

Public Document Pack



**Service Director – Legal, Governance and
Commissioning**

Julie Muscroft

The Democracy Service
Civic Centre 3
High Street
Huddersfield
HD1 2TG

Tel: 01484 221000

Please ask for: Helen Kilroy

Email: helen.kilroy@kirklees.gov.uk

Friday 14 September 2018

Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

Corporate Parenting Board

The **Corporate Parenting Board** will meet in the **Meeting Room 1 - Town Hall, Huddersfield** at **10.30 am** on **Monday 24 September 2018**.

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Muscroft".

Julie Muscroft

Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning

Kirklees Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair/Clerk of their intentions prior to the meeting.

The Corporate Parenting Board members are:-

Member

Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)

Councillor Erin Hill (Currently on Maternity Leave) Family Support & Child Protection

Councillor Karen Allison

Councillor Fazila Loonat

Councillor John Lawson

Councillor Donna Bellamy

Gill Addy

Designated Nurse for Looked after Children/Care Leavers

Tom Brailsford

Head of Joint Commissioning

Colleen Callaghan

Kirklees Fostering Network

Steve Comb

Head of Corporate Parenting

Keith Fielding

Kirklees Fostering Network

Martin Green

Head of Localities Offer (Children and Families)

Barry Lockwood

Kirklees Fostering Network

Sanna Mahmood

Looked after Children and Leaving Care

Elaine McShane

Service Director, Family Support and Child Protection

Ophelia Rix

Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Jo-Anne Sanders

Service Director for Learning and Early Support

Melanie Tiernan

Service Manager, Family Support and Child Protection

Janet Tolley

Virtual School Headteacher

Agenda

Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

Pages

1: Introductions and Apologies

The Chair will welcome everyone to the meeting and announce any apologies received.

2: Minutes of previous meeting

1 - 10

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 9th July 2018.

3: Interests

11 - 12

The Board Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have disclosable pecuniary interests, which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items, or any other interest.

4: Admission of the Public

Most debates take place in public. This only changes when there is a need to consider certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual. You will be told at this point whether there are any items on the Agenda which are to be discussed in private.

5: Deputations/Petitions

The Board will receive any petitions and hear any deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also hand in a petition at the meeting but that petition should relate to something on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10 (2), Members of the Public should provide at least 24 hours' notice of presenting a deputation.

6: Public Question Time

The Board will hear any questions from the general public.

7: Review of Membership and Terms of Reference of Corporate Parenting Board

13 - 18

The Board will consider the revised Terms of Reference and agree the change to the Membership of the Board.
(10.30am)

Contact: Helen Kilroy, Principal Governance

8: Ofsted and Improvement Board update

19 - 24

The Board will consider a verbal update on key issues from Ofsted and the Improvement Board.
(10.35am)

Contact: Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting

9: Performance Monitoring update

The Board will consider a verbal update giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service.
(10.50am)

Contact: Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher

10: Overview of number of children in Care

25 - 28

The Board will consider a report giving an overview of the number of children in care, including the age profile.
(11.00am)

Contact: Julie Bragg, Service Manager (Looked after Children and leaving care)

11: Draft Refreshed foster carer handbook

29 - 114

The Board will consider a draft refreshed foster carer handbook.
(11.10am)

Contact: Andy Quinlan, Acting Service Manager (Fostering)

12: Children's Rights - Annual Report 115 - 138

The Board will consider an Annual Report on Children's Rights.
(11.20am)

Contact: Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager (Family Support and Child Protection)
Sara Miles, Service Manager (Family Support and Child Protection)

13: Independent visitors scheme (quarterly report) 139 - 152

The Board will consider a quarterly report on the Independent visitor scheme.
(11.35am)

Contact: Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager (Family Support and Child Protection)
Sara Miles, Service Manager (Family Support and Child Protection)

14: Annual Report on Youth Offending Team and their work with children in care 153 - 158

The Board will consider an Annual Report on Youth Offending Team and their work with children in care.
(11.50am)

Contact: Richard Smith, Service Manager (Youth Offending Team)

15: Care Leavers Local Offer Action Plan 159 - 164

The Board will consider the Care Leavers Local Offer Action Plan.
(12.05pm)

Contact: Julie Bragg, Service Manager (Looked after Children and leaving care)

16: Updates from Board Members on interaction with Services

The Board will consider verbal updates from Board Members on interaction with Services.
(12.15pm)

Contact: Helen Kilroy, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

17: Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan

The Panel will consider the agenda plan for the Corporate Parenting Board for the 2018/19 municipal year.

Contact: Helen Kilroy, Principal Governance & Democratic Engagement Officer

18: Dates of Future Meetings

To note future meeting dates of the Board during the 2018/19 municipal year:

- Monday 19th November 2018, 10.30 am
 - Monday 21st January 2019, 10.30 am
 - Monday 11th March 2019, 10.30 am
 - Monday 15th April 2019, 10.30 am
-

Contact officer: Helen Kilroy – Tel. 01484 221000

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Monday 9th July 2018

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillors Lawson, Allison
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director, Learning and Early Support
Steve Comb, Interim Head of Corporate Parenting
Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager
Martin Green, Head of Localities Offer (Children and Families)
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher
Sanna Mahmood, Looked after Children and Leaving Care
Gill Addy Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

In attendance: Mandy Prout, One Adoption (West Yorkshire)
Julie Bragg, Service Manager (Children and Families)

Apologies: Cllrs Hill, Bellamy and Loonat
E Mc Shane, M Tiernan, O Rix, T Brailsford

Observers: Emma Whittell, One Adoption West Yorkshire
Tony Earnshaw, BBC

1 Introductions and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Hill, Bellamy and Loonat, Elaine Mc Shane, Melanie Tiernan, Ophelix Rix and Tom Brailsford.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2018.

RESOLVED –

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2018 be approved as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the public

All items were considered in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

7 One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report

The Board considered an Annual Report from Mandy Prout of One Adoption West Yorkshire, outlining the management and outcomes of the adoption service. The report provided an overview of the adoption service activity from April 2017 to March 2018.

The Board was informed that One Adoption was the first Adoption Agency nationally and that they had developed strong partnerships with the Kirklees Children's Services Leadership Team.

Mandy Prout advised that Children were waiting less time to be placed with adoptive families, and an Adopter Led Service had been set up.

In response to a question from the Board relating to the reason for the reduction in Adopters, Mandy Prout advised that this was the case across the country and that work had been ongoing to try and find the answer. Mandy Prout further explained that a number of reasons could include lack of financial confidence due to Brexit and people often came into parenting later in life and if they could not have children, they often moved on. The Board was informed that West Yorkshire was in a good position to be able to progress potential adopters through the door as quickly as possible.

The Board was informed that One Adoption were working closely with the Fellowship Adoption Agencies to try and secure additional funding.

Mandy Prout explained that One Adoption was continuing to increase its work with partners and was now linking more with the Virtual Head Teachers.

The Board was informed that Emma Whittell from One Adoption had a press background and experience of promoting services in the press and was looking to do more promotion and marketing on Adoption.

Mandy Prout advised that the Adoption Leadership Board was engaged with One Adoption, who had spent time with the Chair recently to look at the family funding journey.

In response to a question from the Board regarding accommodation and co-locating staff together from Kirklees and One Adoption, Mandy Prout advised that the offices within Kirklees were decreasing from 5 to 3 but that the future ambition was to have all staff in one central base.

Resolved –

1. The Board thanked Mandy Prout for attending the meeting and the One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report was noted.

7. Performance Monitoring Update

The Board considered a verbal update on key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service.

Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting, and Janet Tolley, Virtual Head Teacher, highlighted the following key issues:-

- Children currently in care – 668 (this figure was shared once a week with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children);
- Children subject to a care order and placed at home – progress was not as fast as it should be, in June 2017 the number was 59 and had decreased to 47 in May 2018;
- Children entering care – Steve Comb advised that the Legal Gateway Permanence Panel continued to support the consistency regarding decision making and planning around placement moves for children and young people;
- Looked after children reviews within statutory timescale – up to 91% in May 2018;
- Child participation in reviews – this had increased from 88.6% in June 2017 to 97.7% in May 2018 which showed positive results and that this was moving in the right direction;
- Independent Return and missing – the number of children that actively participated within their reviews continued to increase;
- Local Authority in touch with Care Leavers – In April and May 2018 the rate was 98% which was an increase from 97.7% in March 2018; Steve Comb advised that some young people did not want to be labelled as 'having been in care' but that they would let the Local Authority know where they were so the Council could keep in touch;
- A new Early Help Strategy was in place to help children to stay with their families;
- Educational attainment of children in care - a lot of work still to do to improve in this area and the impact of placement and relocation of children and young people going into care was important and any decisions needed a central discussion to ensure that the wellbeing of the young person was paramount.

RESOLVED –

1. That the verbal updates on Performance within Children's Services be noted.

8 Ofsted and Improvement Board Update

The Board considered a verbal update on Ofsted and the Improvement Board by Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting.

Steve Comb advised that the Ofsted Monitoring visit would take place on the 11th and 12th July 2018 and that their main focus would be on pre-birth assessments and child protection plans.

The Board was informed that the Commissioner had said that the health outcomes for children in care were encouraging compared to what had been seen in other Local Authorities.

Steve Comb advised that Ofsted had been focusing on three Children's Homes in Kirklees and highlighted the following key issues:-

Healds Road

- Inspected by Ofsted in April 2018. had been rated as 'good overall' and the report had been published;
- The relationships between staff and young people were improving;
- Number of children at the home had reduced from 6 to 4 and transitions had been planned and well managed;
- Staff were promoting and supporting regular contact for the young people with their families and friends;
- Ofsted had given positive feedback on the decision making at all levels of Management at the home.

Woodlands

- Inspected by Ofsted in May 2018, had been rated as 'good overall' and the report had been published;
- The young people at the home were making good progress and were building strong relationships with staff;
- Incidents of challenging behaviour were reducing;
- Number of children at the home had reduced from 6 to 4.

Orchard View

- Inspected by Ofsted in May 2018, had been rated as 'good overall' and the report had been published;
- 59 children and young people were accessing the short breaks in the home for respite care;
- Staff were working well in building partnerships with families;
- Individual risk management plans had been created for each child so they were all helped and supported effectively.

In response to a question from the Board regarding how reductions in numbers in the homes had been managed, Steve Comb advised that as young people moved out of the homes their beds had not been reallocated.

Steve Comb advised that the Statement of Purpose for all three Children's Homes mentioned above had been adjusted and reports had been considered by the Board in April 2018.

The Board noted that one of the ambitions of the Sufficiency Strategy was to have more Children's Homes with places within the Kirklees area.

RESOLVED –

1. That the verbal update on key issues from Ofsted and the Improvement Board be noted.

10 Recruitment of foster carers and future membership of Fostering Panels

The Board considered a verbal report from Steve Comb on recruitment of Foster Carers and the future membership of Fostering Panels.

Steve Comb advised the Board that changes had been made in May 2018 to the Councillors who were Kirklees representatives on the Fostering Panels. A decision had been taken to have 4 Councillors in a pool who would sit on the Fostering Panels on a rota basis or when available. Steve Comb further explained that training would be undertaken and the Councillors new to the role would observe Fostering Panels as part of their training.

The Board was informed that an Acting Service Manager for Fostering had recently been recruited and was now in post. Steve Comb explained that recruitment of foster carers was a national challenge.

Cllr Kendrick advised the Board that she had met with the Kirklees Fostering Network and that connections with Kirklees was important. The Board was informed that 4 network meetings took place each year, the most recent meeting had been held in June 2018 and had been well attended. Steve Comb advised that the Network meetings were a good opportunity for foster carers to meet and talk to each other. Cllr Kendrick informed the Board that she had presented long service awards to foster carers at the Network Meeting in June and between them they had provided 400 years of foster care.

Steve Comb advised the Board that feedback from foster carers at the Network Meeting had been that the event was positive and they had appreciated the opportunity to meet and talk to other foster carers. The foster carers felt valued that Cllr Kendrick had attended the event. The Board was informed that the Virtual Head Teacher and Children's Social Care Managers would attend future Network meetings.

Steve Comb advised the Board that approximately 40 enquiries per month were received in Kirklees from people wishing to become a foster carer. The Board was informed that a report would be presented later in the year giving progress on the recruitment of foster carers.

The Board was informed that Laura Counce now had oversight of the Fostering Placement Team due to her commissioning background.

Steve Comb advised the Board that when people became foster carers, their family needed to understand the process and receive support and help.

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, advised the Board that an additional LAC Nurse (Health Visitor) had been secured to work with the LAC Team. The LAC Nurse provides an additional resource to support foster carers with younger babies and children as well as the general LAC health duties.

In response to a question from the Board regarding good practice for seeking feedback from foster carers when they were leaving the service, Steve Comb advised that exit interviews were carried out. The Board was informed that people sometimes stepped down from foster caring as their own children had grown up and then grandchildren came along. Steve Comb further explained that foster caring was very specialist and some children had attachment difficulties, particularly babies who had been neglected, and could display certain distressing behaviours. The Board was informed that a lot of support was in place for foster carers. Steve Comb advised that some foster carers had agreed to be respite carers during school holidays.

In response to a question from the Board regarding promotion of foster caring via social media, Steve Comb advised that a member of staff in the Fostering and Recruitment Team was an expert on social media marketing and that 38% of enquiries to be a foster carer were now generated through the internet.

The Board agreed to consider a future report on the marketing plan for foster caring – date to be determined.

The Board was informed that a representative from the Foster Caring Network would be invited to be on the Board's membership and attend future meetings. Steve Comb further explained that the Network were currently trying to identify who the representative would be and agreed to update the Board in due course.

RESOLVED –

1. That the verbal update on Recruitment of foster carers and future membership of fostering panels be noted.
2. That the Board consider the marketing plan for recruitment of foster carers at a future meeting – date to be determined.
3. That a representative from the Foster Caring Network be invited to become a member of the Corporate Parenting Board and attend future meetings.

11 Care Leavers – Local Offer Keep on Caring

The Board considered a report outlining the development of the Kirklees Local Offer for Care Leavers and extending Personal Advisor Support to care leavers to the age of 25 and welcomed Julie Bragg to the meeting.

Julie Bragg advised that No 11 Drop-in facility was a remarkable resource for looked after children and young people and had been launched at the end of October 2017. The Council were now looking to review the service provision at No 11.

The Board agreed to comment on the Care Leavers Action Plan and feedback at the next meeting of the Board.

Julie Bragg gave an update on highlights from the report, as follows:-

- Officers were hoping to launch the Kirklees Local Offer for Care Leavers at the Care Leavers week in October 2018;

- Support for 21 to 25 year olds were being looked at and officers were developing an initial assessment tool to establish the needs of the young person and how the Council could help; developed a 'keeping in touch' protocol with Adult Services;
- Review of the No 11 drop-in facility building and housekeeping, Steve Comb advised that the open plan arrangement was not always suitable for some conversations and clinics;
- The Council would like to see a No 11 facility in North Kirklees so the service provision was accessible from both parts of the borough.

