

North East Lincolnshire

Corporate Parenting Strategy



2023- 2025

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Corporate Parenting Strategy

What is corporate parenting?

Corporate parenting is our responsibility to be loving, caring and aspirational for all children and young people who are in our care, or who have recently left our care as adults.

Above all else, this means protecting children and young people from harm and keeping them safe. But, importantly, it is about always striving for their best interests, nurturing their ambitions and helping our children and young people get the most out of life. Ultimately, it means they become independent and thriving young adults.

At its heart, Corporate Parenting means always asking ourselves "would this be good enough for my child?"

Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of local authorities towards children and young people in care.

Corporate Parenting emphasises the collective responsibility of the local authority and its partners to achieve 'good parenting' for all children in care.

Corporate Parenting is not the sole responsibility of the children's social work services. It is the responsibility of the whole council, including councillors, our health service, and other partners.

'Good parenting' includes ensuring the child / young person's health, wellbeing, and safety as well as things like succeeding in school or other hobbies and interests based on their individual abilities and aspirations.

All Elected Members automatically hold Corporate Parenting Responsibilities. There are many different ways in which Elected Members can promote their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

The corporate parenting principles

In delivering our strategy we will ensure that the local authority and all our partners have regards when exercising their functions to ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to have:

- Safe, stable and caring places to live and call home
- Emotionally, physically and mentally health and wellbeing
- Access to Learning, developing, having fun and achieving
- To build Trusted relationships and a strong sense of identity and belonging
- Are supported in making their voice heard and influencing decision-making
- Are supported to be safe and protected at home, online and in the community
- Are supported to develop independence

Our vision for all children and young people

We believe that every child and young person in North East Lincolnshire should have the best possible start in life and the opportunity to thrive. We want to ensure children and young people receive the right support, at the right time, and in the right place.

For children and young people with care experience, our vision is no different.

We recognise that children and young people, who have care-experience, can face additional challenges that others their age may not. As their corporate parents, and in spite of these obstacles, we want them to achieve good outcomes in all aspects of their lives.

For this reason, our ambition to be good corporate parents goes far beyond any laws. Instead, we have a moral, social and economic responsibility, as public services, civil society, local communities and wider society, to work together to equip and empower our care-experienced children and young people to succeed and thrive.

Our plan of action

We have a plan for how North East Lincolnshire can be the best possible corporate parents we can be. We want to be clear about what is expected of us, what we want to achieve and how we aim to do that.

Essentially, the strategy is about one thing: making the lives and prospects of all care-experienced children and young people in North East Lincolnshire better. It sounds simple, but it will take time, hard work and involve challenges along the way. But, by working together, holding each other to account, and delivering on our plan, we believe we can turn our words into positive outcomes in the lives of care-experienced children and young people across North East Lincolnshire.

The lived experience of care

What we say in the strategy comes out of the ambition with our children and young people who are currently in care, and those who have recently left our care. We will further this intent with follow up consultation. The need to engage more robustly with our young people is because they are the people who know first-hand what it is like to live in our care, but they are also the people who are most affected by what we say and do. Understanding and acting on their views, interests and lived experiences is fundamental to being a good corporate parent. All children and young people in care are different. We recognise that they all have their own individual strengths, needs and interests.

Moving forward we will undertake activity where children and young people will begin to contribute to our wider corporate strategy



Outcomes for children and young people

We have split the plan into seven outcomes, which cover every aspect of the lives and experiences of children and young people. If we make good progress against each of these, we will know we are doing what we set out to do. While, we want every child or young person with care experience to achieve each of these outcomes, the specific things that we plan to do, to help us achieve each outcome, won't always apply to every child or young person. This will be based on their individual needs and circumstances.

These are the seven outcomes with key actions below each one:

1. Safe, stable and caring places to live and call home

- Build bridges to support more children and young people to remain safely with their families and avoid coming into care
- Enable more children in care to find a place to call home with families in North East Lincolnshire
- Promote stability for children in care by meeting their individual needs in the right place at the right time
- Help young people develop their independence and step forward successfully into early adulthood

VISION

North East Lincolnshire children will be supported to live within families. When they require local authority care, we will provide a range of fostering placements to meet children's needs and, where necessary provide, residential care placements suitable to meet the needs of children.

North East Lincolnshire children will be cared for whenever possible within North East Lincolnshire, minimising the need for external placements.

Changes in placements will be planned with children and will take place in a predictable and measured way.



What is the challenge?

The demands on Local Authorities in respect of ensuring that they have sufficient placements of the appropriate skill level is increasing with a national rise in the numbers of children in care. Increasing the ability of placements to cope with challenging behaviour and responding better to placements that are under pressure.

