

North East Lincolnshire

Children in Our Care and Care Leavers

EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGY

2025/29

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Introduction

Welcome to our North East Lincolnshire Children in Our Care and Care Leavers Employability Strategy 2025/29.

In the context of our vision 'Our Children Our Future', we want to work 'stronger together' so that North East Lincolnshire is a place where our children can grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them. We are ambitious for children's futures with a focus on learning and aspiration so they can be the best they can be.

In North East Lincolnshire, relationships unite us and everyone has a role as a corporate and community parent, where we put children in our care and care leavers first, centre and last within the work we do.

We know that children in our care and care leavers often face additional barriers and challenges throughout their lives for example low educational attainment and qualifications, limited work experience and professional networks, lack of confidence and self esteem, housing instability and financial insecurity and limited access to career guidance and mentorship.

We also know that children in our care and care leavers have aspirations that can be developed and nurtured and that care experienced people can be the best employees if they are given a chance and support. As corporate and community parents, we are committed to ensuring they receive the love, care and support to help them flourish and thrive. This is further supported through our devolution deal, in which there are key elements in relation to skills, including a specific focus on supporting care leavers to access more opportunities to employment.

We want the children in our care and care leavers to achieve the best educational, training and economic outcomes they can, just like any other parent would wish for their child, and like any good parent, we want our young people to go on to higher education or into employment or training if that is what they want to do. We also want them to get the right information, support, and help that they need to have the same opportunities as others, and to prepare them for adulthood.

This strategy provides clarity regarding our local approach in supporting the employability of the children in our care and care leavers. By addressing the priority areas of focus, and supported through our Virtual School, our Earning and Learning team at Young People's Support Services and our Leaving Care Team, among others, we can create a learning environment and sustainable employment pathways that promote the best possible long term outcomes.

Feedback from children and young people

As part of the development of this strategy, we sought the views of children in our care and care leavers. Some examples of feedback were that:

What would have helped when I started working?

‘I was very supported when I started with the council and I felt very happy with everything that happened’

What support do you think needs to be put in place ?

‘I think there could be more support when it comes to the learning side of the apprenticeship.

I felt overwhelmed when it came down to doing all the English and maths as I thought it was all chunked at me, but now me and Wendy have sorted out my calendar and figured out what I can do and where I feel a lot better’

‘When we move into independence, we need to do it when we’re ready, and when we move, we need more support....’

What do you think the offer needs to include the most effective ?

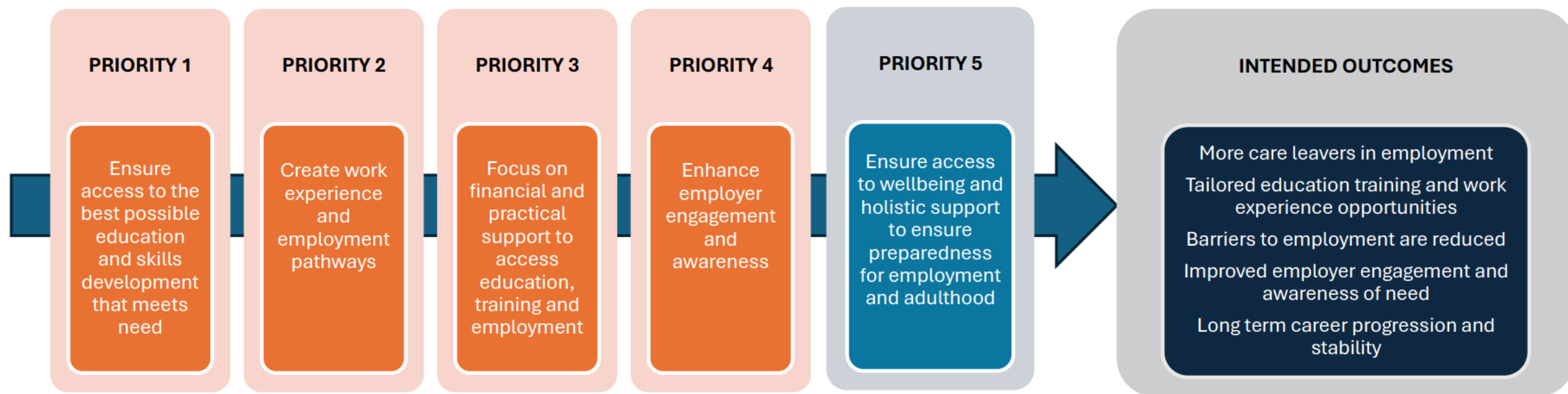
I’m not really sure because I think that the offer is very effective as it is.....