The Board agreed to receive details of the Care Leavers Week in October.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report on Care Leavers – Local Offer keep on caring be noted.
2. That the Local Offer Action Plan for care leavers be circulated to Board Members for comment and be considered by the Board in September 2018.
3. That the Board receive the dates of the Care Leavers week in October 2018.

12 Draft Children's Interim Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan (2018-19)

The Board considered a report on the draft Children's Interim Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan for 2018-2019 presented by Steve Comb.

The Board noted that as part of the Improvement Plan, the Council was committed to producing a Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan setting out how it would increase the availability of local placements to ensure that children and young people did not need to be placed at a distance from their communities.

Steve Comb advised the Board that the last 12 years had seen an increase in the numbers of children in care and that partnership working was critical in terms of meeting complex needs locally. The Board was informed that a broader piece of work was required on how Children's Services could work well with the Child Adolescent Health Services to provide the support required.

Steve Comb advised that it was important to listen to children and young people and referred to the section of the report which outlined some extracts from "Views of Children" by the Kirklees Children's Rights Team in March 2017. The Board was informed that one young person had said that their foster carer did not understand what they were doing at school and could not help with homework. Steve Comb further explained that wider support was needed so that placements could be sustainable.

The Board agreed that it was positive to see that the child's voice had been included and taken into account in the development of the Sufficiency Strategy.

The Board agreed that a paragraph be included in the “Voice of the Child” Sufficiency Action Plan to endeavour to keep children at their current school when they are placed in care.

The Board agreed that health needs for girls would be better supported if they could be placed within Kirklees. Sanna Mahmood advised that young females were more likely to talk and engage than young males and that this needed to be looked at.

In response to a question from the Board regarding over the border placements, Steve Comb advised that over the border placements from Kirklees remained the responsibility of the Corporate Parent and the relevant Local Authority would keep Kirklees informed.

Gill Addy advised the Board that Kirklees would undertake its own health assessments for out of border placements and would contact the Local Authority to advise when a child from Kirklees was being placed in their area and when they were leaving.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report on the draft Children’s Interim Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan for 2018-2019 be noted.
2. That the “Voice of the Child” Sufficiency Action Plan be amended to include a section on trying to keep children at their current school where possible when they are placed in care.
3. That Members of the Board give their comments on the draft Sufficiency Strategy and its future development to the Head of Corporate Parenting as soon as possible.

13 Training for Members of Corporate Parenting Board

The Board considered an update on the proposed LGA Corporate Parenting and Total Respect for Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other elected members.

The Board was informed that Corporate Parenting Training had been scheduled for the 13th and 17th September 2018 and that all Elected Members would be invited to attend one of the sessions.

The Board noted that Total Respect training for members of the Board would be arranged in the near future – date to be determined.

RESOLVED –

1. That the update on the proposed LGA Corporate Parenting training for Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other elected members be noted.
2. That the Board Members and all elected members be invited to attend the LGA Corporate Parenting Training sessions on either the 13th September (9.30 am at Hudawi Centre) or 17th September (5.30 pm at Dewsbury Town Hall).
3. That Total Respect Training take place for members of the Corporate Parenting Board in the future – date to be determined.

14 Updates from Board Members on interaction with Services

The Board considered verbal updates from Board Members on interaction with Services.

Councillor Kendrick gave a summary of events and meetings she had recently attended:-

- Visit to the Youth Offending Team – The Annual Report outlined good outcomes for looked after children who had been involved in the justice system; a good response had also been seen in terms of educational attainment;
- Attended Children’s Scrutiny Panel – feedback from the Panel had indicated that they felt well informed and that information provided was timely; Cllr Kendrick confirmed that information should be presented and shared with Scrutiny in the early stages;
- Visit to the Multi Systemic Therapy Team and joined in staff teams;
- Visit to West Yorkshire One Adoption Committee – meetings were held every 6 months attended by representatives from 5 Local Authorities in West Yorkshire;
- Met with Foster Carers at the Foster Carers Network and Long Service Awards Ceremony;
- Met with Care Leavers and Sanna Mahmood, Looked after children and leaving care;
- A Local Government mentor visited Kirklees from Wolverhampton and Councillor Kendrick will be visiting them in the near future to observe their Corporate Parenting Board;
- Visit to Peer Mentors at No 11;
- Visit to Heckmondwike Grammar School, had a good meeting with the Head Teacher and took part in a question and answer session on politics with 6th form students.

The Board noted that visits to internal services and external partners and organisations could be arranged and co-ordinated if required.

Steve Comb and Julie Bragg advised that they had recently visited the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum.

15 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan for 2017/18 and looking forward to 2018/19

The Board considered the Agenda Plan for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal year.

The Board agreed to have an informal meeting at 9.30 am prior to the public meeting at 10.30 am.

The Board agreed to consider future reports on the following issues:

- Update report from Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum – November 2018 (S Mahmood)

RESOLVED -

1. That the Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan for 2017/18 be updated as agreed.
2. That the Board's supporting officer be authorised to liaise with attendees to address the agreed actions.

16 Dates of Future Meetings

That the Board noted the future meeting dates of the Board during the 2018/19 municipal year:

- Monday 24th September 2018, 10.30 am
- Monday 19th November 2018, 10.30 am
- Monday 21st January 2019, 10.30 am
- Monday 11th March 2019, 10.30 am
- Monday 15th April 2019, 10.30 am

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC

DECLARATION

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Name of Councillor

Item in which you have an interest	Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an "Other Interest")	Does the nature of the interest require you to withdraw from the meeting while the item in which you have an interest is under consideration? [Y/N]	Brief description of your interest

Signed:

Dated:

NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your disclosable pecuniary interests under the new national rules. Any reference to spouse or civil partner includes any person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or as if they were your civil partner.

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.

Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -

- under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- which has not been fully discharged.

Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - the landlord is your council or authority; and the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

(a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and

(b) either -

the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.



Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board

Date: 24th September 2018

Title of report: Revised Membership and Terms of Reference

Purpose of report:

To provide Corporate Parenting Board with a revised Board Membership and Terms of Reference for consideration and agreement.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by Director & name	R Spencer-Henshall – yes 10.9.18
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	No financial implications
Is it also signed off by the Service Director - Legal Governance and Commissioning?	J Muscroft – yes 10.9.18
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick – Children's Services

Electoral wards affected: N/A

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report presents revised Terms of Reference and membership for the Board to be considered and approved. The Board is asked to consider a change to the Membership to add the Chair of Children's Scrutiny to the Board as an ex-officio member, which will bring the Kirklees Corporate Parenting Board in line with other Local Authorities in terms of membership.
- 1.2 The proposal to add the Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel to the Board's membership enables Scrutiny to be part of discussions and have access to the same information as the Board. By being an ex officio member, the Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel or his/ her nominee can report back to scrutiny and may identify specific areas that scrutiny wants to give more detailed consideration to.
- 1.3 The Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel may send a substitute Member from the Children's Scrutiny Panel to attend the Board meetings in their absence.
- 1.4 The existing terms of reference were agreed by Annual Council on 23rd May 2018. The Terms of Reference and Membership are appended to this report.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 The information required to take a decision is contained in Appendix 1.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

The Corporate Parenting Board ensures that Council fulfils its statutory duties as corporate parents for looked after children. It holds services and partners to account for their performance in terms of the outcomes for looked after children and where early intervention and prevention approaches should be adopted or improved.

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

A key consideration of the Board relates to the extent that looked after children are prepared for adulthood including their ability to gain and sustain paid employment.

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

The Corporate Parenting Board provides the oversight and accountability function for the outcomes of all Kirklees looked after children.

3.4 Reducing demand of services

The Corporate Parenting Board drives improvements in outcomes for looked after children and in doing so should reduce the demand for services once looked after children leave the care system.

3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable.

4. Consultees and their opinions

4.1 Not applicable

5. Next steps

5.1 Once approved by Corporate Parenting Board, the revised membership and terms of reference will be implemented with immediate effect.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

6.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board approves the change to the Membership of the Board to add the Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel, or his/ her nominee, to the Board as an ex-officio Member and approve the revised terms of reference for the 2018/19 municipal year.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation

7.1 That the change to the Membership and revised terms of reference are approved.

8. Contact officer

Steve Comb – Interim Head of Corporate Parenting 01484 221000

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

9.1 Terms of Reference Corporate Parenting Board – 23rd May 2018 Annual Council Meeting

10. Service Director responsible

10.1 Elaine McShane, Service Director – Family Support and Child Protection

Purpose: To ensure that the Council fulfills its responsibilities as good corporate parents for all their children in care.

The Corporate Parenting Board is accountable to Full Council through its Cabinet. Initial reporting of concerns will be escalated by the cabinet portfolio holder to appropriate governance bodies including Cabinet.

The Board will meet for a minimum of six times per annum.

Membership:

Cabinet Portfolio Holder Member

Elected Members representing all political parties

Chair of Children's Scrutiny Panel (ex-officio Member)

Service Director, Family Support & Child Protection – to be confirmed

Head of Corporate Parenting

Virtual School Head Teacher

Virtual School Chair of Governing Body

Service Director, Learning and Early Support

Health Commissioning Representative

Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Head of Localities Offer (Children and Families)

Service Manager, Family Support and Child Protection

Designated Nurse for Looked after children

Representative from Kirklees Fostering Network

Representatives from a range of services and partner agencies will be invited as appropriate and will receive papers including: Director of Children's Services, Kirklees College, Calderdale and Kirklees Careers, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, Sufficiency Team, Performance Team, Kirklees Foster Carers Network and Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing

Terms of Reference:

- 1 To consider and recommend ways in which the Council can improve the life chances of all children in care and care leavers.
- 2 To advise the Council's Cabinet and other governance bodies of actions that need to be taken.
- 3 To bring to the attention of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee any areas which may warrant Scrutiny consideration
- 4 To ensure there are good partnerships between council departments and partner agencies and that Council services and partners are held to account for their strategies and operational delivery.
- 5 To provide an opportunity for the voice of our children and young people to inform the considerations and recommendations of the Board.
- 6 To maintain a strategic overview of new developments, initiatives, plans, policies and strategies that impact on services for children and young people in or leaving our care.
- 7 To monitor the performance of the Council by receiving regular progress reports on all performance data relating to Corporate Parenting Services.
- 8 To receive regular reports on the progress and needs of care leavers including employment, further education, training, housing and health.

9. To consider statutory reports from the Adoption and Fostering Services, Independent Reviewing Officers, Residential and Youth Offending Teams and make recommendations.
10. To agree an annual work programme setting out its key priorities and areas for action.
11. To prepare an Annual Report on the areas considered by the Board, including its work programme, for presentation to Council and Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 11 To acknowledge and celebrate in the achievements of children and young people in care and support and participate in annual celebration events.
- 12 Review on an annual basis the Statements of Purpose of the Kirklees Fostering Service and Kirklees Registered Children's Homes
- 13 To receive an Annual Report on:-
 - One Adoption (West Yorkshire)
 - Children who go missing from care
 - Health of looked after children
 - The educational outcomes for looked after children
 - The work of the Leaving Care Service
 - Children and young people placed outside the Kirklees boundary
 - Youth Offending Team relating to their work with children in care
 - Private Fostering Service
 - Children's Rights and Advocacy
 - Complaints and Compliments
 - Membership and Terms of Reference of the Board
 - The Sufficiency of Placements for Children in Care

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Message from Sal Tariq, Deputy Strategic Director of Children and Families Services

Dear colleague

As you know, Ofsted recently carried out a further monitoring visit, and I am pleased to share the details of their findings, which have just been published.

Ofsted recognise the improvements we have continued to make, and they point to accelerated progress in securing a more stable workforce.

They have highlighted our increased pace of improvement since the last monitoring visit and have confirmed we are continuing to make steady progress.

This was Ofsted's fifth monitoring visit and focused on the experiences of children in need of help and protection. Inspectors reviewed progress being made in relation to:

- the quality and timeliness of assessments and plans, including pre-birth assessments
- the multi-agency response to children in need of help and protection
- the consideration of children's individual needs in assessments and planning
- complaints from children and families and how learning from those complaints is disseminated
- the effectiveness of management oversight and challenge.

I would like to thank all of you who met with the inspectors. These monitoring visits, which happen every quarter, provide us with valuable intelligence and assist us in achieving the best possible outcomes for our children, young people and families in Kirklees.

Some of the findings highlighted by Ofsted were:

- Morale is much improved and social workers are better engaged
- Social workers report that support is more readily available and that senior leaders are approachable
- The social workers which the inspectors spoke to, articulated well the needs of the children and families, and the direct work being undertaken with them to meet their needs
- The self-assessment is robust and there are appropriately focused plans to improve services for children and families
- Firm foundations are now in place to move the service forward, and there is increasingly sound monitoring of progress
- A recent change in the pre-birth assessment pathway is having a positive impact on practice.

Ofsted confirmed our view that there is still further focus and improvements to be made across certain areas. These include making sure we sufficiently assess and

respond to children who are living in family arrangements; improve further on social work visits to children and core group meetings so they happen within the child's timeframe and within timescales set out in statutory guidance.

We are already improving in these areas and continue to address and tackle the issues raised. Ofsted have acknowledged and recognised that improvements have been made and are continuing to improve. However, we remain committed to carry on improving services for children and families and to achieving this in a restorative way – working with you at all times.

We are far from complacent, and recognise that there is still a lot to be done, but I also want us to remember how far we have come as a service.

You can read the latest monitoring letter [here](#). In the meantime, many thanks for your continued hard work in supporting children and families across the district.

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3 August 2018

Mr Steve Walker
Interim Director of Children's Services
Kirklees Council
Civic Centre 3
Huddersfield
HD1 2YZ

Dear Mr Walker

Monitoring visit of Kirklees children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Kirklees children's services on 11 and 12 July 2018. The visit was the fifth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate for services for children in need of help and protection and children looked after in October 2016. This visit was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspector, Rachel Holden and Ofsted Inspector, Cath McEvoy. The local authority has increased the pace of improvement since the last monitoring visit, which has resulted in some steady progress being made. There is more work to do to improve and embed the quality and timeliness of the social work response to children and families, and to tackle drift and delay.

Areas covered by the visit

During this visit, inspectors focused on the experiences of children in need of help and protection. Inspectors reviewed progress being made in relation to:

- the quality and timeliness of assessments and plans, including pre-birth assessments
- the multi-agency response to children in need of help and protection
- the consideration of children's individual needs in assessments and planning.
- complaints from children and families and how learning from those complaints is disseminated
- the effectiveness of management oversight and challenge.

A range of evidence was considered during the visit, including children's electronic case records, supervision records, case file audits and performance information. Inspectors spoke to parents and a range of staff, including social workers and managers.