What more can we do/ what will we do:

- Complete our sufficiency analysis.
- Where we have known pressures (solo/ duo provision) – develop business case for the evolution of existing provision.
- Audit circumstances of children who have significant number of placement moves.
- Develop definition of fragile placements and process to respond.
- Develop a specific placement support offer (people, programmes, approach) and deploy to fragile placements.

Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
Children will be placed in stable placements	% of children with 3 or more placements % of children (aged under 16) looked after for at least 2.5 years in same placements for at least 2 years
Children will be placed in North East Lincolnshire (when this is suitable for their needs)	% of children placed 20 miles or over from home % of children placed outside of North East Lincolnshire Number of foster placements available via Foster4North East Lincolnshire
We will respond effectively to placements at risk of breakdown	Clear definition of fragile placements Reduction in short notice placement moves Reduction in children with more than one placement Clear offer of support to fragile placements
Children will be able to 'stay put' or 'stay close' to their placement on becoming a care leaver	% of young people staying put % young people staying close
Increase the number of Local Authority foster carers	Enquiry to assessment to approval No. foster carers
The Quality of care provided by our foster carers will equip our children to reach their full potential	No. of foster carers accessing training and progressing in levels of payment for skills.



Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

- Health /ICB Services
- Yorkshire and Humber Police
- Children's Commissioning Service
- Adults and Health Commissioning Service
- Children looked after social work teams
- Placements Team
- Foster Carers and Fostering Service
- Children's Residential Services
- Housing
- Independent Placement Providers



2. Emotionally, physically and mentally healthy and well

- Promote good holistic health, wellbeing and resilience
- Improve our understanding of health and wellbeing needs among professionals, carers, and young people
- Design and deliver services as child-centred, trauma-informed and rooted in the lived experience
- Support smooth transitions within and between services
- Provide timely and effective support for additional health needs

VISION

We want our children to be happy and healthy both physically and emotionally, to be safe and protected from harm and exploitation. We want them to be supported to become successful independent adults who can thrive, manage their own health needs, seek support when needed and be able to achieve their potential in life.

What is the challenge?

Many of our children and young people who are in care or care experienced, have had a difficult start in life. Life expectancy and the likelihood of developing physical and mental health problems are strongly linked to experience. Where you live (type of housing), access to services and how you are treated – especially in the early part of your life, can amplify the risks of health inequalities. Children and young people who are care experienced are more likely to develop problems with their mental health and suffer health inequalities if they have faced one or more of the following, with risk increasing as more are experienced: the child young person is in the care system or care experienced; they are new to the country and asylum seekers; they have experienced trauma; they are excluded from school; they have special education needs; they live in poverty; or they have experienced the youth justice system.

The effect of poor physical and mental health and health inequalities impacts throughout people's lives. It is strongly linked to their ability to achieve and attain within education, their employment opportunities, and their earning potential and life chances.

What we will do

We will listen and involve our children and young people; moving forward we will consult with young people on key factors impacting on them and present the priority actions to the Corporate Parenting Board. North East Lincolnshire number one priority is to support their physical and emotional health and wellbeing, and the second priority was for their voice to be heard and for them to be involved.

We will use evidence-based trauma and attachment informed services, to promote healing and support our children and young people to be able to cope with the pressures life brings. We will support children in care and care leavers to improve their health and wellbeing and will provide services of a high standard to support their needs including their physical, mental and sexual health. We will know this is being achieved when all our children have access to the health services they need.

We will continue to monitor outcomes that we know make a difference: - immunisations status, the percentage of completed SDQ's and if they are used to inform practice, GP Registrations timeliness of dental reviews and timeliness and quality of Health assessments.

What will success look like?

Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
For children and young people in care to be supported to have improving emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Be assured that the SDQ is informing care, education planning and support for our children and young people as per guidance.	<p>To have 100% SDQ completion.</p> <p>We will report on SDQ year on year scores to examine trends; and sample 20 children</p> <p>10 medium and 10 high to be assured that SDQ's whilst being completed are also being used to inform care.</p>
Practitioners understand the health needs of unaccompanied asylum seekers and how to access specialist services.	<p>Training to be provided to health professionals (e.g., GP's- targeting practices in areas that have higher UASC population.)</p> <p>This will be monitored by the CLA health and safeguarding subgroup through the service improvement plan</p>

Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
<p>Initial Health Needs Assessment to be completed as per statutory guidance (DfE 2015)</p> <p>To ensure all relevant information is available to inform Initial Health Needs Assessments and subsequent Health Plans.</p>	<p>Consent to be provided by the appropriate social worker to the health team within 3 days of child / young person coming into care to enable health assessment to be completed within 20 working days.</p> <p>Social worker to attend 100% Initial health assessments.</p>
<p>Care leavers have access to services that meet their needs. This to include mental and emotional health, sexual health, peri, and postnatal health care services.</p>	<p>All actions currently in development the following will be available and monitored as part of the services continuous action plan.</p> <p>Fast track for care leavers for sexual health to be in place.</p> <p>Health outreach workers to be available at the care leaver hub.</p> <p>C card scheme to be available at care leaver hub.</p> <p>Peri and Post-natal health provision to be available at care leaver hub.</p>

Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
<p>To have clear pathways of support available for looked after young people moving to adult services. Themes include: Mental Health, Transitional safeguarding and transitions for those young people who do not have a diagnosis and yet will continue to need support from social care (including FASD and addictions).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have knowledge of current and potential future demand for mental health services. • To be able to identify within the Looked After cohort those Young people aged 14-25 who are known to at least one mental health professional, • To identify those Young people aged 14-25 who are not already known to a mental health professional but will need to use mental health services for the first time during this age range, • To identify Young people aged 14-25 who also have a diagnosis of learning difficulties and/or disability, ADHD or Autism. • To use this information to inform service provision. 	<p>All actions currently in development the following will be available and monitored as part of the services continuous action plan.</p> <p>Young people aged 14-25 who are leaving care to have access to mental health services when needed.</p> <p>FASD diagnosis and support services to be available for children and young people in care and care leavers.</p> <p>Drug and alcohol services to be available.</p> <p>To monitor service provision annually with 2021 baseline.</p>



3. Learning, Developing, Having Fun And Achieving

- Be aspirational for children and young people's education and learning
- Provide extra support for babies, children and young people with additional needs
- Support children to remain in school by avoiding exclusions and absences
- Make sure nurseries, schools and colleges are inclusive spaces for care-experienced pupils
- Encourage young people to get involved in extra-curricular activities

VISION

North East Lincolnshire's desire to improve the life chances of the young people of the area will deliver ambition we not only want to improve Attendance and Attainment but also to ensure children and young people have the chance to Achieve and enjoy positive opportunities for development such as in sports and the arts to have fun and new experiences and to develop and pursue their own interests. This is echoed below:

'All children have the right to rest, play and take part in cultural and artistic activities'

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

'Support children and young people and care leavers to have fun and new experiences and develop their own interests'

- Children and Care Leavers promise

'Having fun and things to do in a young person's spare time encourages social interactions, self-esteem and confidence. This also gives the young person a sense of "normal" and not being restricted to certain activities 'just because' they are in the care system'.

We will develop in collaboration with young people a - Young Person - Corporate Parenting Board Strategy – through the use of Children and Young People's survey and consultation forums.

We will listen to the things that are important to them and deliver services to ensure we build on this we will make meaningful engagement opportunities to promote the rights of young people

What is the challenge?

One of the best bits about childhood is doing the things you enjoy outside of the classroom. Yet research suggests that children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds never get the chance. As a result, they lose out on the benefits:

Increased confidence which helps social interaction.

Aspiration to go onto higher or further education.

Soft skills and a sense of health and wellbeing and belonging.

In addition, extra-curricular activities are vital in developing networks which those from affluent backgrounds often have ready-made.

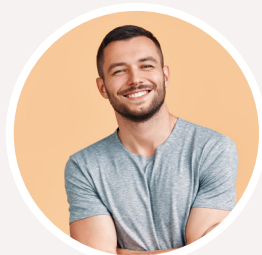
Social Mobility Commission - An Unequal Playing Field: Extra-Curricular Activities, Soft Skills and Social Mobility (2019)

In addition: 'We found that different types of participation are valued differently by carers, representatives of corporate parents, and young people in care themselves.

Following this we found that the 'everyday participation' and preferences of young people in care are often overlooked. And yet our findings suggest that where facilitation is embedded and related to the everyday interests and activities of the young person there is an increased likelihood of engagement and participation leading to the established benefits of participation for wellbeing and personal development.'

Valuing Participation: The cultural and everyday activities of young people in care (2015)

Also: 'With regard to young people's health and happiness, many reported that engaging in physical activities made them feel healthy, gain fitness, allowed them to exercise and be active. These types of activities also offered a form of stress relief and were inherently relaxing and thus had an impact on their overall wellbeing. As expected, many also reported that being able to have fun and enjoy activities was vital and directly impacted their happiness. However, missing out on activities was reported by some to impact on both their health and their happiness.'



Vision

Parents want their children to have the best start in life and to reach their full potential. North East Lincolnshire has ambition for all its children and young people and, like any good parent, has especially high aspirations for the children in our care.