When asked about what they wanted to do as a job, and if they knew how to get there, young people said:

- that an apprenticeship was an option (‘so I can help people like me’)
- they wanted to achieve in their lives and be aspirational (‘to see the light in life’)
- they wanted people to help them make up their mind

Vision, strategic objectives and priority areas of focus

- In the context of our vision 'Our Children Our Future', we will work collaboratively to improve the lived experiences and outcomes for children in our care and care leavers.
- This strategy, which has taken account of the outcomes of engagement activity including with our children and young people, is set in the context of our Corporate and Community Parenting Strategy 2025/29 (and other strategic planning frameworks including but not exclusively the Council Plan) and specifically the following strategic objectives:
- **LEARNING AND ASPIRATIONS:** to support access to, and engagement in, positive experiences of education, employment and training so they reach their potential
- **PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE:** to ensure preparedness for becoming an independent adult
- Under the auspices of this strategy, we have identified specific priority areas of focus as follows:



The role of this strategy in delivering our promise and offer

We have a plan for how North East Lincolnshire can be the best possible corporate and community 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 strategic plan is about one thing: making the lives and prospects of the children in our care, care leavers and those with care experience 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.

Through our vision and this strategy, we will contribute to the delivery of this Promise we have made to our children and young people as their corporate and community parents, with a specific focus on education training and employment, and support for you.



Through our local offer for care experienced young people, we recognise that most young people need help and support to make decisions about what to do after they leave school. We want our young people to do something they enjoy and that can help them be as successful as possible in the future. We are also committed to helping and supporting as required.

Through the offer, we have articulated how we will do this via further education, employment, apprenticeships and training. We also recognise the support required to access higher education and the importance of being able to get around to access education, employment and training opportunities.

Priority 1: What will we do and how will we know

To support the delivery of our priority areas of focus, we have articulated the outcomes that we want to achieve, as well as what we will do to achieve them and how we will know:

Priority 1

- **Ensure access to the best possible education and skills development that meets need**

Our corporate parenting promise says that.....

- We will understand your needs and find the best options for your education
- We will connect you to people and opportunities and help you build skills and get the job you want
- We will encourage and support care leavers to work in our organisation

What will we do

- Develop the offer of careers information advice and guidance to children in our care at the earliest point i.e. in education settings and via bespoke events / meetings
- Increase children in our care and care leavers understanding of opportunities
- Provide access to vocational training and higher education
- Develop / commission a training programme to upskill children in our care and care leavers employability skills and skills based learning

How will we know

- Educational outcomes for children in our care
- Numbers of children in our care / care leavers accessions commissioned training programme and impact
- Children in our care and care leavers in education, employment and training
- Feedback from children and young people

Priority 2: What will we do and how will we know

To support the delivery of our priority areas of focus, we have articulated the outcomes that we want to achieve, as well as what we will do to achieve them and how we will know:

Priority 2

- **Create work experience and employment pathways**

Our corporate parenting promise says that.....

- We will understand your needs and use this to help develop our services

What will we do

- Develop the apprenticeship / supported internship / work experience offer across agencies, organisations and businesses
- Develop specific employer led programmes to create opportunities for children in our care and care leavers i.e. NELC Family Enterprise Scheme, and ensure they are appropriately resourced (to include mentoring support, career development, ringfenced opportunities)
- Work with businesses, and also seek out funding opportunities, to develop bespoke support for children in our care and care leavers who are not in education, employment or training

How will we know

- Children in our care and care leavers in apprenticeships / internships
- Take up, impact and outcomes of young people engaged in NELC Family Enterprise Scheme (and other programmes)
- Feedback from children and young people
- Feedback from employers

Priority 3: What will we do and how will we know

To support the delivery of our priority areas of focus, we have articulated the outcomes that we want to achieve, as well as what we will do to achieve them and how we will know:

Priority 3

- **Focus on financial and practical support to access education, training and employment**

Our corporate parenting promise says that.....

- We will understand your needs and use this to help develop our services

What will we do

- Ensure Pupil Premium is appropriately utilised to support children in our care to achieve their aspirations and potential
- Seek to better understand the barriers to education employment and training and enhance support and resources
- Ensure clarity of the offer and access to bursaries, financial support and work related expenses
- Offer support with housing stability and budgeting to create a secure base for employment

How will we know

- Children in our care and care leavers in education, employment and training
- Feedback from children and young people

Priority 4: What will we do and how will we know

To support the delivery of our priority areas of focus, we have articulated the outcomes that we want to achieve, as well as what we will do to achieve them and how we will know:

Priority 4

• Enhance employer engagement and awareness

Our corporate parenting promise says that.....