Overview

The senior leadership team has a comprehensive understanding of progress and areas for continued development. Since the last monitoring visit, the local authority has made steady progress, and firm foundations are now in place for securing improvements in service delivery. There is an improving picture in relation to: management oversight through systematic case auditing and regular supervision; staff engagement and morale; the response to pre-birth concerns; workforce stability; and partnership working. No children were seen where risk of immediate harm was unassessed and not responded to.

Some of these changes are very recent and not embedded in practice. The cumulative impact of risk is not always recognised in assessments and planning. The quality of social work practice is still too variable, and this is not ensuring that children and families consistently receive a timely response to their needs. Caseloads in some teams remain too high and in some instances there are still too many changes in social worker. The challenge of management and child protection chairs is not sufficiently robust and is not making a difference to children. This is contributing to drift and delay in too many of the cases seen.

Findings and evaluation of progress

The senior leadership team has a thorough and realistic understanding of the areas for improvement. The self-assessment is robust and there are appropriately focused plans to improve services for children and families. Firm foundations are now in place to move the service forward, and there is increasingly sound monitoring of progress, for example through the systematic auditing of cases and improved regularity of supervision. However, managers are not always recognising when they need to challenge drift and delay for children.

Progress is accelerated in securing a more stable workforce at a senior and frontline manager level. Almost all posts are now filled. In addition, very recently advanced practitioners have been appointed to every social work team. These are non-case holding practitioners recruited to support the development of social work practice. Staff have articulated that this is starting to support and promote service improvement. Increasing permanence of frontline staff is improving continuity of case ownership, and social workers with whom inspectors spoke articulate well the needs of the children and families, and the direct work being undertaken with them to meet their needs. The impact of this direct work with children is not always reflected in children's case records, reducing accountability, oversight and the ability to challenge where there is drift.

Morale is much improved and social workers are better engaged. Social workers report that support is more readily available and that senior leaders are approachable. Leaders are systematically focused on reducing caseloads, and this is

having a positive impact for some teams, but for others, caseloads are still too high. Case supervision is now regular, task-orientated and appropriately focused on securing compliance. Recent opportunities for more reflective supervision with advanced practitioners are starting to provide social workers with scope to consider their practice in a more qualitative way. It is too soon to see the impact of this on children.

There is an improving multi-agency response to children at risk of significant harm. The recent relocation of some social work teams into localities is starting to facilitate better working together and an improved recognition of and response to the presenting risk. Children are being seen alone in these cases, and the views of children and parents are well considered and recorded. However, for children who are already known to children's social care and where there is arising risk, partners are not routinely engaged in strategy discussions and cumulative risks are not always recognised or addressed. In some cases, there is insufficient assessment of and response to children who are living in family arrangements.

The quality of assessments remains variable. In the cases seen, assessments are superficial and lack information about the ethnicity and identity of families. They do not sufficiently depict or explore the lived experiences of children and young people. The format of the assessments is restrictive and does not give social workers the space to enable them to sufficiently analyse impact. Assessments are not always updated in order to inform child protection reviews, and in a small number of cases seen children came off a child protection plan prior to full information being received. Some cases had several changes of social worker within a short timeframe, and this was contributing to drift and delay and a lack of continuity for children.

Families speaking with inspectors during the visit said that their contact with children's social care had been initially poor but had been improving recently. The individual needs and experiences of brothers and sisters are now being addressed within the assessments seen, and the response to pre-birth concerns is improving. Staff are now undertaking timely assessments prior to birth, and planning to ensure the safeguarding of new born babies. A recent change in the pre-birth assessment pathway is having a positive impact on practice.

Although the timeliness of child protection reviews and practice is improving from a low base, initial child protection conferences, social work visits to children and core group meetings do not always happen within the child's timeframe or within timescales set out in statutory guidance. Although the responsiveness and challenge of child protection chairs is improving, there is not a consistently robust challenge to drift and delay.

Where children and families have been subject to a child protection plan and risk reduces, appropriate and timely decisions have been made for children to come off plans in the majority of cases seen. Appropriate levels of support are being provided in order to promote resilience in families. However, the response to children in need is not sufficiently robust. The local authority recognises this and plans to fully audit

children's cases in this area. Inspectors saw some examples in these cases where children needed a more protective response.

The local authority is appropriately focused on improving the quality of plans and planning for children. Social workers have recently received training in this regard, but this is not yet embedded and it is too soon to see the impact of these on children. The poor quality of some assessments and inconsistent recognition of cumulative risk is not contributing to sharp planning for children.

The audited cases tracked demonstrate recent improvements in social work practice. The findings from the audits had been actioned and this is improving the social work response to children and families in these cases. Some variability remains in the quality of audits. For example, some audits failed to address deficits in practice. Leaders are aware that the audit process needs further embedding, but that it is already starting to challenge and highlight areas of weaker and stronger practice.

The local authority response to children's complaints is improving and all complaints are now responded to in a timely manner. A children's rights service is readily available to support children to make complaints and to advocate on their behalf. Senior managers now have oversight of complaints, which is facilitating complaint resolution at an earlier stage and lower level. There is improved learning.

A copy of this letter will be sent to the Department for Education and published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Holden
Her Majesty's Inspector

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 24 September 2018
Title of report: Number and Age of Children in Care

Purpose of report:- To provide information relating to the number of children in care, their placement location and age.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	NA .
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	NA
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	NA
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Elaine McShane (for Sal Tariq) – 12.9.18 NA NA NA
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr V Kendrick Childrens Portfolio

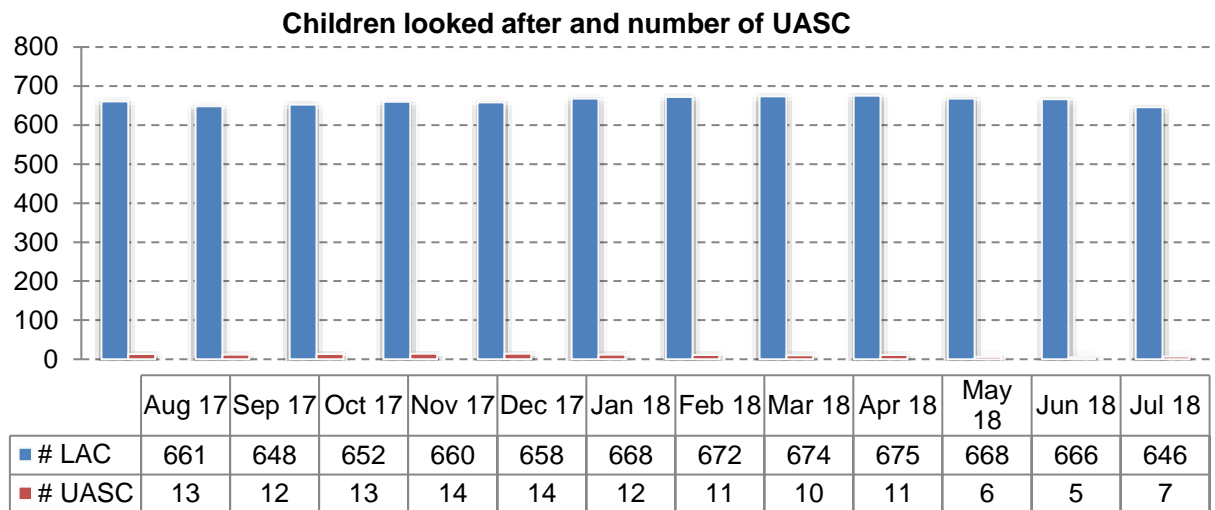
Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted:

Public: No

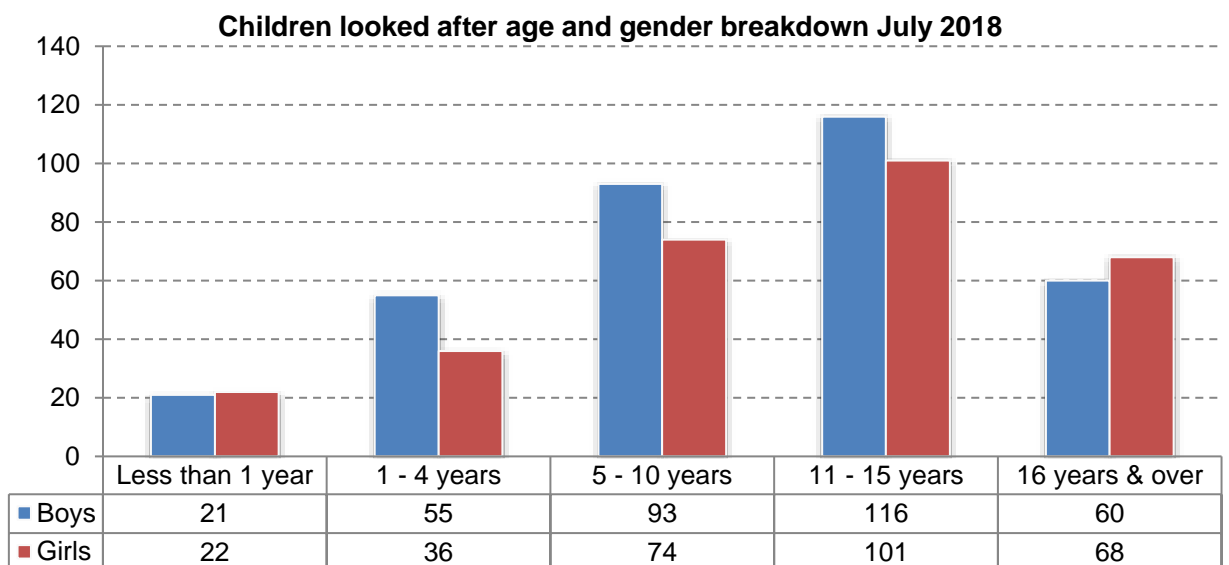
1. Summary

The data below illustrates the trend relating to the number of children and young people in our care and the age profile of those children over the last twelve months.



(LAC Looked after Children)

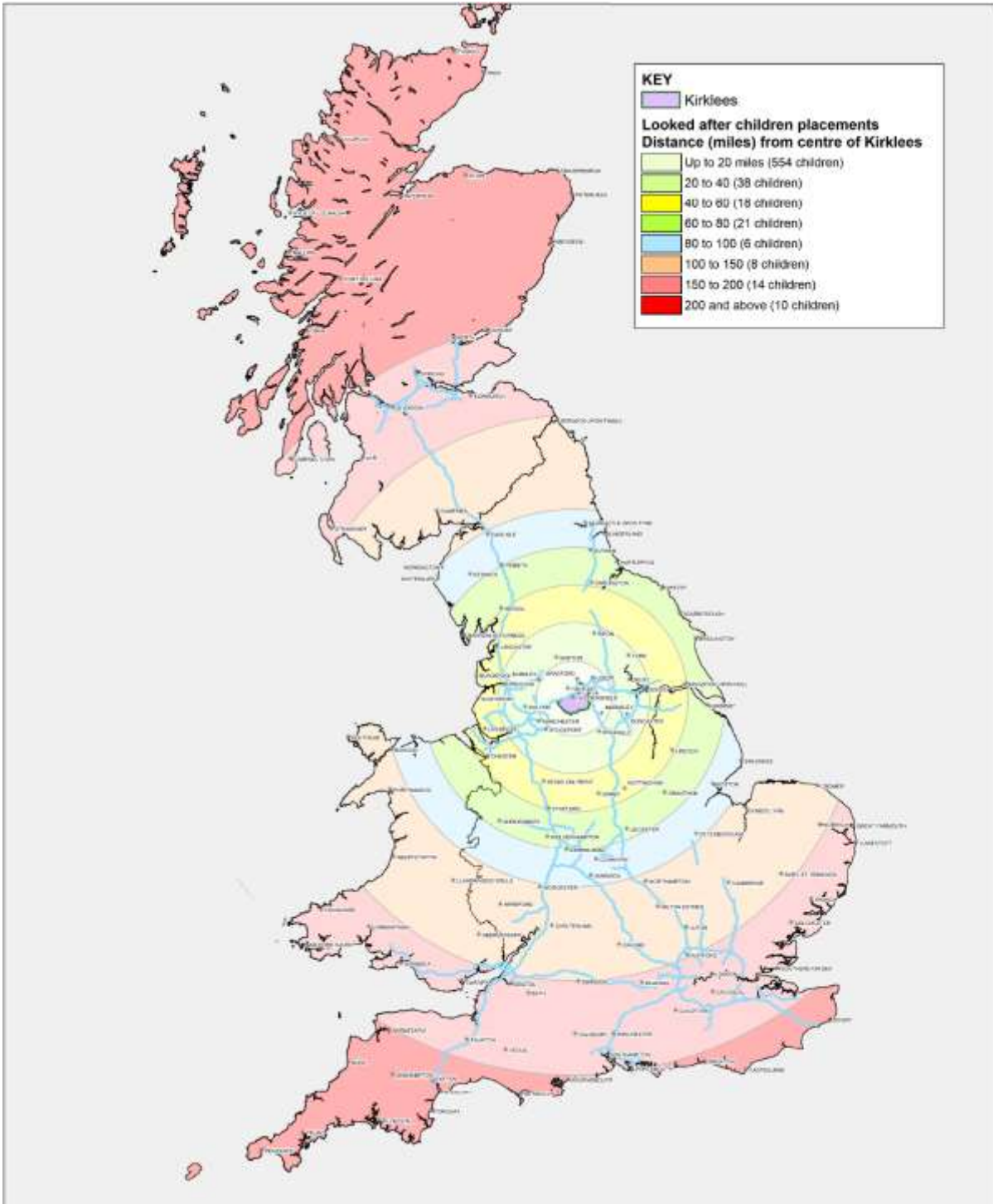
(UASC Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)



Placement over 20 miles from home address July 2018

	31 July 2018	
	Number	%
Placed outside Kirklees & over 20 miles from home address	110	17.0%
Total LAC	646	

Children in Care Placements by location March 2018



2. Information required to take a decision

For information, no decision is required.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

Not applicable

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

Not applicable

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

This information is provided at the request of Corporate Parenting Board to monitor the number of children in care their age and location of placements.

3.4 Reducing demand of services

Not applicable

3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps

A similar report to be presented at future Corporate Parenting Board meetings.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That future updates be presented to Corporate Parenting Board meetings.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Steve Comb Head of Corporate Parenting

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Elaine McShane Service Director - Child Protection and Family Support

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

Foster Carer's Handbook

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Section A

Kirklees Equality and Diversity Statement

We believe in treating everyone fairly and see the diversity of our community and workforce as a real strength. We want to build strong communities with a sense of togetherness, and we want to tackle disadvantage. We want everyone to be able to realise their potential and to benefit from the cultural, social, economic and civic vitality of our district. We want to meet people's needs as best we can, and we realise that treating people fairly does not necessarily mean treating everyone as if they are the same.