Our vision is to ensure that all aspects of learning from early childhood development to preparation for adulthood and independence are a top priority for all those involved in the lives of our children and young people. We want to ensure they can learn and develop, attend, and engage, attain and achieve at every stage of their learning journey from their earliest years to school, to further and higher education and go on to benefit from the excellent opportunities for work experience, training, apprenticeships and employment in a town with a strong economy that's also vibrant, compassionate and caring.

As leaders responsible for ensuring that the local authority discharges its duty to promote the educational achievement of their looked-after children, the Chief Executive of the Council, the Lead Member for Children and Families and the Director of Children's Services will ensure that top priority is given to creating a culture of high educational aspirations for looked-after children and care leavers across the council and its partners.



What is the challenge?

Although North East Lincolnshire is not alone in the challenge of securing universally and consistently good outcomes linked to education, training and employment for our looked after young people and care leavers, North East Lincolnshire does have a positive story to tell in many aspects of its services and provision impacting on a number of measures where our young people fare better than those looked after by other local authorities and in comparison, to national data sets.

As for many local authorities, there remain some areas where we have not realised the outcomes we aspire to and the work of the corporate parenting board seeks to address these areas as we strive to be the best town for this most important group of children and young people.

Key challenges are:

- Children who attain well at the end of Key Stage 2 don't realise that potential in key stage 4
- Children with identified SEND do least well
- The link between well-being and learning: there is a strong correlation to poor outcomes for young people who have an elevated score in their strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ – a scaling tool to measure young people's well-being) and those have not had a SDQ questionnaire completed
- Supporting positive, planned transitions in both care and education as they are so intrinsically linked
- Ensuring the voice of young people is clear and evident in personal education plans so they experience a sense of agency and investment in their learning journey
- Young people transitioning to care leaver status, adulthood and independence with secure EET outcomes and pathways that reflect their potential

What will we do?

All aspects of the statutory duty to promote the education of looked after children and care leavers will align to three priority corporate parenting principles: to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for children and young people; for children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

All aspects of this work start with, and depend on, the knowledge and skills of the workforce in bringing our corporate parenting duties to life through practice. In addition, having a high quality and effective personal education plan (PEP) is the vehicle through which we deliver improved outcomes.

- Deliver a targeted training and CPD across all corporate parenting roles including members of the board, social care child protection and looked after teams, IROs, residential teams, care leaver services and personal advisers, foster carers and supervising social workers, kinship care and SGO teams, designated teachers and school governors and report to the board on the themes/content and the coverage and uptake.
- Continue to focus on the theme of 'transition': starting school in reception, moving to high school, moving into post-16, leaving statutory engagement in education, training and employment, leaving care, changing care placements and changing schools, leaving a secure children's home, returning to live with family etc.
- Build capacity and skills across schools and services by investing in intensive training and development in practice and provision around the impact of relational loss, trauma and attachment so that children's social, emotional and mental health needs can be identified and understood in the context of their care and education so that this is not a barrier to their attainment and progress.
- Develop a shared/multi-agency process for quality assuring PEPs, commensurate with an overview of the child's provision, where children have other significant vulnerabilities e.g., those at risk of criminal exploitation, those who are the highest attainers and at risk of not achieving their potential, those who have score highly on their SDQ or don't have an SDQ etc.
- Ensure that quality PEPs reflect the early identification of SEND and evidence the graduated approach, securing effective and inclusive practice in schools and settings.
- Ensure that SDQs and other measures of well-being inform quality PEPs to address the social, emotional and mental health needs of our young people.
- Ensure that quality PEPs reflect and celebrate the achievements of our young people and show how they are enjoying learning and having fun.
- Ensure that young people's voice is a quality measure in PEP completion.
- Strengthen the quality and visibility of careers education, information and guidance in PEPs at every age and stage.
- Harness the breadth of potential opportunities that could be offered by both the Council and the Child Friendly Ambassador partnership supporting work experience and employment for looked after children and care leavers

Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
The Virtual School priority development plan and annual report	Existence of action plan
Children will be making at least if not better than expected progress across the range of statutory measures	EYFS, KS2, 4 and 5 outcomes and measures of in-year progress
Children Looked After will be attending and engaging in education, training, and employment from 3 - 18	% CLA persistently absent % CLA with at least one FTEx % CLA and Care Leavers NEET in years 12 and 13 % CLA and Care Leavers participating in work experience
All CLA will have access to a full-time school offer	No. of children on part time timetable No. children awaiting a school place
All CLA on school roll within 20 days of a placement move that has been identified as being best placed to meet their needs	No. of children not on a school roll No. children in school/setting not appropriate to their needs
CLA will attend schools that are Good or Outstanding or where not the case the school has been identified as being best placed to meet their needs	% children attending good or outstanding schools
All children in care have a high-quality personal education plan and pathway plan that sets out how they will be supported to achieve their potential at every age and stage	% children aged 3-18 who have a PEP % of children who have a PEP completed within 20 working days of placement % children who have a quality pathway plan that reflects their goals and ambitions

Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
<p>CLA and CL will be supported to access higher education opportunities</p> <p>North East Lincolnshire will increase the number of care experienced students accessing higher education</p>	<p>No. of Care Leavers accessing graduate and post graduate courses from 18-25</p>
<p>Children in care and care leavers will have their SEMH needs understood and addressed in their PEPs</p>	<p>% Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires completed</p> <p>% PEPs with Strengths and Difficulties</p> <p>Questionnaires scores included</p>



Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

- Virtual School
- Schools
- SENDISS
- Social work – area teams and children Looked After Services
- Fostering, Kinship and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Services
- Residential Services
- Care Leavers Service
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service



4. Trusted relationships and a strong sense of identity and belonging

- Help children and young people understand their life story, and maintain strong connections with their birth families
- Support children and young people to build trusted relationships and support networks
- Provide wrap-around support for care-experienced young people who are new parents
- Respect children and young people's identity and support them to be proud of who they are

Vision

Our vision is to make sure that all communication I understood especially if English is not the first language and or if there are any speech and communication needs. We want to ensure that everyone working with children has an improved understanding of gender, identity and sexual orientation, so that young people feel respected, understood and empowered to be themselves.

What Is The Challenge?

We need to create a stable workforce so that there are fewer changes of social workers, personal advisors and other professionals. Where change needs to happen we need to ensure children and young people are informed
We need a workforce that understand the links young people sense of identity has on their mental and emotional wellbeing

What Will Success Look Like?

- Children will tell us they have stronger and more trustworthy relationships with the adults in their life
- Children will tell us they have healthy relationships with how they view themselves and their engagement with others
- More young people will engage in family group conferences with the aim of developing links with their community
- Children and young people are more likely to keep in touch when they leave our care so that we can support them if and when they need it
- Social workers and personal advisors are less likely to leave so young people have more meaningful relationships



5. Making Their Voice Heard And Influencing Decision-Making

- Put the voice of children and young people at the centre of all levels of decision-making
- Provide opportunities so that young people co-produce more services and strategic plans with us
- Let children and young people know the outcomes of decisions, what is possible to do, what is not, and why

Vision

Children, young people, and care leavers are supported to express their views, wishes and feelings and that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account when decisions are made that affect their lives. We will work in partnership with children, young people, and care leavers to ensure they have a voice and influence over the design, delivery and review of the services that are provided to them.

What is the challenge?

- To support staff to improve their skills and confidence in finding ways to help children, young people and care leavers express their views, wishes and feelings, and have an influence in decisions which affect their lives.
- To develop a range of approaches that enable children, young people, and care leavers to work in partnership with senior leaders and services to influence priorities, policy and practice.

What We Will Do

Through this priority we will ensure we provide advice, guidance and training for social care staff and develop a youth voice model that enables children, young people and care leavers to share their ideas, issues and experiences with decision makers and evidence how their views have influenced service improvement. Our approach will include:

- Work in partnership with managers and staff on voice and influence projects and provide advice and guidance to social care staff and external partners to enable the voice and influence of children, young people and care leavers to influence service improvement.

- Deliver Voice of the Child briefings for social care students and staff.
- Facilitate new Total Respect Training which will be delivered by care experienced young people for elected members, corporate parenting board and social care staff.
- Support members of the Care Leavers Council to deliver training for foster carers as part of the skills for foster programme.
- Train and support youth representatives to be members of the Corporate Parenting Board and facilitate an annual Voice of the young person engagement event
- Regular meetings between the Head of Children Looked After and the care experienced advocacy services.
- Supporting care experienced young people to participate in the recruitment and selection of senior social care staff and the commissioning panels of social care services.
- Develop a youth voice model with identified voice and influence leads in teams working directly with children and young people who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children or care leavers who are former UASC, children and young people and care leavers with SEND, care experienced parents, children, young people and care leavers who live out of area.
- Develop online surveys to be able to capture the direct feedback, views and experiences of looked after children and care leavers.
- Produce six monthly voice of the child in social care voice and influence reports which highlight key issues raised by young people and care leavers and demonstrate good practice from across the service. The reports will be shared with the corporate parenting board and include updates on promise issues raised and complaints made by children, young people and care leavers.



Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
<p>Staff feel confident in supporting children, young people, and care leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings and are aware of what qualities and behaviours young people feel make a good social worker.</p>	<p>% of staff who feedback that they feel more confident in supporting CYP and care leavers to express their views wishes and feelings.</p> <p>(evaluation completed at end of training by participants collected annually)</p>
<p>Children and young people have been given promise documentation by their social worker and the promise has been explained.</p>	<p>% children and young people who report that their current social worker has given them promise information and explained it to them.</p> <p>(IRO data collected quarterly)</p>
<p>Children, young people and care leavers thoughts, wishes and feelings are central to their plans developed by services</p>	<p>% children and young people's plans that evidence that the child has been meaningfully involved in their development and review</p> <p>(IRO data collected quarterly)</p>
<p>Priorities raised by young people and care leavers are included within corporate parenting operational group lead plans and leads work in partnership care experienced advocacy services</p>	<p>Examples of how corporate parenting operational group leads are listening to the views and priorities of CYP and working in are evidenced in the six monthly voice and influence reports and from updates presented at Corporate Parenting Board by lead staff at themed meetings.</p>

Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
	presented at Corporate Parenting Board by lead staff at themed meetings.

Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

Care Leavers Council

North East Lincolnshire Childrens Rights

IRO Service

Care Leavers Service

Looked After Childrens Teams

Virtual School

Residential service

6. Safe and protected at home, online and in the community

- Work together to understand risks, vulnerabilities and needs in the home, in communities and online
- Respond together to harm, abuse and exploitation early, effectively and in child-centred and trauma-informed ways
- Work holistically with young people to avoid criminal behaviour and activity

Vision

Our vision is to ensure that the safeguarding of looked after children and young people is prominent in the work of North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership we will seek to provide high quality safeguarding training to all staff and carers working with children and young people looked after. And ensure that safeguarding is a central consideration in all care plans, placement plans and pathway plans. We will seek to do all we can to provide children and young people with safe placements in safe environments. We will work collaboratively and persistently to reduce the extent of children and young people going missing from their placements and to reduce the risks faced by young people of exploitation and exposure to criminal behaviour

What Is The Challenge

The challenge is articulating and sharing the understanding of risk across our systems, particularly when we have not engaged preventatively and effectively with families to support children in the community.

A lack of confidence and trust in stakeholder relationships have prevented effective and meaningful collaborative plans to keep children and young people safe and share risk across our areas.

What Will Success Look Like

All children young people and families will have access to support advice and guidance that enables them to manage risk appropriately within communities and families. That supports them to have access to highly trained staff who can assist children and families to feel safe and have stability in their lives. We will ensure that were children have to enter in to our care because of neglect and abuse We will do everything we can to keep children safe, help them recover from trauma they may have experienced and protect them from further harm.



7. Developing Independence

- Prepare early for adulthood and independence
- Offer financial, practical and emotional support for young people who need it in early adulthood
- Support young people to take up further education, employment and training opportunities

Vision

Young people will be successfully supported from care to independence with a high standard of care from a range of partners. Corporate parenting responsibilities will be understood by all North East Lincolnshire Council partners and the Care Leaver Offer will clearly lay out what support or service Care Leavers are entitled to.

- All young people leaving care should be better prepared and supported to live independently.
- Improved access to education, employment, and training.
- Care leavers should experience stability in their lives and feel safe and secure.
- Improved access to health support.
- Care leavers should achieve financial stability.

What is the challenge?

Nationally, outcomes for care leavers remain much worse than for their counterparts in the general population, as an example; in 2015 only 14% of care leavers achieved A*-C grades in their GCSEs compared with 55% of the population and only 6% of care leavers were in university compared with 38% of the population. 25% of homeless people are care experienced and 46% of care leavers are estimated to have mental health support needs. Care Leavers are 4 times more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system and 25% of prisoners are care experienced.

[Find out more in the Looked-after Children - The Silent Crisis publication.](#)

In February 2018, [PA support for Care Leavers was extended from 21 to 25.](#)

What we will do:

- Develop a Hub of services with partners to deliver a 'one stop shop' service for our care leavers.
- Ensure the Hub provides a range of socialisation and support opportunities as well as information, advice, and guidance.
- Ensure sufficient accommodation is available that meets the needs of young people through our partnerships with OWLs, North East Lincolnshire Homes and through the development of a guarantor scheme.
- Develop a Care Leavers Housing policy with partners from North East Lincolnshire Homes.
- Promote Staying Put for Children Looked After who are in foster care and reaching 18 and develop a Staying Close policy with the North East Lincolnshire residential service.
- Create a multi-agency support service for Care Leavers who are planning a family or who already have children.
- Increase participation and engagement with Care Leavers to develop our partnerships.
- Develop our social media and website to communicate in a way that care leavers want and reach more people