- We will understand your needs and use this to help develop our services

What will we do

- Work with businesses to raise awareness of the barriers and challenges faced by care leavers and those with care experience
- Develop and disseminate employer toolkits to support care leavers and those with care experience in the workforce i.e. through co-production of 'how to' guides with young people
- Upskill the workforce / foster carers to be able to best support children and young people's aspirations and raise awareness of the employability offer so they can effectively signpost and support
- Promote, encourage and support social responsibility initiatives that include recruiting care leavers
- Agencies / organisations to explore embedding those with care experience as a protected characteristics and where applicable, ensure that for those with care experience that protected characteristics are utilised as a supportive mechanism to them accessing employment opportunities

How will we know

- Care leavers in education, employment and training
- Recruitment of those with care experience
- Feedback from children and young people
- Feedback from the workforce / foster carers
- Feedback from employers

Priority 5: What will we do and how will we know

To support the delivery of our priority areas of focus, we have articulated the outcomes that we want to achieve, as well as what we will do to achieve them and how we will know:

Priority 5

- **Ensure access to wellbeing and holistic support to ensure preparedness for employment and adulthood**

Our corporate parenting promise says that.....

- We will help you build the skills you need as an adult

What will we do

- Develop a programme of life skills training for children in our care and care leavers to prepare and support independence and prepare for adult life, including (but not exclusively) enabling employability
- Provide mental health and resilience building programmes
- Develop access to peer support and networking opportunities
- Create opportunities for mentoring and one to one career coaching and mentoring

How will we know

- Take up of life skills training and the impact of this
- Pathway plans reflect preparation for adulthood
- Feedback from young people

Enablers: voice and engagement

Children in our care and care leavers are first, centre and last within the work we do. In the context of our North East Lincolnshire Practice Approach, and our focus on relationships, we will listen to and take account of children and young people's views and lived experiences. Through working together with them as partners and experts in their own lives, we will co-produce local services and support which meet their needs, leading to better outcomes.

We want to develop and build relationships with our children and young people to best understand their views and experiences, including (but not exclusively) relating to their learning and aspirations and preparation for adulthood. This will help to ensure that more children and young people have the opportunity to shape and influence partnership action relating to employability, build relationships, develop new skills and engage in new activities and experiences.

This strategy has taken into account the outcomes of engagement activity with children in our care and care leavers. We are committed to ensuring ongoing voice and engagement at an individual, service and strategic level.

At an individual level, we must

- ensure there are opportunities to gain the views and feedback of individual children in our care and care leavers
- ensure that children in our care and care leavers are able to have a say on issues that directly impact on their lives, experiences or outcomes
- ensure that individual children in our care and care leavers have access to self directed information and support

At a service level, we must:

- ensure there are voice and engagement groups/partnerships/mechanisms to listen to and take account of experiences of services and provision (including Our Voice Listen Up)
- ensure the collective views of children and young people are taken into account to shape and influence service developments
- include children and young people are involved in recruitment and commissioning processes (where applicable)

At a strategic level, we must:

- ensure the views and lived experiences of children in our care and care leavers are included in needs assessments, priority setting and strategic planning frameworks
- include children in our care, care leavers and the people that care for them in joint commissioning, assurance / scrutiny, partnerships and governance processes, and develop their opportunities for challenge, power and influence
- show evidence of voice and engagement, and its impact and outcomes across the system