This commitment applies to our work as an employer, a service deliverer, a contractor and funding body and in our community leadership role.

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Kirklees-Our Pledge

The government says that every council should make a pledge or promise to the children and young people in their care. Our Pledge outlines all we promise to do for children and young people in our care who are aged from 0-18 (some parts only apply at certain ages). Our Pledge is also for Kirklees young people who have left care, usually up to the age of 21 but sometimes up to the age of 25. We will try our best to make the experience of being in care is as positive and happy as possible. We will always involve children and young people in decisions about their lives and make sure we listen to their views. The safety and well-being of children and young people is also really important to us. For further information on what support is on offer in Kirklees **see Section B, Children's Rights.**

To read the Kirklees Pledge please click on the link below:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/young-people/pdf/PledgeLeaflet.pdf>

There is a national Care Leavers Charter that outlines what support young people will receive after they leave care, please click on the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264694/Care_leavers_charter.pdf

The Foster Carers' Charter

Ministerial Foreword

Too often we fail to appreciate the essential contribution made by the great unsung army of foster carers. With the majority of looked after children in England living with foster carers their role is invaluable and deserves to be recognised and supported. This Charter is an important step to do just that and make their job as straightforward and rewarding as possible.

With the growing pressures on the care system we need to attract new and dedicated prospective foster carers to come forward in tandem with making sure that existing carers are encouraged to carry on their caring responsibilities, and where appropriate, extend them. Yet, too often, I hear from foster carers that they feel isolated, insufficiently supported and even put upon. Whilst there are many examples of good practice amongst local authorities and agencies, the picture remains mixed – yet foster carers and the children they look after need to enjoy the experience of the best. A good quality foster placement helps achieve stability for the child, satisfaction for the carer and most important of all a vital element in helping often damaged children and young people to have a decent second chance at a safe and fulfilling childhood. It is a win win situation which relies primarily on people and relationships and the Government is determined to do everything to promote it further.

It is essential therefore that foster carers are at the heart of arrangements for looked after children and must be fully engaged, supported and consulted at every stage. Without understanding how important the role of a foster carer is and what they can expect from others, it is so much harder to do the best for these children and young people. At the same time everyone needs to be focused on what is best for the most important people of all – the children in their care.

That is why I hope that all of you can endorse not only the Charter but also the spirit of the Charter. I hope the Charter can be used to unite foster carers, local authorities and fostering services around a shared understanding. I hope that it will give people the confidence to question and make demands when the 'spirit' of the Charter is not being met. I want you to build on the foundations of the Charter and make it work for you locally. This means being confident enough to come forward and talk about where things are working well and not so well, and share experiences and ideas on how to make things better and how ultimately we can achieve a better experience for those children and young people in the care system.

Children's Minister

Children come first

- Children in foster care deserve to experience as full a family life as possible as part of a loving foster family with carers who can make everyday decisions as they would their own child and without the child feeling that they 'stand out' as a looked after child.
- Children must be given every support to develop their own identities and aspirations, fulfil their potential, and take advantage of all opportunities to promote their talents and skills. Above all, they should be listened to.

Local authorities and fostering services must

- Recognise in practice the importance of the child's relationship with his or her foster family as one that can make the biggest difference in the child's life and which can endure into adulthood.
- Listen to, involve foster carers and their foster children in decision-making and planning, and provide foster carers and their foster children with full information about each other.
- In making placements be clear about the continuing care or support there will be (including for the child into adulthood), be sensitive to the needs of the foster carer and the child in making and ending placements and have contingency plans should the placement not work.
- Treat foster carers with openness, fairness and respect as a core member of the team around the child and support them in making reasonable and appropriate decisions on behalf of their foster child.
- Ensure that foster carers have the support services and development opportunities they need in order to provide their foster child with the best possible care. That includes liaising with local foster carers groups and seeking to respond to problems and disseminate best practice.
- Make sure foster carers are recompensed on time and are given clear information about any support, allowances, fees, and holidays they will receive including in cases of dispute with the service or during gaps in placements.

Foster carers must

- Provide positive adult role models, treat the foster child as they would their own child, and be a "pushy parent" in advocating for all aspects of the child's development, including educational attainment and physical and emotional health and wellbeing and co-operate fully as part of a team with other key professionals in the child's life.
- Support their foster child and do all they can to make the placement work. Take part in learning and development, use skills and approaches that make a positive impact and enable the child to reach his or her potential. Support their foster child to help them to counter possible bullying and discrimination as a result of their care status.

In signing this Charter the fostering service, child's local authority and foster carer agrees to reflect the spirit and intentions of the Charter in their actions.

- **The child's local authority**
[Contact details for person responsible for implementing the aims of the Charter]
- **The Fostering Service (if different to above)**
[Contact details for person responsible for implementing the aims of the Charter]

Foster carer/s

The following section is for local authorities, fostering services and foster carers to say how they will implement the commitments in the Charter and any additional commitment/s particularly important to their own local context.

The following organisations have worked to develop the Charter and have pledged to support the Foster Carers' Charter and help make it a reality in all areas



Department for
Education



Every child deserves a family



DRAFT

Published 18 March 2011

Fostering Regulatory framework

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards as amended provide a clear framework for Fostering Service Providers, Foster Carers and associated staff with regard to how fostering services should be delivered, how foster carers should be assessed and what foster carers can expect to receive by way of support. The Regulations and Standards are used by OFSTED when inspecting fostering service providers.

Fostering Regulations

For further information on Fostering Regulations a foster carer can follow the link below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/581/contents/made>

National Minimum Standards

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services are an integral part of the legal framework in which the fostering provision is regulated and conducted under the Care Standards Act 2000.

The National Minimum Standards are mandatory and as a Fostering Service Provider we must comply with them. If as a Local Authority we are found to have substantially failed to meet these Standards, then OFSTED has a duty to inform the Secretary of State for Health, who will take the necessary steps to ensure the requirements are met.

The Minimum Standards represent the 'basic' requirements rather than 'best' possible practice and are designed to be applicable to a wide variety of Fostering Providers rather than a standardisation of service. As well as providing a measure by which services are regulated, the Minimum Standards act as a basis for the induction and training of staff and a guide for families as to what they should expect from a Fostering Service.

The National Minimum Standards are split into two sections of child focused standards and standards of fostering service. A foster carer needs to know and understand these, please see link below for reference:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192705/NMS_Fostering_Services.pdf

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013

This significantly changed the process for assessing foster carers by introducing a new, two-stage process and introduced a shortened process for revising a foster carers terms of approval subject to his/her consent.

The process for assessing a person's suitability to foster consists of two parts, which can be carried out concurrently, but the information required in stage 1 must be obtained as soon as possible and the decision made about their suitability at stage 1 made within 10 working days of all the information required at that stage being received. If the fostering service's decision maker decides that the applicant is unsuitable to foster at stage 1, he/she must write to the applicant to inform him/her of the reasons for their decision. The applicant does not have the right of appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism at stage 1, but may make a complaint to the fostering service if they are unhappy about the way in which their application has been handled.

At Stage 2 of the process, if following a brief or full report being presented to the fostering panel and agency decision maker, the applicant is considered not suitable to foster, he or she should be informed in writing of the reasons and that they may, within 28 days, seek a review of this determination either by the Independent Review Mechanism or the fostering service.

The Children Act, 1989

The Children Act, 1989 allocates duties to local authorities, courts, parents and other agencies in the United Kingdom, to ensure children are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.

A foster carer also needs to be familiar with the Children Act 1989. For further information on this a foster carer can follow the link below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

The Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015

These amend the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 which make provision about care planning for Looked After Children. They create a statutory concept of permanency for a child through long term fostering. To read these a foster carer can follow the link below:

http://www.familylaw.co.uk/system/redactor_assets/documents/2735/uksi_20150495_en.pdf

Fostering competencies

A foster carer is expected to achieve and maintain the following competencies.

1 Caring for children

- 1.1 An ability to provide a good standard of care to children. Good care promotes healthy emotional, physical, sexual and intellectual development.
- 1.2 An ability to accept the individual child as he/she is.
- 1.3 An ability to work closely with children's families. This might mean not only biological family, but others who are important to the child.
- 01.4 An ability to set appropriate boundaries and to manage children's behaviour within these. You must do this without the use of physical or other inappropriate punishment.
- 1.5 A knowledge of normal child development. This means you'll have an ability to listen to and communicate with children appropriate to their emotional age and understanding.
- 1.6 An ability to promote a young person's development towards adult status.

2 Providing a safe and caring environment

- 2.1 An ability to ensure that children are cared for in a home where they're safe from harm or abuse.
- 2.2 An ability to help children keep themselves safe from harm or abuse. This also means that you'll know how to seek help if their safety is threatened.
- 2.3 An ability to recognise the particular vulnerability of disabled children to abuse and to discrimination.

3 Working as part of a team

- 3.1 An ability to collaborate with other professional workers and to contribute to the department's planning for the child/young person.
- 3.2 An ability to communicate effectively.
- 3.3 An ability to keep information confidential.
- 3.4 An ability to promote equality, diversity and the rights of individuals and groups within society.

4 Own development

- 4.1 An ability to appreciate how personal experiences have affected themselves and their families. This means you'll consider the impact that fostering is likely to have on them all.

- 4.2 An ability to use people and links within the community to provide support.
- 4.3 An ability to use training opportunities and improve skills.
- 4.4 An ability to sustain positive relationships and maintain effective functioning through periods of stress.

Kirklees will offer the foster carer support and training to help achieve and maintain these competencies. Any questions about these should be raised with the supervising social worker.

Foster Carer Agreement

When a foster carer is approved they are required to enter into a written agreement with the Local Authority. The agreement constitutes a statement of responsibilities, requirements and expectations of the partnership between Kirklees Council and the foster carer. The foster carer needs to read, sign and return the agreement so it can be kept on the file. A new agreement is issued following each annual foster carer review.

Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

This is the single body with responsibility for inspecting fostering services. Ofsted inspects and evaluates fostering and other services for "Looked After" children against the National Minimum Standards and fostering regulations detailed previously. Ofsted can be contacted in the following ways:

By email

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

By telephone

0300 123 4234 - about education or adult skills

0300 123 1231 - about children's services or any other aspect of our work

0161 618 8524 - for textphone/Minicom users

Section B

Guide to using this section of the handbook:

This section of the Handbook is divided into an alphabetical list of subjects and areas that are often referred to in the foster carer role.

Some of the sections include [links](#) to other documents, policies or procedures that give more detail on particular subjects.

This Handbook is designed to be regularly updated with new information and links. If a foster carer has any suggestions of content to be included this can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

DRAFT

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Alcohol

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Belongings

Birth Certificate

Bullying

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Care plan

Caring for a child from a different heritage to your own

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Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

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FAQs / Abbreviations / Useful contacts

A

Abuse

Children placed in foster care will have suffered physical, emotional, psychological, sexual abuse or neglect. All abuse is damaging to children. The foster carer will be offered training and support to enable them to care for these children.

It is important that a foster carer is able to recognise the signs of abuse, please refer to the links below:

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/procedures-guidance.html>

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/signs-of-abuse.html>

What to do if a child discloses abuse or ill treatment

A Looked After Child needs a confidant like any other child. If information a child shares with the foster carer is likely to have an impact on their future the foster carer needs to encourage for this information to be shared with the child's social worker. If a child will not do this it is essential that the foster carer tells the child they will have to tell their social worker. Some information cannot be kept confidential such as if a child disclosed that they had been abused or ill-treated a foster carer has to inform the child's social worker. If a child discloses abuse or ill-treatment a foster carer should:

- Stay calm
- Listen
- Avoid asking questions as these could be seen as leading and impact on a prosecution
- Write down what has been said
- Notify the child's social worker as soon as possible
- Reassure the child that they have not done anything wrong

Also see Child Sexual Exploitation

Accidents and illness

Unfortunately accidents will happen. The foster carer will need to record any accident involving a child in their care on record sheets and on an accident form. This recording needs to include how the accident occurred and what action has been taken. It can sometimes be difficult to remember or explain the signs of an injury weeks after. Any accident needs to be reported to the child's social worker as soon as possible so that birth parents with Parental Responsibility can be informed.

If a child has a more serious accident or illness that requires medical or hospital treatment the foster carer will need to show the signed consent to medical treatment to access this. This should be passed to the foster carer when a child is placed as part of the Looked After Child paperwork. Children sixteen years or over can give consent to medical treatment. Some children under sixteen may also be able to give or refuse consent if they are considered to have sufficient understanding. The foster carer can discuss this with the child's social worker if they are unsure about it.

The foster carer needs to notify the child's social worker as soon as any medical treatment has been organised. The social worker can be contacted on **01484 221000** during office hours if they are not available the foster carer can speak to the duty worker for that team.

If an accident or illness occurs outside office hours that requires hospital admission and, or surgery the foster carer must notify the Emergency Duty Service on **01484 414933**

[Link to Accident form template in links folder](#)

[Link to Record sheet template- in links folder](#)

[Link to Medication Administration Record and guidance- in links folder](#)

Also see Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

Allegations

A Looked After Child is likely to have experienced abuse or neglect and their life experience may include some of the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Parental substance/alcohol misuse
- Parental mental health issues
- Inadequate parenting
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Loss of a parent.

All of the above impact on a child's attachment experiences and their ability to make connections with others. A child can internalise these experiences such as presenting as withdrawn or externalise these such as presenting as aggressive.

The foster carer needs to understand the reasons behind a child's behaviour rather than focusing on a child's presenting behaviour, supervising social workers can offer support with this. The foster carer has an important role to play in supporting a child to build resilience and feelings of self-worth. This insight and input from the foster carer is vital to reduce the likelihood of placement disruption as placement stability increases a child's chances of positive outcomes in all areas of their life.

If a child makes an allegation to the foster carer about another person's conduct towards them the child's social worker or supervising social worker must be notified.

Allegations and complaints are occasionally made against foster carers. This can place foster carers in a difficult and often distressing situation. Kirklees Council has an Allegations Management Policy which aims to deal with allegations against foster carers quickly, fairly, confidentially and impartially.

Why do allegations happen?

- A child may remember a previous experience of abuse or neglect and be confused about when this happened to them.
- A child may misinterpret behaviour as abuse, or fear it leading to abuse, based on their previous experiences
- A child or birth parent may hope that if an allegation is made the child will be able to go back home.
- A child may hope that if they make an allegation they will move to another placement
- A child may make unfounded allegations because they are angry about something without understanding the implications for themselves or their foster carers
- In some situations allegations are made because foster carers have in fact harmed or neglected a child.

A Looked after Child is more likely to be subject to abuse than the general population of children.