Outcome Statement	Outcome Measure
Care leavers are in touch and receiving services	100% of care leavers in touch with their PA every 8 weeks
Care leavers are supported to develop meaningful plans to help them prepare for the future	100% care leavers with and up to date pathway plan
Care leavers understand their Pathway Plans and find them useful	Feedback from young people at leaving care review and through Interactive File Audits
Have somewhere safe to live after they leave care	100% Care leavers in suitable accommodation
Care leavers report they feel supported to achieve their personal goals	Pathway Plan reviews evidence good progress and pride at achieving personal goals
Fewer children of Care Leavers have statutory social work involvement, fewer pre-birth assessments are undertaken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosaic reports to evidence a 'turn in the curve'. • Care leavers voice group feedback experiences of positive support.
More Care Leavers are engaged in education or employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosaic reports evidence a turn in the curve • Pathway plans evidence progress and outcomes • ESIF reports will evidence positive outcomes

Key Partners for this strategic priority are:

- Children looked after and area social work teams
- Residential Services
- Fostering
- Employment and Skills Service
- Public Health / ICB
- Housing
- Third sector partners
- Corporate Business Partners



Governance Arrangements

The Corporate Parenting Board provides the strategic partnership to oversee and drive our arrangements for ensuring that children looked after by North East Lincolnshire local authority, and those adults previously looked after, achieve the best possible outcomes. The board is made up of elected members, key service leaders and service providers including council officers and representatives from wider public services.

The Corporate Parenting Board provides a leadership role by championing the specific needs of children and young people who are, or have been, looked after by the local authority. It does this through working with all elected members, officers within the Council, with colleagues from partner agencies and with children and young people. This is done by overseeing the work undertaken in specific services to ensure a corporate approach is being taken from a range of Council departments and agencies and ensure that the services support children that are or have been looked after to have the full benefit of the widest possible resources to support successful outcomes.

Democratic Involvement and Accountability

The Corporate Parenting Board is able to refer matters for, and provide information to, the Children's Services Scrutiny Board. Need to clarify local governance arrangement

Participation of Children and Young People

The voice of children and young people will be a consistent and influential feature of the Corporate Parenting Board. Participation will be steered through advocacy services for care experienced young people. The Corporate Parenting Board youth representatives will receive training and join the board as board members for need to determine. The Head of Service will meet at least three times a year with the care experienced advocacy services to obtain the voice of the young person

Operational Delivery

In delivering the ambitions for our children looked after and care leavers set out within the strategy, a representative multi-agency delivery partnership, the 'Corporate Parenting Operational Group' is in place reporting directly to the Corporate Parenting board.

Each of the board's Seven priorities are led by senior officers from the relevant service area to oversee and drive improvements in respect of each individual lead area. These priority themes are then reported back to the Corporate Parenting Board in turn in a yearly cycle. The illustration in Figure 1 below sets out the process of reporting.

Corporate parenting training and awareness

To support effective governance and oversight from Corporate Parenting Board a programme of training in respect of responsibilities and understanding of children looked after and care leaver needs has been co-designed with our Voice and Influence team. The Head of Service for Children Looked After, Corporate Parenting and Youth Services is responsible to provide a programme of training across the partnership to board members.

Children's Social Work Services will support Elected Members in understanding their role as Corporate Parent through providing training sessions as a key part of the induction for all Councillors.



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Effective Corporate Parents:

- Have a clear understanding and awareness of the issues for children looked after and care leavers in the authority area including those placed out of area
- Are able to ask questions and constructively challenge outcomes for children looked after and care leavers
- Have effective communication with children looked after and care leavers and their services
- Ensure that children and young people have a say in how decisions are made about the services that affect them and that they are able to influence those decisions positively
- Ensure that they are familiar with our 'Promise' and challenge whether the Council, as corporate parent, is keeping the promise
- Ask how all elements of council business and change have an impact for children looked after
- Make connections and links between council plans, strategies and decision-making impacting on children looked after and care leavers
- Consistently ask in decision making and meetings impacting on children looked after 'Would this be good enough for my own child?'

Whilst all elected members have corporate parenting responsibility, the tasks that need to be undertaken will differ according to the role(s) that individual members have taken on. The different levels of responsibility can be summarised as follows:

Universal Responsibility (Level 1)

All councillors must ask themselves:

- Do I understand why children need to be looked after, and the legal and policy framework that governs this?
- Am I aware of the governance arrangements for corporate parenting within my council?
- Do I know about the profile of the children looked after by the council – and the outcomes they are achieving compared with other local children?
- Can I be sure that we are providing the best care possible for our looked after children and care-leavers? Would it be good enough for my child?
- Am I aware of our local Promise to children looked after and how I can contribute towards fulfilling it?
- Does the council have a corporate parenting strategy and, if so, what are the key points?
- Am I taking responsibility for promoting the welfare of children looked after and care-leavers in all my work for the council – and in my other capacities?
- Are there any celebrations or other events that I can attend in order to demonstrate directly to children and young people in care that I want them to do well?
- Do I know what the most important issues are for our children looked after and care-leavers?