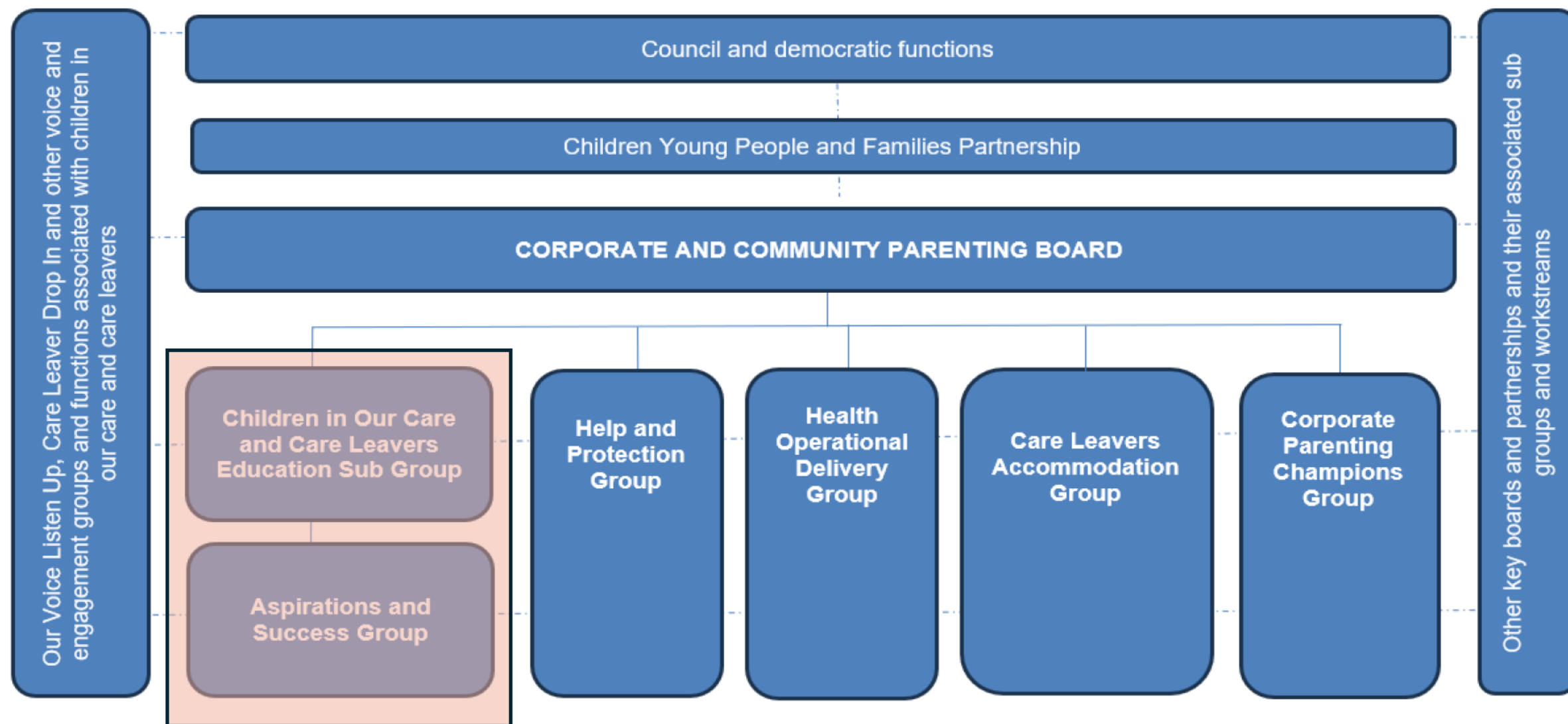
To enable engagement, we must:

- ensure clear, open, transparent communications, representative voice and engagement opportunities and fair access
- provide feedback on the outcomes of voice and engagement activity and share across the partnership as appropriate to ensure we make the best use of information available to us to shape and influence service design and commissioning, and to encourage and support ongoing relationships and trust
- challenge and support each other to work within these engagement principles

Monitoring and evaluation

- We have a strong commitment to listening, learning, reviewing and adapting, in a context of high support and high challenge. There are clear partnership governance and reporting arrangements in place to ensure oversight and assurance of progress in the delivery of this strategy
- The delivery of this strategy is overseen via the Aspirations and Success Group which reports to the Children in Our Care and Care Leavers Education Sub Group, which is ultimately accountable to the Corporate and Community Parenting Board
- The Aspirations and Success Sub Group is chaired by the Deputy Service Director for Children in Our Care and Care Leavers / Deputy Service Director Skills, Employability and Education Transport while the Education Sub Group is chaired by the Head of the Virtual School
- The Virtual School will also have a role in monitoring the education, employment and training outcomes for children in our care and care leavers.
- As well as routine reporting on a quarterly basis, including performance data, there is a commitment to contributing to an annual self-assessment, culminating in an annual report. This will take account of, and acknowledge, progress against this strategy and its contribution to the strategic objectives, as well as considering further areas for development
- There will also be an interface with the wider skills and employability partnership and governance arrangements with the Aspirations and Success Group reporting periodically to the Skills Board, chaired by Phillips66

Partnership and governance arrangements



Points of reference and associated documents

- Corporate Parenting Promise
- Corporate and Community Parenting Strategy
- Care Leaver Offer
- Skills Strategy and Skills Action Plan
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy
- Health and Care Partnership Employability Programme
- Economic Strategy
- Education and Inclusion Strategy