Strategies and actions the foster can take to reduce the risk of allegations:

- Attend the mandatory Safe Care Training and other relevant training identified by the supervising social worker
- Know the child and their history through the placement planning meeting, relevant paperwork and ongoing discussion with the child's social worker
- Regularly update the Safe Care Policy and when a new child is placed
- Communicate with children in an open and honest way to build trust so they are able to discuss when something is wrong
- Keep records up to date ensuring these are signed and dated regularly by the supervising social worker
- Work closely with other professionals and keep communication open
- Recognise stress, if there is tension in the home or, if the placement is difficult this needs to be discussed with the supervising social worker
- Have an identified support network

- Have clear rules within the home for ways of behaving, including how visitors should behave
- Know the Kirklees procedures for investigating allegations

When an allegation is made against a foster carer it can be a very difficult and stressful time. The supervising social worker will provide support but will not be able to discuss the allegation during the investigation period and this can result in a foster carer feeling isolated and unsupported.

Allegations are covered within the foster carer induction. In the event of an allegation being made all Kirklees Foster Carers are registered with the Fostering Network who can provide independent support. This referral should be offered and made by the supervising social worker.

Support is also available via the Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN) who operate a 24/7 Helpline. The number for the Helpline is **07866 635147**.

Please click on the link below to access the procedures for allegations against a foster carer:

http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_alleg_foster.html

Link to Safe Care template to be added- in links folder

Also see Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping, Fostering Network, Support

Alcohol

Guidance on alcohol consumption is discussed with the foster carer during the assessment process. The guidance covers the foster carer and children. If the foster carer is unclear on the guidance, has any questions or requires any additional support this can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

The foster carer should remember that a Looked After Child may have come from a home where parental alcohol misuse was an issue.

The foster carer needs to ensure that any alcohol is stored away safely as detailed in the health and safety checklist

Link to Guidance note saved in links folder

Please find below other useful alcohol links:

NHS guidance on alcohol abuse:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Alcohol-misuse/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Enjoy responsibly (information for adults and young people):

<http://enjoyresponsibly.co.uk/>

Also see assessing and minimising risks

Allowances

A foster carer is paid on a fortnightly basis. Finance officers based within the fostering service process all these payments. Payments are paid directly into the bank account.

The foster carer will see different descriptions for these payments on financial statements detailed below:

- **Skills Level Payments** – the financial payment provided for the Skill Level a foster carer has achieved
- **Allowances** – money paid directly to cover the care of a child placed
- **Continuous Service Award** – a payment for each year of continuous service as a Kirklees Foster Carer

Mileage

A foster carer can claim mileage for the following:

- Taking a child to and from school or nursery
- Taking a child to and from contact sessions
- Attending all professional meetings linked to the needs of the child placed
- Taking a child to medical appointments
- Attending training, support groups, KFN meetings, fostering steering group
- Facilitating recruitment and marketing events on behalf of the fostering service.

The list is not exhaustive so if a foster carer is unsure about claiming for a journey this can be discussed with the supervising social worker. The foster carer needs to send mileage claims to the supervising social worker who will check, authorise and pass them to finance officers to be processed.

The activities listed below should come out of the child's allowance and mileage will not be paid for these:

- Taking and collecting a child from social activities, trips and contact with friends
- Trips out with the foster carer

Child's Allowance

These payments cover the full cost of caring for a child:

- Food
- Clothing
- Pocket money
- Personal and household expenditure

- Equipment
- Special outings
- Dental and optical needs
- Attending clubs and participating in hobbies, including clothing and equipment required
- School activities
- Telephone expenses

Ongoing clothing and footwear costs must be funded from the child's allowance. This should be used flexibly to purchase items for young children and be provided to older children on a weekly/monthly basis as required. The use of the allowance will differ for all children. If a child has sufficient clothing and footwear the allowance should be saved for future needs. This should be agreed with the child, the child's social worker and the supervising social worker.

Looked After Children living with a foster carer are not entitled to free school meals even if they were receiving them whilst living at home. School meals must be paid for from the weekly allowance.

If a child goes to a respite foster carer the child's allowance for that period of time must go with them.

The chart below details the expected percentage of the child's allowance that should be used for certain things depending on the age of the child.

Age of Child	Clothing (includes clothing for sports, hobbies and school trips)	Hobbies/Activities/School Trips (including equipment)	Personal (includes Pocket Money and Savings)
0-4	20%	6%	6%
5-10	25%	12%	8%
11-15	26%	12%	10%
16+	26%	12%	12%

Initial Clothing Allowance

A foster carer can request this one off payment only when a child is coming from home. The need for this should be minimal as children should wherever possible bring sufficient suitable clothing with them. If a child does not arrive with sufficient clothing the foster carer should discuss this with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker to see if these can be collected from home at a later stage. Items of clothing from home form part of a child's identity and could be important to them. If the clothes are not what a foster carer would choose but they are appropriate and fit then the child should be allowed to wear them. If an initial clothing allowance is required the foster carer needs to agree an amount **before** purchasing items with the supervising

social worker. Clothes should be bought from stores such as supermarkets where the clothing is generally of a good standard.

Allowances for School Uniform/Work clothing

A child should usually have their school uniform with them. If they do not the foster carer needs to discuss this with the child's social worker or supervising social worker to see if this can be brought from home.

If a child is starting Nursery, Primary or Secondary school or is required to change school funding towards the uniform is available. The foster carer needs to discuss and agree an amount with the supervising social worker in advance of purchasing this.

If a young person is starting work, an apprenticeship or college course, a payment towards this can be made and includes the cost of purchasing equipment. The foster carer needs to discuss and agree an amount supervising social worker in advance of purchasing any items.

Leisure Activities/Hobbies

Part of the child's allowance is provided for leisure activities, day trips or short holidays with the foster carer (see table for guidance). A child should be encouraged and supported to take part in at least one activity per week. The allowance can be used towards membership, costs of the hobby and equipment.

A child may take part in a leisure activity that has a higher cost than the guidance. In these circumstances a child may have to take part in the activity fortnightly instead of weekly.

Proms/graduation

A foster carer can request a one off payment towards clothing for these events. The foster carer needs to discuss and agree an amount with the supervising social worker in advance of purchasing any items.

Holiday, birthday & Festival Payments

A foster carer will receive a holiday allowance (equivalent to 2 weeks allowance), birthday Allowance (equivalent of one week's allowance) and a festival allowance for Eid or Christmas (equivalent to one week's allowance) for each child in placement. These allowances relate to the child so are paid to the foster carer that has care of the child at that time.

The holiday allowance that is paid once per year (usually June) is intended to cover the school summer holiday period as this is when holidays are usually taken. If a child is placed long term with a foster carer they may choose to take the holiday at another time in the year using the allowance. If a child moves before the summer holiday period the allowance should be passed onto the new foster carer.

School Trips

A contribution up to a maximum of £500 towards the cost of one trip organised by the school will be paid. This contribution covers the duration of a child's time in education. Other trips will need to be funded through the child's allowance set aside by the foster carer (see table for guidance). This contribution is monitored by the team for the child placed and the finance team.

Allowance queries

If a foster carer has any allowance queries they should contact the finance officers or the supervising social worker. Any underpayments will be reimbursed and over payments deducted. Overpayments are taken back in three payments over a six week period from the ongoing payments made to a foster carer. In situations where a foster carer may be taking a break from fostering then individually negotiated arrangements will be made, for example, paying back the overpayment in full by cheque or BACS transfer or if the amount of overpayment is significant then a different arrangement could be negotiated.

If a foster carer is experiencing difficulties making payments it needs to be discussed with the supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity. If there are significant delays in resolving payment issues this could be referred to the Council Central Finance team who will contact the foster carer directly.

Caring for a child with a disability

A foster carer providing care to a child with a disability may receive any disability payments that are already in place or these can be applied for with the agreement of the child's social worker and in discussion with the child's parents. These payments are in addition to the allowances and are for the child. These should be used for goods or services that will enhance quality of life for the child.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Since 20 June 2016 [Personal Independence Payment \(PIP\)](#) has replaced DLA for people aged 16 to 64 years.

All children and young people who are eligible for a specialist foster placement may, in principle, meet the eligibility criteria for low, middle or higher rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component. There will be some children placed with non-specialist foster carers who will also meet the criteria for DLA. At the point of becoming looked after and being placed, both the statutory review and placement planning meeting should clarify matters relating to the child's DLA claim. The foster carer can get assistance from the supervising social worker to make a claim for DLA if this has not already been made. DLA is intended to meet the additional cost of caring for a disabled child. It is in addition to the weekly child's allowance and should be used to meet any additional needs due to the child's disability.

The foster carer should set up a separate bank account specifically for the DLA and any other additional financial support in order to provide an audit trail of income and expenditure. DLA which is not spent should be saved in the bank account for the child or in a savings account, for example a Junior ISA.

Savings

A foster carer is expected to make savings for each child they care for. These should be put into a bank or building society account so they can be easily transferred across to a new foster carer or family member if the child moves placement, or be put in trust until a child reaches 18 years of age. The savings payments are as follows:

Children aged 0-10 years	£ 5 per week
Children aged 10 – 18 years	£10 per week

A foster carer should discuss any queries with the supervising social worker.

The Government has made a £200 contribution into a junior ISA for all eligible Looked After Children. For further information on this follow the link below:

<https://sharefound.org/getting-access/>

Assessing and minimising risks in and out of the home

It is important that the home is as safe as possible for everyone living in it. A foster carer needs to speak to the supervising social worker for further support or guidance about any of the subjects covered in this section.

Fire Safety

A foster carer can contact the fire service to complete a fire safety check on the home. A fire safety check is recommended every two years. A check can also be requested if there have been changes to the home or if a child has been placed who has a history of lighting fires.

The latest information can be found here <http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/>

Health and Safety Checklist

This is completed as part of the fostering assessment and reviewed as part of every foster carer annual review. Actions identified from this will need to be completed within agreed timescales. The foster carer has responsibility to notify the supervising social worker of any changes throughout the year so that necessary amendments can be made. The link to this template is below:

Pet and dog Questionnaire

These are completed as part of the fostering assessment and reviewed as part of every foster carer's annual review. The foster carer should speak to the supervising social worker before buying or bringing any new pets into the home.

It is a legal requirement for all dogs to be microchipped by the time they are 8 weeks old. Details of this registration, microchip number and Petlog ID need to be included in the dog questionnaire. For further information on dog microchipping click on the link below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2015/9780111125243>

Please see link below to health and safety checklist including pet and dog questionnaire. To be added:

Safe Care

Safe Care Training is mandatory in the first year of approval for primary and secondary foster carers. During assessment the foster carer will complete a generic Safe Care Policy for the home. The purpose of this is to keep everyone safe so it needs to be as detailed as possible. The foster carer should complete an individualised Safe Care Policy for each child in their care and the supervising social worker can offer support with this. These are reviewed as part of every foster carer's annual review.

Safe Care Policy template link to be added

Links to two good practice examples generic and child specific to be added

Supervision of children

The foster carer needs to provide developmental appropriate supervision to the Looked After Child to keep them safe. Very young children will need constant supervision but older children will need support and supervision to ensure they can keep safe as they become more independent.

Keeping children safe from abuse

The foster carer should support children to keep themselves safe from abuse through developmentally appropriate discussion. The child's social worker and supervising social worker can offer support with this.

Please find the link below to the NSPCC underwear rule:

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/advice-and-info/underwear-rule-guidance-foster-foster-carers.pdf>

The foster carer should discuss any useful materials they come across with their supervising social worker so these can be shared with other foster carers and added to future handbook updates.

Children being left home alone

In law there is not a set age at which a child can be left home alone. The NSPCC suggests that no child under the age of 13 should be left unsupervised for more than brief periods. After this age it is a step which needs to be considered in the context of the child developing independence skills. A foster carer should never leave a Looked After Child without consulting with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker. Please see link below to NSPCC guidance:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/leaving-child-home-alone/>

Children going out alone

Looked After Children may have had few or no boundaries before coming into care. A foster carer should involve children in agreeing appropriate rules and boundaries for going out. Possible dangers such as traffic and strangers can also be discussed. A foster carer should help a child explore the possible risks that could be encountered and what to do in an emergency, such as if they miss the bus home. There will be times when a child does not stick to the house rules for example not telling the truth about where they are going or not returning at an agreed time. A foster carer may be concerned that a child is putting themselves at risk but be unable to physically stop them from leaving. In these situations it is important for the foster carer to remain calm and avoid conflict whilst communicating to the child that they are worried they could be putting themselves at risk. The foster carer should discuss any concerns with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker who can offer advice and additional support.

This section has been written to recognise that a Looked After Child may function developmentally younger than their chronological age.

Also see also accidents and illness, Counter Terrorism, Child Sexual Exploitation, Safe use of Information and Communication Technology

Attachment

Attachment is the term used for the emotional bond between a child and the adult/s caring for them. Attachment behaviour starts from birth when a new born baby develops a means of engaging their caregiver in order to survive.

Ideally all children should have secure attachments with their caregivers where the carer is in tune with their needs and able to meet them consistently. However, Looked After Children are more likely to have formed insecure attachments with their birth parent or carer as a result of abuse or neglect that has led to them becoming looked after. Even very young children learn to develop behaviours which help them survive. They may shut down emotionally and become very self-reliant; alternatively they may be constantly demanding of attention; or they may try to be in control by crying incessantly, having outbursts or being defiant. Children may see themselves as

unloved and unlovable and believe that they do not deserve good things. They may view adults as unreliable people, who do not protect children from harm.

A foster carer needs to understand attachment because it will help them understand a child's behaviour and how to manage this. Although it will take time given consistency and love, many children can be helped to trust adults and develop attachments. If a foster carer can support a child to form an attachment with them it helps the child develop the ability to make attachments with others in the future.

B

Babies

It is recommended that babies up to the age of 6 months old sleep in the bedroom with the foster carer. The reasons for this are associated with reducing risks in cot death. Research has shown that being in the same room as a responsible adult, allows for the adult to be semi-tuned in whilst asleep and also the baby can hear the sleep pattern of the adult, which it is thought prompts the baby to breathe.

It is recommended good practice for the mattress to be changed for each new baby. The reason behind this is more important for small babies, who are unable to roll and turn and whose faces could be in the same place on a mattress, breathing in potential bacteria, germs and dry vomit. In children over 1 year old or those that are moving about it is less important, but still considered best practice.

These recommendations would be followed by parents so the foster carer needs to be changing the mattress, especially for babies under 6 months old.

Please see below link to website for reference that is a trustworthy resource within health:

<http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk>

Car seats

Please see below the link to the latest government advice on car seats dated October 2016 and advice from Halfords:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/using-a-child-car-seat-or-booster-seat>

<http://www.halfords.com/advice/kids-zone/buyers-guides/guide-to-i-size-car-seats>

Belongings

Children will bring items of clothing, toys or other possessions with them when they go to live with a foster carer. These belongings may not seem very valuable to an adult but they will be precious to the child and should be respected. A child will have

been separated from their family and familiar surroundings to be placed with strangers. Something that may seem like an unimportant item could be a child's most treasured possession. A child should be encouraged to display these things in their bedroom and the wider foster home to give them a sense of belonging.