Targeted Responsibility (Level 2)

For councillors who undertake visits to children's homes, are part of the Children's Services Scrutiny arrangements and/or are members of the Corporate Parenting Board, their role will be more extensive. In addition to the above, they will need to ask themselves:

- Are the right structures and systems in place in order for my council to be an effective corporate parent, and are all the right partners involved?
- Am I up to date on current (and proposed) government expectations regarding the service to children looked after and care leavers?
- Do I have access to both qualitative and quantitative information on the service, and enough knowledge to understand and evaluate this information?
- Do I know how well my council is doing in comparison with other councils, and our own past performance?

- Are there sound mechanisms within my council for hearing and responding to the views of looked after children, care leavers and their parents/carers?
- Do I have a good picture of which needs we are meeting well and which we are failing to meet?
- Is there an action plan across the council and involving partner agencies to improve the service and to ensure it responds to changing needs?
- Do I know what our children looked after and care leavers think about the service we are providing?

Specialist Responsibility (Level 3)

Finally, there will be key roles where corporate parenting is at the heart of an individual's role. The Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families, Chair of Children's Scrutiny Board and the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board will need to work closely with the Director of Children Services and Head of Service for Children Looked After, Corporate Parenting and Youth Services to ask themselves, in addition to the above:

- Are we providing both political and operational leadership in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children looked after and care leavers?
- Are effective governance arrangements in place to implement any decisions regarding children looked after and care leavers across the authority and partner agencies?
- Have we undertaken an in-depth analysis of the needs of the council's care population and how far services are meeting those needs so as to inform future action?
- Is there a review process to ensure adaptation to changing needs?
- Have we made sure that the strategic plans of the children's services authority and joint plans with partner agencies meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers?
- Are we up to date with emerging research findings and new initiatives that should inform the direction of services?
- Do we have strong links with the Children in Care Council and does that body have all the support it needs to be effective?

Link Members To Our Children's Homes

Within North East Lincolnshire our children social work services provide a number of children's residential homes across the town which provide a mixture of specialist care in group living settings. All of our homes are registered with Ofsted as the regulatory body for providing children's residential care services and each have arrangements for independent scrutiny and oversight as required by regulations.

Our Corporate Parenting Board also has a function to oversee and support and champion our children's residential homes and of course the young people supported by them.

Our Board arrangements include for individual Elected Members, who are also Corporate Parenting Board members and children's champions, to be linked to our children's homes to provide support for our homes within their communities and provide a direct connection between our homes and corporate parents.

The role of link Elected Member includes maintaining contact through the registered manager of the home with the home and staff and children within it along with providing support within the community as necessary. The Head of Service for Children Looked After, also the Responsible Individual for the children's homes, will provide a single point of contact for all Elected Members who are corporate parenting link members to our homes and facilitate and support visits and ensure that information on inspections or critical incidents are shared appropriately.

Board members supporting Strategic Priority Themes

Within our Corporate Parenting Strategy, we have set out six priority themes that will provide a focus for services and partners to ensure that there is continuous effort to improve key outcomes for our children looked after and care leavers. Each priority theme will be led by a council officer or equivalent manager within a relevant partner and work to deliver the outcomes set out in our strategy. Our corporate parenting board arrangements include for the regular review, challenge, and support for these priorities, and this will also be supported through individual 'priority champion' board members.

The Corporate Parenting Board members 'priority champion' role will involve individual elected members from the Corporate Parenting Board working with the operational lead for their identified priority theme. The 'priority champion' will provide support and challenge on progress and support the operational lead in promoting the priority within relevant forums including committees, meetings, decision making forums and wider council and community events as relevant. The elected member priority champion will receive updates from the operational lead as agreed and prior to reports being presented to the corporate parenting board.

Officers

Officers have a crucial role to play in ensuring that services are developed and delivered to a high standard and that they inform Elected Members of the progress of the plan and any challenges that are being faced. They need to know about the children who are in our care and strive at all times to deliver the highest quality service. They are responsible for advising the panel and ensuring that any agreed actions are carried out as well as:

- Reporting to the Corporate Parenting Board on performance relating to children in care and care leavers.
- Reporting on information relating to fostering, adoption and small group home provision.
- Ensuring that Corporate Parenting Board has all relevant information to ensure that they can provide robust monitoring of services provided to children in care and make decisions based on the most up to date information.

The Head of Services for Children Looked After, Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice Services meets with both the Have a Voice Council and Care Leavers Council three times a year and will liaise with elected member champions to support reporting in each theme to the board.







Corporate Parenting Strategy



North East Lincolnshire

Corporate Parenting Strategy

2023- 2025