to develop arrangements for the quality monitoring of organisations providing accommodation &amp; support.</p>	<p>To develop an standardised approach to accommodation placements for Care Leavers that makes best use of existing provision and minimises the usage of high-cost spot-purchased accommodation</p>	<p>Report drafted analysing and comparing current quality framework for spot-purchased accommodation with Supported Housing Quality Assessment Framework</p>
	<p>Introduce a forum on the updated 'Right Side of Care' website for placing online advertisements for sharing accommodation</p>		

## Enjoying and Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Objective	Responsibility	Timescale	Action	Outcome	Progress To Date
Increase employment opportunities for care leavers (vocational and academic)	14-19 team	March 2015	Pathway Team to work with the 14-19 Employment Team and Connexions to increase the range of opportunities available for individual care leavers.	More care leavers access vocational and academic courses, which results in employment.	
<b>*(Recommendation 21)</b>			Performance systems capture this information	Number of care leavers accessing EET is increased and which includes more apprenticeships.	

<p>Ensure looked after children's reviews and personal education plans are undertaken in accordance with Regulations</p>	<p>Corporate Safeguarding Manager</p>	<p>December 2014</p>	<p>Links between the Pathway Team and Wirral apprenticeship programme are further strengthened</p> <p>Where appropriate Independent Reviewing Officers and social workers should combine the LAC Review and PEP Meetings to make more effective use of professionals time</p>	<p>Reviews will have greater oversight of educational achievement and professionals will spend less time in meetings</p>
<p><b>*(Recommendation 15)</b></p>				

Identify ways of  
sharing data more  
effectively in relation  
to looked after  
children between  
schools and  
specialist services

Analysis of PEP's is  
undertaken at the  
Practice  
improvement  
Meetings Chaired by  
the Head of Service

Ensure the Personal Education Allowance meets the identified needs of looked after children

\*(Recommendation 17)

Virtual Head  
Teacher

June 2015

Schools to ensure that the Personal Education Allowance is being used as effectively as possible to improve the outcomes for looked after children

This will ensure the money is being spent appropriately and attainment levels will increase, thereby improving further education and employment opportunities.

LACES Team

June 2015

The LACES Team to ensure that all children who are entitled to a Personal Education Allowance have access to the funding.

Introduce and implement a system to allocate Pupil Premium to all schools	Virtual Head Teachers	December 2014	The LACES Team to analyse the effectiveness of the Personal Education Allowance and the benefits it is having on looked after children	Allocate the funds to each school  Evaluate the impact of the funds	Schools receive the relevant funding and results in improved attainment as a result of the changes made in the way the Premium is used
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Ensure all placements promote Independent living skills and employment and training opportunities

**\*(Recommendation 3)**

Fostering Service  
Team Manager

March 2015

Fostering Service to develop closer links with the Employability Team so that Foster Carers are more aware of the employment and training opportunities for looked after children.

Foster Carers receive relevant training and support from their supervising social worker on how to support young people to develop their independent

Foster Carers play a more active role in supporting children in placement to be better equipped for adulthood. This will result in increased attainment levels in schools and more young people accessing further education/training and going on to gain employment.

living skills to the children in their care. Foster carer reviews will routinely assess this

To ensure the education needs of looked after children are prioritised via high quality personal education plans.

\*(Recommendation 14 & 16)

Senior Manager,  
Children in Care  
and Virtual Head  
Teacher

December  
2014

Audits undertaken to identify missing Personal Education Plans and assess quality. Workshops subsequently delivered to Social Workers to raise the profile, importance and quality of Personal Education

Better quality Personal Education Plans will result in increased educational attainment for looked after children  
  
Closer relationships between schools and the Fostering

Plans.	Service, which will make it clearer to Foster Carers their
Performance systems	role in improving educational
strengthened to identify missing	attainments for children in their care.
plans, ensure plans are reviewed and are	LACES RAG rate the quality of plans twice
of good quality. A selection of plans will	yearly and is fed in to the Social Care
be audited twice yearly to monitor the	Practice Improvement
quality.	meeting. Systems capture
	who is attending parents evenings

Senior Manager, Children in Care and Virtual Head Teacher	December 2014	All Personal Education Plans, Individual Placement Agreements and Placement Plans to identify who will be responsible for attending the parents' evenings of looked after children.
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Virtual Head Teacher	December 2014	Performance systems strengthened to track foster carer and residential staff attendance at parents evenings
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Create closer working relationships and understanding of respective roles for professionals involved in supporting the educational attainment of looked after children

Virtual Head  
Teacher

Ongoing

Designated  
Teachers continue to receive looked after children training on an individual basis linked to the existing training programme

Professionals are more aware of the barriers impacting on looked after children achieving and are better equipped to help them overcome them.

F

Fostering Service  
Team Leader and  
Residential Team  
Manager

February  
2015

oster Carers and residential staff to receive training on attending parents' evenings.

The education needs of looked after children placed outside the borough are equally prioritised	Senior Manager, Children in Care	December 2014	The North West Regional Protocol for supporting the education of children placed out of authority is reviewed, updated and briefed out.	The educational attainment of children placed outside the Borough is closely monitored and support is provided to ensure these children achieve their potential.
Ensure all school governors recognise and prioritise the needs of looked after children in schools	Virtual Head Teacher	December 2014	Governors receive training in relation to looked after children, which is targeted at those schools who have not received it and where possible involving input from the Children In Care Council.	Schools will have a better understanding of the needs of looked after children and be better equipped to meet their needs. Figures of how many attend are provided to the group.

The development of stronger working relationships between schools and Social Workers

**\*(Recommendation 13)**

Senior Manager,  
Children in Care  
and Virtual Head  
Teacher

December  
2014

Consider the most appropriate ways to develop these relationships and engage schools in this process.

Consider how to implement multi-agency practice training involving health, education and social care.

Better communication will result in schools being kept informed of the changes affecting children and enable them to respond to their needs more effectively.

Promote more multi-agency working and Improve protocols for sharing information between Schools, Specialist Services, Health and other professionals

Ensure looked after children are ready for further education, training and employment when they leave care  
 \*(Recommendation 18, 19 and 20)

14-19 Team and Senior Manager Children in Care

March 2015

An additional peer mentor and apprentice to be recruited to increase the capacity of the employability team (care leavers)

Further Identify and promote opportunities for

More young people will be able to access work experience, which will increase their employability and raise their aspirations. More young people will go on to gain employment

Linked to (Recommendation 21)

internships and work  
experience for  
looked after children  
and care leavers

A clear strategy is in  
place to increase the  
number of care  
leavers who attend  
higher University and  
gain employment

Explore further  
opportunities to  
engage private  
companies to offer  
work experience,  
internships and  
apprenticeships to  
care leavers

Pathway Team

October 2014

Review how the  
Department can  
review the Pathway  
Plans for Former  
Relevant Children

## What do we want to ensure?

When a Local Authority looks after a child or young person, it has a legal responsibility to share the duties and responsibilities of the child's parent. Effective Corporate Parenting depends upon ownership and leadership at a senior level, including elected members who have a specific role to play in ensuring that the outcomes and life chances of children looked after are maximised.

As Corporate Parents we need to continually ask ourselves:

- If this were my child would it be good enough for them?
- If I were that child would it be good enough for me?
- How can I make it better?

We must demand the highest standards for all our looked after children, ensuring that systems and services are in place which reflect their needs, abilities, cultural, and linguistic heritage and life experiences.

On a day to day basis the social worker embodies the corporate parenting role. Children looked after need a consistent parent in their lives who can act as a powerful advocate and effectively coordinate relevant services to deliver positive outcomes.