The foster carers should keep an inventory of a child's belongings and add to this when items are purchased. This inventory can go with a child if they move on. If a child is moving on the foster carer should take time to help them pack their belongings to ensure they are not damaged in transit. All belongings should be packed in an appropriate suitcase, if a child does not have a suitcase the foster carer will need to purchase one.

Children's belongings must never be moved in plastic bags or bin liners as this will impact on their feeling of self-worth.

Birth Certificate

If a birth has been registered then a birth certificate is available recording the details of the child's birth. When a child becomes looked after the Local Authority obtains a copy of this. If the foster carer requires a copy of a child's birth certificate they need to contact the child's social worker or seek advice from the supervising social worker. If a child moves on the foster carer needs to ensure that their birth certificate goes with them.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as 'deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time when it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves' (Department of Health, Education & Home Office document Working Together to Safeguard Children).

Many looked after children experience bullying at school, in the local area and sometimes from other children in the foster home.

Bullying can be:

- Name calling and teasing
- Threats, extortion and theft
- Physical violence
- Damage to someone's belongings
- Leaving people out of social activities
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Bullying by mobile phone text message or e-mail

If a foster carer thinks that a child in their care is being bullied or is bullying they need to discuss this with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker so appropriate action can be taken and support put in place. The child's school will have a bullying policy and any issues can be raised in school and with the virtual school (*see education for contact details*).

For further information please follow links below:

Bullying UK

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/>

Kidscape

<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/#>

Childline

<https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx>

DRAFT

C

Care Leavers

All Looked After Children have a social worker who will have discussions with them around all aspects of their life prior to turning 16. This will be part of the assessment that forms the pathway plan that looks at needs in all aspects of life and how these can be met. The foster carer will be involved in this assessment. At 16 children should have a Personal Advisor (PA) who will prepare them for when they are no longer subject to a Care Order at 18 and continue to support them until they are at least 21. The PA can be the social worker but at some point between 16 and 18 another worker is allocated to this role. At 18 there will be a final meeting with the social worker and then ongoing support will be provided by the PA.

Preparing for 18 +

To care for themselves a young person requires knowledge and understanding about:

- Emotional resilience
- Health issues, including personal care and sexual health
- Education, employment and training
- Budgeting skills, paying bills and benefits advice
- Managing their own accommodation
- Living skills, such as cooking a balanced diet, washing clothes, ironing and cleaning
- How to manage adult social and sexual relationships.

The foster carer will need to offer support with all of the above with guidance from the child's social worker, PA and the supervising social worker. The foster carer is expected to promote and build confidence in developing skills and encourage the learning of basic skills that are needed for living alone such as:

- Providing opportunities to learn and practice skills
- Promoting financial responsibility
- Encouraging a young person to recognise the importance of building their independence skills before moving on
- Encouraging the young person in their chosen educational, training or employment option

The foster carer can ask the supervising social worker for a copy of the booklet *Leaving Care - How we will support you* produced by the Kirklees Care Leavers Forum. Further information can also be found from the link below:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/young-people/in-care-in-kirklees/leaving-care.aspx>

See also - Staying Put

Care Plan

Every child in care must have a Care Plan that is drawn up as soon as it is identified that child needs to be looked after. It should be completed prior to the child being placed wherever possible or, if it is not practicable to do so, within 10 working days of them being placed. If there are exceptional reasons that prevent the Care Plan from being drawn up prior to the child's placement, the key objectives of the child's admission to care and the proposed placement must still be identified and recorded.

If a child is subject to legal proceedings they will have a Court Care Plan.

All Looked After Children in Kirklees whether accommodated under Section 20 or subject to a Legal Order under the Children Act 1989 will have a child friendly Care Plan once the permanency plan for them has been agreed.

The foster carer will contribute to the Care Plan at Looked After Child reviews. The Care Plan should be updated after each review unless there are no changes. If a foster carer, through discussion with a child, identifies an aspect of the Care Plan that needs considering at any point this should be raised with the child's social worker. The Care Plan can be updated by the child's social worker, with the team manager's approval, at any time. The foster carer will receive a copy of the child's Care Plan every time this is updated. If not the foster carer should speak to the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

Please see below links to two child friendly Care Plan examples:

Also see Children's Rights for more information on support available to the child

Caring for a child from a different heritage to your own

If a foster carer is asked to care for a child from a different ethnic, religious or cultural background the planning meeting and paperwork should inform of any specific needs that need to be met. The foster carer can speak to the child's social worker and the supervising social worker for further support with this. It may be beneficial for another foster carer who has relevant experience of caring for a child from the same background to offer mentoring.

The foster carer will need to understand the importance of background and culture to help the child build a positive identity. There are many ways to do this, for example providing opportunities for the child to meet others from similar backgrounds.

It is important to keep the child's heritage alive in everyday life, this can be done through: discussion, food, clothing, books, internet, television channels, contact with family and friends and life story work.

The foster carer may also need to support a child to cope with racism and other forms of discrimination.

Some children may have entered the United Kingdom unaccompanied by an adult and are fleeing conflict in their country of origin. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) will be subject to immigration rules.

See also Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Challenging behaviour

A child may exhibit behaviour that can be difficult to manage. This can include the use of bad language, throwing objects and refusing to co-operate with simple tasks or instructions. For many it is a way of trying to gain some control and predictability over their lives. A foster carer needs to understand how a child's early life experiences impact on them and this is often the reason for such behaviour. A foster carer needs to remember when managing challenging behaviour that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable and not the child involved.

A child's behaviour needs to be understood and managed appropriately. Approaches to this should not involve emotional or physical abuse of a child. The foster carer can speak to the child's social worker or the supervising social worker for guidance and support with this. If additional support or training is needed this could be offered by the supervising social worker or through a referral to Emotional Wellbeing clinic. Peer mentoring by a foster carer who has experience of dealing with a particular behaviour is also available. If a foster carer is struggling it is important that this is raised at the earliest opportunity so support can be put in place.

Use of 'time in' rather than 'time out'

'Time out' isolates a child and can leave them feeling abandoned, rejected and unloved. A child may already have these feelings due to early life experiences so if a foster carer uses this as a way of managing behaviour it reinforces this. It can cause fear, anger, confusion, resentment, embarrassment, humiliation, insecurity and low self-esteem.

A foster carer should have a dedicated area in the home that can be used for 'time in' that a child is invited to when behaviour suggests they are finding it difficult. Rather than the child being alone the foster carer should spend time in this area with them. A child of any age can be comforted and engaged in nurturing play or discussion, feeling safe in this dedicated area.

Awareness of limits

A foster carer needs to be aware of their own limits. A foster carer needs to recognise if they are becoming stressed and losing patience with a child in their care and speak to the supervising social worker for additional support. Admitting to having difficulties is not a sign of weakness.

Restraint

This should only be used if a foster carer is appropriately trained and all other de-escalation techniques have been exhausted. A foster carer should record any use of

restraint as soon as possible after the incident on the appropriate form and return this within 48 hours. The supervising social worker should be notified of any instance of restraint as soon as possible.

[Link to completed form](#)

[Need link to restraint template](#)

See Also Mentoring, Support

Changes in circumstances

A foster carer should discuss any changes to circumstances or household with the supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity.

Child Protection Case Conference (CPCC)

A CPCC is when people who are involved with a child, come together to discuss concerns about the child's welfare. The foster carer may be invited to a CPCC.

A foster carer does not have an automatic right to receive the minutes of a CPCC due to the sensitivity of information recorded in these meetings. This can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Follow the link below for further information on Child Protection:

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/child-protection-system.html>

Also see *Children's Rights for support children can get when attending CPCC's*

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Looked after Children can be vulnerable to CSE due to their history and experiences before becoming looked after. They may have lived in a chaotic and dysfunctional household (parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, parental mental health issues, and parental criminality). They may have a history of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. They will have suffered loss and possibly bereavement. They may have low self-esteem and self-confidence.

What is CSE?

Child Sexual Exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations and contexts where children (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing sexual activities and/or another performing

sexual activities on them. (Sue Jago and Jenny Pearce, The University of Bedfordshire, 2008)

Boys and girls can be subject to CSE and it is child abuse.

Possible signs of CSE

- Going missing/returning late
- Missing school/not taking part in education
- Physical injuries such as bruising
- Unexplained gifts/new possessions
- Associating with other young people at risk of CSE
- Having older boyfriends/girlfriends. Under 16s cannot be in a sexual relationship
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Mood swings/changes in emotional presentation
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Lot of time spent online
- Multiple mobile phones

A foster carer needs to be aware of these possible signs and that a combination of some of these in a child can indicate possible CSE. If a foster carer is worried that a child could be at risk or is being exploited this needs to be discussed with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

CSE Risk Management Plans

If risk of harm through CSE is identified a strategy meeting will be held with the foster carer included in this. A CSE Risk Assessment is undertaken by the Kirklees CSE Team and from there an intervention plan is formulated. The foster carer may be asked to do things as part of this plan, for example ensuring a child hands their mobile telephone in at night time. This plan for Looked After Children will be reviewed every 4 weeks if high risk and every 6 weeks if medium and low risk. Information from the foster carer at these meetings will be valuable to help the social worker assess the level of risk of CSE to the child. Team Managers and social workers for the child are responsible for chairing the meetings and updating the risk management plans that already exist but they will have the input of the CSE Risk Assessment and Intervention Plan from the CSE Social worker. A social worker from the CSE Team will attend all reviews and provide input.

Taking a child at risk of CSE abroad

If a child is known to be at risk of CSE through a police flag a signed letter is not sufficient for the foster carer to take them abroad. The CSE Team should be given prior notice of travel plans (dates and destinations) before travel so they can alert the port they are travelling through that the child is travelling legally and does not need to be stopped. Any child with a CSE Flag should be stopped at any port they go through.

CSE training

E-learning on CSE can be accessed through the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board website and this needs to be completed by all Kirklees foster carers. The foster carer will need a log in and password to access this. The foster carer can discuss learning from this and any issues raised with the supervising social worker. A link to the training can be found below:

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/child--sexual--exploitation.html>

Other useful websites/links

Parents against child sexual exploitation (PACE)

<http://www.paceuk.info/>

Barnardo's spot the signs

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cse/spotthesigns.htm

Marie Collins Foundation

<http://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/>

CEOP Thinkuknow

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Bewise 2 sexual exploitation resource in links folder

Barnardos be safe in links needed folder

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sC4Nn_mYKu0&feature=youtu.be

Children's Guardian

If a child is subject to ongoing Court Proceedings they will have an allocated Children's Guardian from Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass). The role of the Guardian is to ensure that decisions made are in a child's best interests. The Guardian will want to talk to the child and may want to talk to the foster carer. More information for children and adults can be found on the Cafcass website:

<https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/>

Children's Rights

The Kirklees Children's Rights Team are an Independent Support Service for children and young people who are looked after by Kirklees Council. The team provide advocacy to children and young people to ensure that their voice is heard and considered in any decisions which are made that affect their lives. The team can help children and young people to prepare for meetings such as their looked after reviews, attend with them or attend and present their views on their behalf. Support can range from researching information to just being a listening ear. In addition to advice and information on rights the team help children and young people to understand their own responsibilities.

The service is confidential so no information that is given by children and young people would be passed onto anyone without their consent unless there was a risk to them or someone else.

There is the opportunity to take part in activities such as becoming a member of the Children in Care Council or Care Leavers Forum, delivering training to adults, taking part in one off consultations or interviewing adults who are applying to work with Kirklees Children's Services.

The team also co-ordinates the Independent Visitor Scheme. Children and young people are matched with a volunteer who meets with them to take them out to do fun things and build up a positive, trusting relationship.

For further information about any of the above please contact Children's Rights:

Freephone: 0800 389 3312 (*free from landlines*)

Telephone: 01484 225288

Text number: 07938195322

Email: childrens.rights@kirklees.gov.uk

www.kirklees.gov.uk/youngPeople

Write to: FREEPOST KIRKLEES COUNCIL CHILDRENS RIGHTS TEAM

Visit:

Kirklees Children's Rights Team
2nd Floor Brian Jackson House
New North Parade
Huddersfield
HD1 5JP

Children who smoke

A foster carer should ensure that a child understands the dangers of smoking offering encouragement and support to stop. If a child does smoke this must be outside the home.

It is illegal for a child under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes and if a foster carer is aware that a shop is selling them they should speak to the proprietor.

The Specialist Nurse for Looked after Children can provide advice about stopping smoking and can signpost a child or a foster carer for stop smoking support.

Compliments and complaints

If you have a compliment or complaint about the service please discuss this with the supervising social worker or their team manager. If your complaint is not resolved please refer to the compliments and complaints procedures:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/contact-the-council/complaints-procedure.aspx>

Complaints in Kirklees are dealt with in three stages that you can find more detail on in the procedures.

Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

The Placement Team will share any information known about a child with a foster carer prior to a child being placed. This and information from the child's social worker should enable the foster carer to provide appropriate care. Much of the information will be personal and all of it is told to a foster carer in confidence.

Who else needs to know?

The foster carer will need to share some of this information with children and family members who are likely to have regular contact with the child. The foster carer should know how much their own children can cope with, depending on their age and maturity and use discretion. It is important that the foster carer emphasises to children and family members the need for confidentiality.

Who does not need to know?

Friends and neighbours - basically it is none of their business. A firm refusal by a foster carer to talk about the Looked After Child will usually stop questions.

Discussions with other foster carers

Any foster carer is governed by the same principles of confidentiality. A foster carer can seek general advice from another foster carer, for example, managing a

particular behaviour without breaking confidentiality. A foster carer must not discuss specific details of a child's case or background with another foster carer.

Records

Records are kept by Children and Young People's service on every Looked After Child and every foster family. The supervising social worker will record information about the foster carer which will include a copy of their approval, all relevant checks, references and foster care reviews. The child's social worker will record information about the child.

If a foster carer wishes to see their records an access to records request must be made. For information on this please see the link below:

<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/information-and-data/data-protection.aspx>

Record keeping

A foster carer needs to keep a clear record of events in the life of any Looked After Child they care for. A separate record needs to be kept on each child placed. These are important because:

- They will help a foster carer to provide clear information when they contribute to making plans about a child's future.
- They will provide useful information for life story work and the child in later life.
- It will help to protect children in their care, and safeguard family members from false allegations.
- Records could be of use in a Court hearing and may be requested by the Court

The supervising social worker will look at log sheets and sign these off during supervisory visits.

Children and their parents should be made aware that foster carers are making written records. This can be explained at the placement planning meeting.

A foster carer must return all written information about a child when the child moves on. The foster carer must delete all information relating to a child when the child moves on.

When to record

Records should ideally be made on a daily basis or as soon as possible after an event or incident. This will help to ensure the accuracy of dates, times, conversations and incidents.

How to record

- Keep it simple, clear and legible
- Notes do not have to be lengthy, just the main points

- Foster carers should record how a child has actually said something
- Keep to factual information and do not be judgmental
- Accuracy is important when referring to specific incidents

Please find link to log sheets below:

The article below highlights the significance of keeping records for the children you care for:

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2016/04/22/care-file-left-voice-social-worker-wont-make-mistake/>

Records the foster carer will receive when a child is placed

When a child is placed with a foster carer they should receive a copy of the following information from the child's social worker:

- Placement Plan including Delegated Authority
- Signed Medical Consent
- Care Plan
- Missing risk assessment if there is one

As the placement progresses the foster carer will receive copies of reviews they have attended regarding the child. Copies of all these documents should be stored confidentially as part of the child's records. The foster carer will also be kept informed of any key decisions which are made by the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

Also see social media

Contact

The Children Act, 1989 places a legal duty on the Local Authority to promote contact for Looked After Children. There are clear expectations on the foster carer to promote contact outlined in section 10 of the National Minimum Standards for foster carers. The foster carer should be provided with information that enables them to make contact as safe and enjoyable as possible. The foster carer should prepare children for contact, take a child to contact and offer support afterwards reassuring a child it is okay to discuss contact. A foster carer could also be expected to facilitate contact in the home or at an agreed venue if it is considered safe and appropriate. It can increase a child's sense of security when the people who are important to them are comfortable with each other and can be less threatening for parents and other family members. It is important that the foster carer promotes sibling contact when siblings are placed in separate placements.

Contact is important for a child to maintain their sense of identity. A child with dual heritage or those who may be placed with foster carers who are not a cultural match, need to maintain links with their family, friends and community so that their cultural history is encouraged and valued.

Contact arrangements will be discussed with the foster carer at the placement planning meeting and detailed within the child's Care Plan, Placement Plan and Delegated Authority. This will also highlight any assessment of risk of those involved. This contact may be direct or indirect such as telephone contact, letters and cards.

Problems with contact

Contact can cause distress for a child and the foster carer is often the person who has to deal with confusion or disappointment. This can be emotionally difficult for a foster carer who feels frustrated that the family are letting the child down, but, there are many possible reasons why parents and family members find contact stressful including feelings of guilt, anger and failure. It is important that a foster carer supports the child and reassures them it is not their fault without appearing negative about the birth family.

The foster carer can also make invaluable contributions to the plans for a child by recording the behaviour in relation to contact. This may identify patterns which can contribute to decision making which may otherwise go unnoticed. It is also important that the issue of contact is discussed in formal supervision with the supervising social worker so that problems can be identified, shared and hopefully resolved.

Counter terrorism

When children move into the adolescent stage of development they are trying to establish their identity making them vulnerable to grooming from terrorist groups. This is a safeguarding issue so the foster carer needs to be aware of the warning signs and behavioural indicators for this:

Behavioural indicators

- Change in appearance
- Search for answers - identity, faith and belonging
- Desire for adventure/excitement
- Desire to enhance self esteem
- Sense of grievance triggered by personal experience of racism/discrimination/aspects of government policy
- Isolated from peers, associates with only one group of people
- Withdrawal from family members
- Additional vulnerability risk factors: Special Educational Needs, mental health Issues, alcohol and drug abuse

Warning signs

- Graffiti, symbols or artwork promoting extremist messages
- Accessing extremist material online
- Changes in behaviour, friendship and actions
- Young people voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies or narratives

- Use of extremist or hate terms to exclude others or incite violence

If a foster carer is worried about a child this should be discussed with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

For further information please see link and contact details below:

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/you-kmc/partners/communitySafety/preventChannel.aspx>

Prevent Hub 01924 483747.

Court

Children giving evidence in criminal proceedings

A child living with a foster carer may have to go to Court. They will be given what is known as special measures in Court. These should be explained clearly to the child and the foster carer. Please see useful link below:

Crown Prosecution Service leaflet for use by an adult to prepare a child for Court

https://www.cps.gov.uk/victims_witnesses/millie_english.pdf

Children making appearances in Court

A child in foster care may have to attend Court in relation to a criminal offence. A foster carer will need to support them to attend appointments and Court appearances.

Young People and the Law:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-rights/legal-system/young-people-and-the-law/>

A foster carer appearing in Court

In certain circumstances a foster carer may be requested to give evidence to the Court. Accurate records kept by the foster carer will assist with this.

For a foster carers attending Court can be a daunting experience but the child's social worker and the supervising social worker will offer advice and support to prepare before the Court date.

Also see Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

D

DBS checks

A foster carer will have a DBS during assessment. This is then renewed every three years.

Members of the fostering household who are over 17 years old will also have a DBS check every three years.

Members of the support network who provide practical support such as baby sitting and taking children to school will also have a DBS check every three years.

It is the responsibility of the foster carer to make the supervising social worker aware of any new issues for them, members of the household or support network that could impact on the DBS.

Delegated Authority

This will be agreed within the Placement Planning Meeting and included in the child's Placement Plan. The foster carer and the supervising social workers need to ensure that delegated authority is clear from the planning meeting asking questions as necessary for clarity. The delegated authority should be specific to the individual child and the foster carer will receive a signed copy of this from the child's social worker. The foster carer should raise any issues about delegated authority with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker. Delegated authority will be considered as part of every Looked After Child review.

Permanency through long term fostering

The Care planning Regulations 2015 recognise long term fostering as a route to permanency on par with adoption for a Looked After Child. The foster carer makes a commitment for the child to stay with the family through childhood and beyond meaning the child is fully integrated into the family. The assessment for a long term foster carer includes identification of a support network of people that can offer practical support. These identified people will care for a child for longer periods of time if needed rather than a child going to respite in line with what happens in a family such as a child going to their Grandparents.

For further information on delegated authority please see the link to the procedures below:

http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_del_auth_fc_resid.html

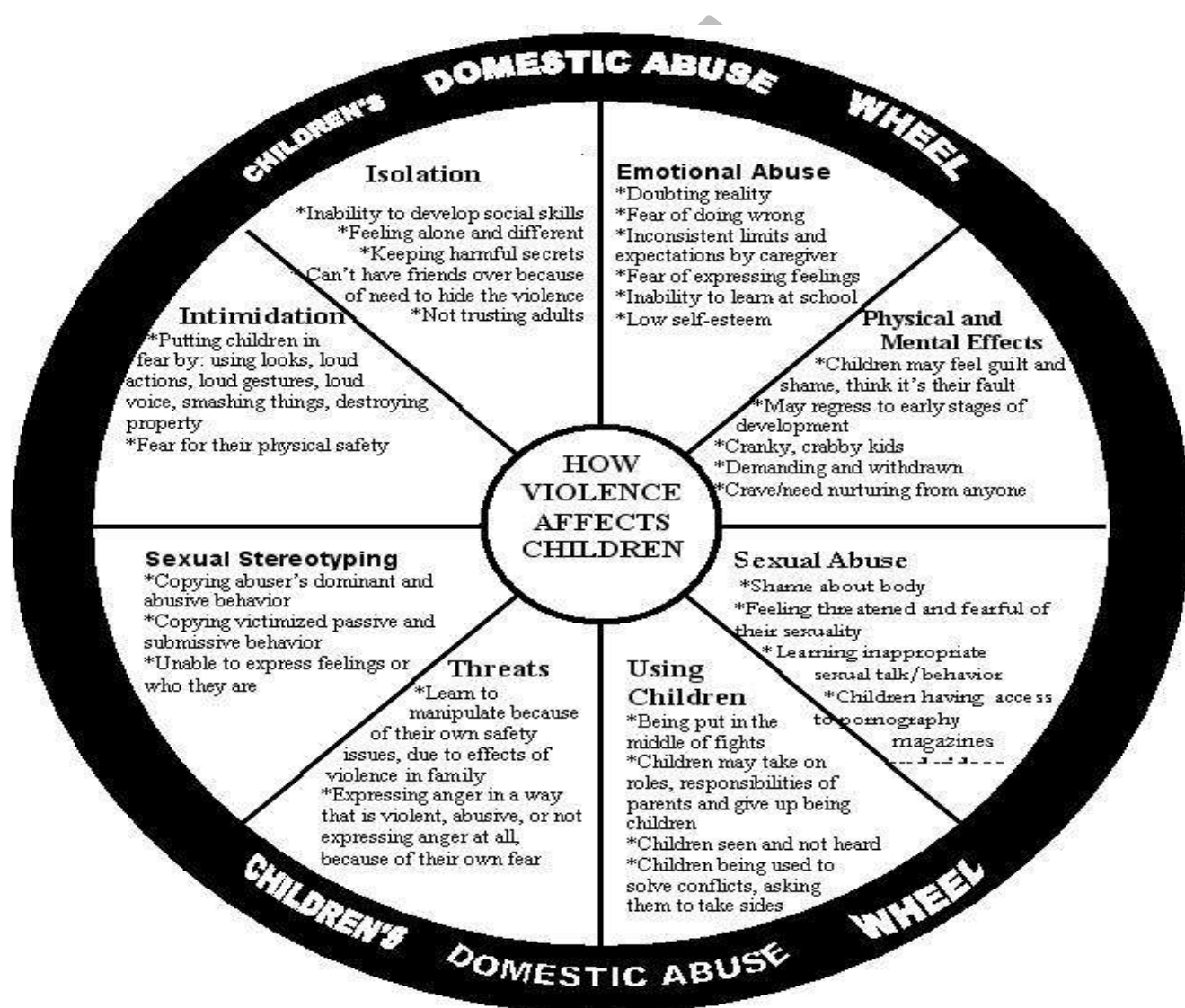
Please see link below for an example of delegated authority paperwork – to be added from the links folder

Please see link below for more general information on delegated authority:

Domestic abuse

Impact on children of living with domestic abuse

The wheel below will help a foster carer understand why a child who has experienced domestic abuse may display certain behaviours.



Supporting a child who has experienced domestic abuse

How the foster carer responds to a child such as using a loud voice can trigger memories of being at home resulting in the child behaving in a certain way. In this example if a foster carer talks quite loud naturally it may mean adapting this to talk quieter. It is important that a foster carer is able to understand the reasons behind behaviour rather than focusing on the presenting behaviour. The child's social worker

or the supervising social worker will be able to give further guidance and support to a foster carer on caring for an individual child.

It is important for a foster carer to have open, developmentally appropriate discussion with a child about healthy relationships.

[Activity sheet from training supporting children from violent homes \(saved in links to be included folder\).](#)

Abuse in young people's relationships

Young people aged 16 and 17 are included in the Government definition of domestic violence and abuse:

'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members¹ regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- **Psychological**
- **Physical**
- **Sexual**
- **Financial**
- **Emotional**

'Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

Abuse within young people's relationships is commonplace, they can be more accepting and, or dismissive of this than adults. Social networking is used more in young people's relationships as a method of exploitation and control but they often do not recognise this. Young people also often lack an understanding of sexual consent.

Impact of abusive relationships on young people

- Physical injuries
- Fear
- Isolation
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Self-harm
- Poorer educational attainment
- Substance use
- Earlier sexual intercourse

- Reduced contraceptive use
- Potential to impact on future relationship behaviour

A Looked After Child may already be impacted by some of the factors listed above. Looked After Children are vulnerable to abusive relationships due to their life experiences such as they may come from a home where domestic abuse, particularly physical violence is viewed as normal within a relationship.

What can prevent a young person becoming involved in an abusive relationship?

- Talk about relationships to help them distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Challenge stereotypes and attitudes
- Promote the consistent message that abuse is not acceptable
- Build supportive, empowering and non-judgemental relationships with young people
- Increasing self-esteem and positive coping strategies

Further useful information/links:

Impact on children of living with domestic abuse and young people and domestic abuse see link below:

<http://thehideout.org.uk/>

<http://www.equation.org.uk/resources/>

For more information on abuse in young people's relationship follow the link below to the teen power and control wheel:

Add link it is saved in links needed folder.

The teen power and control wheel can be used along with the teen equality to wheel to discuss healthy relationships with a young person in your care. Link for equality wheel below:

Add link it is saved in links needed folder.

Spiralling short film about a young couple's relationship

<https://vimeo.com/63750726>

Spiralling toolkit can be used with above link to this **saved in links to be used folder.**

For further support and tools foster carers can speak to their supervising social worker

Disruption

Unfortunately, there can be circumstances which prevent a foster placement from working and being in the best interests of the child. This can lead to a placement disruption which means it has ended outside the time frame agreed at the start of the placement. A disruption can occur when the professionals involved with the child feel the placement is no longer meeting the child's needs or when a foster carer decides that they are no longer able to care for a child. An older child may also "vote with their feet" and decide to leave the placement.

Wherever possible when a placement is recognised to be coming to an end, a plan should be developed to move the child on. A Foster carer should avoid ending a placement abruptly or in an unplanned manner wherever possible. To enable this a foster carer needs to make sure any concerns are discussed with the supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity so support can be offered to prevent disruption.

A foster carer will need to work with professionals to move a child on appropriately to another placement. Finding another placement can take a number of weeks and it is good practice to ensure a period of introduction is arranged for the child to increase the chances of the placement being successful.

Where placements are disrupted there can be strong feelings about how things went wrong. This can be an extremely difficult time for all concerned and it is important to remain professional and objective to enable lessons to be learned by all parties to the placement plan.

When a placement disrupts a disruption meeting will be requested by the team manager for the child and chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer. This meeting is a helpful tool in the future planning for the child, for the foster carer and the Service. There will normally have been some positive experiences for the child, the foster carer and their family and it is important to remember these. The foster carer is invited to attend these and contribute with support from the supervising social worker. For further information on disruption meetings please see link to the procedures below

http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_place_disrup_meet.html

Drug and legal high abuse

A child can be tempted to take or experiment with drugs regardless of their home and social circumstances.

It is often difficult to tell if a child is using drugs or legal highs, particularly when a child first takes drugs or only takes them occasionally.

Some possible indicators of drug and legal high abuse are listed below:

- Sudden changes of mood from happy and alert to sullen and moody.
- Unusually irritable
- Loss of appetite
- Bouts of drowsiness or sleepiness
- Increased evidence of telling lies or furtive behaviour
- Unexplained loss of money or belongings from the home
- Unusual smells, stains or marks on the body, clothes or around the house

Many of these signs can be easily confused adolescent development. It is important not to jump to the wrong conclusion but if a foster carer is concerned that a child could be using drugs or legal highs it should be discussed with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker.

Support for children/young people

The Base is a drug and alcohol service for young people and young adults in Kirklees (up to the age of 21). They provide friendly support around drugs, NPS (previously known as 'legal highs') and/or alcohol. The service also offers a provision for parents, carers and professionals who support young people in Kirklees.

The service is flexible and accessible. They offer appointments across Kirklees to ensure that accessing any of our services is made as easy as possible.

They are based at Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade, Huddersfield and Dewsbury Town Hall, Old Wakefield Road, Dewsbury.

<https://www.changegrowlive.org/young-people/the-base-kirklees>

Other resources:

Frank

<http://www.talktofrank.com/worried-about-a-child>

NPS/Legal high information

<https://www.hit.org.uk/index.php/publications/leaflets/legal-highs-series/item/39-legal-highs-essential-information-and-advice-for-parents-and-professionals>

E

Eating problems

A child can have very different eating habits and preferences. Some will have large appetites whilst others may be reluctant to eat much particularly at the start of a placement. These differences are to be expected, and usually should not be a cause for concern. Some eating problems are serious and can have a damaging effect on physical and emotional health. The most common of these 'eating disorders' are detailed below:

Anorexia Nervosa

People who suffer with this have an extreme fear of normal body weight and feel fat, even when they have lost so much weight that it becomes obvious to others. They may starve themselves by only eating tiny quantities of food. Some stubbornly and angrily resist attempts to get them to eat or will pretend to have eaten when they have not.

Bulimia

People with Bulimia gorge themselves with food on 'binges' and then make themselves sick to get rid of the food. Children may also take large amounts of laxatives. They may not look overweight or underweight, which can make their eating problems difficult to detect.

Compulsive Eating Disorder

People who eat compulsively consume much more food than their bodies need or, use food for comfort or distraction. They may become very overweight, which can lead to serious medical problems for the future.

Signs that could indicate an eating problem

- Regularly skipping meals and obsessively counting calories
- Eating only low calorie food
- Avid interest in buying or cooking food for others
- Wearing very loose clothes to hide the body
- An obsession with exercise
- Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Food missing in large amounts from the fridge/cupboards
- Disappearing from the table directly after meal (in order to make themselves vomit)

The foster carer should ensure that members of the family eat together to help a Looked After Child's sense of belonging but to also pick up any indicators of an eating problem. It is important to promote healthy eating and sensible exercise so a child can model this.

Eating disorders affect many more girls than boys, but it is important to remember that boys do suffer from them too. If a foster carer thinks a child they are caring for may have an eating problem this should be discussed with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker as this can be a sign of emotional difficulty. Support can then be given to get additional help for the child if needed.

Due to the emotional impact of adverse life experiences Looked After Children can use food as a means of control, overeat, sneak or hide food. These signs do not mean that a child has an eating disorder but if a foster carer is worried about a child's eating patterns this should be discussed with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker. The foster carer should not punish a child for any of this behaviour but give reassurance that food will always be available in the home.

Early Permanence Placements (EPPs)

EPP was previously referred to as 'foster to adopt' and is explored with all prospective adopters. The appropriateness of this is considered within permanency planning meetings for each individual child due to the impact moving has on a child's development. There is a legal duty to consider this option for all children with a plan for adoption where it is likely such as a sibling recently being adopted. With an EPP the adults take the risk rather than the child as there is no guarantee the child will remain there. Adopters with EPPs will have had a full adoption assessment and approval at panel. They will temporarily be approved as foster carers by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM). A social worker from the Adoption Team is the supervising social worker for these foster carers with support from the fostering service to reduce the number of professionals involved with the child.

E cigarettes

It is too early to identify any long term health risks from the use of or passive smoking of E cigarettes. A foster carer who uses an E cigarette cannot foster a child under 5 years old and these should not be used in the home. E cigarettes normalise smoking to a child. A foster carer needs to ensure any liquid used in these is safely looked away so that a child cannot access this.

For full guidance on these please click on the link below:

[E cigs guidance from Dr Parry saved to links](#)

Education

Education is a universal entitlement and is a fundamental right for all children. Attending school is an important part of everyday life and can provide a point of stability for Looked After Children who have had their lives disrupted and live apart from their families.

It is well documented and evidenced that the educational performance and attainment of Looked After Children is well below that of children who are not in care.

Some of the significant disadvantage is a result of changes in placement and often changes in schools either prior to the child being taken into care, or as a result of them being taken into care. This lack of consistency is a major factor impacting on poor educational attainment and has an impact into later adult life.

Therefore it is essential that the foster carer provides the much needed stability and encouragement by working in partnership with schools and other children's services to improve the education attainment for the child.

It is vital, where possible, for a child to remain in their existing school, where they may have a network of friends and support. A foster carer will be required to take a child to school and any difficulties should be highlighted at the placement planning meeting.

A foster carer should be consulted and involved in all aspects of the child's education from ensuring the education provision is appropriate right at the start of the placement, to ensuring that this continues on a day to day basis. The foster carer should attend all parents' evenings, sports days and other school events to show their interest, commitment and support.

Early intervention in a child's education often prevents future problems and signals that their education is important. Taking positive action and avoiding delay should be a shared objective of everyone involved with a child.

It is not acceptable for a Looked After Child to be out of education. They should not be treated less favourably because they are in care. They should receive priority action by all involved to support their education.

Kirklees Virtual school

The Kirklees Virtual School supports all of our Looked After Children from the age of 3 to 18 .

Every young person has a link to a named member of the team who will support and challenge schools and other professionals to ensure that every young person has access to an education provision that meets their needs and enables them to achieve their potential.

They will coordinate all initial PEP's and attend other PEP meetings as necessary, especially where there are issues with the progress a young person is making at

school or college. They will be involved in supporting all school moves and should be involved as early as possible if you have any concerns.

You should know who this person is and be able to contact them if you have any concerns, if not please contact the Virtual School on

01484 221580

Kirklees.VirtualSchool@kirklees.gov.uk

Role of schools in supporting Looked After Children

Clearly there is a need for all schools to prioritise and support Looked After Children. A Looked After Child is guaranteed their first preference of school and every school has prioritised Looked After Children in their admission criteria. The Social Worker will make any school applications as the Corporate Parent, supported by the Virtual School and it is essential that you are involved in these discussions.

Schools have a responsibility to enhance the understanding of their staff about Looked After Children and to promote their involvement in extracurricular activities and clubs.

Attendance at planning meetings and reviews should be a priority for schools and there is an expectation that schools will release staff to attend meetings for these vulnerable young people. Every school should have a designated teacher for Looked After Children who should maintain close links with the foster carer and social workers. The foster carer should seek the advice of the Virtual School if they are experiencing difficulties. Every school should also have a designated governor for Looked After Children. Every school should have clear policies and guidelines for liaising with external agencies and communicating with the foster carer and social workers. Schools should keep the foster carer informed by:

- Making regular contact
- Having a clear plan for introduction and integration of a child into school
- Having a proactive approach to problems
- Sharing concerns at an early stage
- Jointly managing and writing the Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP) that every Looked After Child is entitled to.

The role of the PEP meeting (recorded in ePEP)

All PEP meetings should ensure that every Looked After Child receives access and support to services; contribute to stability; minimise disruption and broken schooling; signal particular and special needs; establish clear goals and who is responsible for achieving them; and act as a record of progress and achievement.

The PEP process should run concurrently with the Care Plan and should be set up in the first instance within 10 working days of a child coming into care. It should subsequently be reviewed in line with statutory reviews. Outcomes should be clearly recorded and named people should be allocated specific tasks with timescales to raise educational attainment.

It is essential that the foster carer attends PEP meetings and actively participate in its completion, as this will ensure that there is regular communication between home and school. The foster carer should be given a copy of the completed PEP by the Social Worker.

Role of the foster carer supporting Looked After Children with education

A foster carer plays an essential role in supporting the child with education. It is vital that a child's educational arrangements are prioritised and discussed with the social worker and the supervising social worker prior to placement. The foster carer should establish and maintain close links with the child's designated teacher and social worker.

Kirklees wants the best outcomes for all Looked After Children so has clear expectations of the foster carer to enable them to achieve, these are:

- Recognising the educational strengths and weaknesses and needs of each child
- Keeping schools informed of changes and emerging problems
- Helping the child to express their concerns or aspirations and advocating on their behalf
- Encouraging the child to develop their talents and recognise their achievements no matter how small
- Responding quickly to requests from school for meetings
- Ensuring attendance at school through establishing clear expectations of attendance, punctuality, uniform, and completion of homework
- Ensuring that attendance is promoted and supported, including taking the child to school
- Liaising with other agencies if non-school attendance is an issue
- Not taking family holidays during term time
- Providing an appropriate learning environment including a quiet area for homework and the required resources such as Internet access
- Providing learning opportunities outside the home such as visits to libraries and museums

- Ensuring the child's ethnicity and background are considered and supported when making plans
- Demonstrating a positive interest in a child's education daily
- Attending parent's evenings and encouraging where appropriate birth parent's involvement
- Supporting school's policies on discipline and dress
- Supporting homework by reading with a child, offering advice and making sure they complete set work
- Supporting school events
- Rewarding achievement
- Discussing any issues with the child's social worker and supervising social worker at the earliest opportunity. Seeking advice regarding a child's school and any difficulties they may be experiencing through the Kirklees virtual school.
- Providing positive messages about the benefits of lifelong learning by celebrating and sharing your own learning achievements.

School Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school for a fixed period it is the duty of the school to inform the foster carer, in writing within one day, of the reasons for the length of the exclusion. Whilst the child is excluded the school must:

- Provide appropriate work for them to do at home
- Put in place measures to try and support the child to avoid future exclusions
- Provide the foster carer with the name of a contact person should they wish to appeal the exclusion
- Be clear about the length of the exclusion and the date and time the pupil should return to school

Please ensure that the Social Worker and Virtual School are notified immediately if this happens and work together to ensure that the situation is resolved as soon as possible. If you are concerned that a young person is at risk of exclusion please contact the Virtual School to discuss your concerns

School applications/changing schools

These are made by the child's social worker as the corporate parent, supported by the Virtual School. The foster can input into this but the child's social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and virtual school need to agree this.

Holidays

Looked After Children cannot be taken on holiday in term time

Pupil premium

The Pupil Premium is allocated to the Virtual School Head for all Looked After Children. They have the responsibility of allocating this funding to schools to support them to raise the achievement of Looked After Children. The Virtual School works with each educational setting to agree how pupil premium funding will be spent to meet the needs identified in the child's EPEP meeting. Examples of this support might be 1:1 tuition in English or maths, targeted reading support, revision sessions.

Equipment

A foster carer will be provided with the essential items of furniture and equipment needed to care for a child. These items include:

- Bed (single or bunk beds)
- Bedroom furniture i.e. wardrobe or chest of drawers
- Cot/carry cot/ Moses basket
- Pushchair/pram
- Fireguard
- Stair gate
- High chair
- Car seats
- Steriliser and bottles
- Baby Monitors
- Specialist equipment for a disabled child would be discussed with the Disabled Children's Service

This furniture and equipment is purchased by the fostering service and is on loan to the foster carer so if they cease to foster the equipment needs to be returned.

The foster carer should check and agree an amount with the supervising social worker before purchasing any items.

If a foster carer has furniture or equipment that is no longer needed the fostering service will support for this to be passed on elsewhere. If a foster carer has furniture or equipment that is no longer serviceable they are expected to dispose of this.

F

Foster Carer Agreement

See section A of the handbook

Fostering Network

The Fostering Network is a charity working throughout the United Kingdom to promote and improve quality of the foster care services.

Kirklees provides membership to the Fostering Network for all foster carers. Once a foster carer has been approved they will receive an individual membership pack. If a foster carer does not receive this they need to speak to the supervising social worker. Membership includes:

- Access to online resources
- Four magazines per year
- Email updates
- Helpline for any fostering related query
- 24 hour Legal protection insurance and helpline
- Access to an online community
- Regional forums and workshops
- Discounts on things such as family days out

Kirklees also uses the Fostering Network Independent Support Service to offer support to foster carers or identified members of the support network if they are subject to any allegations.

For further information on the Fostering Network visit the website:

<https://www.fostering.net/>

Fostering Panel

The core work of the Fostering Panel is to:

- Consider the assessment of any prospective foster carer and to make recommendations to the ADM as to whether they are suitable to foster
- Consider the first annual review of approval for a foster carer after the first year of practice and subsequent reviews as required
- Consider amendments to a foster carer profile when there are significant changes in the approval status of the foster carer
- Consider long term matches of a child with a foster carer

- Consider service recommendations of termination of a foster carer approvals arising from concerns regards practice
- Acknowledge resignations of an approved foster carer due to other circumstances.

The Panel also has oversight from an independent standpoint of the overall practice and performance of the fostering service in the recruitment and retention of foster carers and overall delivery of service.

A foster carer is expected to attend Fostering Panel and answer the questions asked of them. The foster carer will see the Panel questions in advance and be given time to prepare answers with support from the assessing or supervising social worker. In the waiting room the foster carer can view a folder that explains Panel and introduces members. At Panel members will introduce themselves before the foster carer is asked the questions.

Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

The (IRM) is a review process which prospective foster carers and foster carers can use if they do not agree with the qualifying determination given to them by the fostering service provider. A qualifying determination' is a determination made by a fostering service provider that it does not propose to approve a person as suitable to foster a child, or proposes to terminate or change the terms of the approval of an existing foster carer. The review process is conducted by a review panel managed by CoramBAAF on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and is independent of the fostering service provider. A review panel will consider the case and make a recommendation to the fostering service ADM, who may or may not accept it.

G

GDPR

The **GDPR** is Europe's new framework for data protection laws – it replaces the previous 1995 data protection directive, which current UK law is based upon. The EU's **GDPR** website says the **legislation** is designed to "harmonise" data privacy laws across Europe as well as give greater protection and rights to individuals.

Please see the following link which explains in detail this new piece of legislation and how it applies to the council.

www.legislation.gov.uk

H

Health

The foster carer should receive all the information required to meet an individual child's health or developmental needs from the child's social worker. The child's social worker should also be able to provide information and give advice on specialist advisory or support groups. This should be discussed at the placement planning meeting.

The specialist nurses for Looked After Children (LAC) can be approached for advice and/or signposting. The team consists of school nurses and a health visitor, who have a wide variety of skills and knowledge. They can be contacted through the 'Looked after Children and Care Leavers Service' on 01484 221000. The Medical Advisor/Paediatrician(s) are available for advice via the LAC nurses or the social worker.

The child's social worker should ensure that the foster carer has a copy of the latest health recommendation plan, to ensure they meet their responsibilities and are aware of the child's health needs. Health issues should always be discussed at the Looked After Child review and any issues related to carrying out the actions in the health plan by the carer should be discussed at the earliest convenience and not necessarily wait for the next review.

When a child has attended the dentist, the date must be provided to the child's social worker by the foster carer as soon as possible, as there is a statutory duty to ensure they attend and this information is recorded. The date of the dental visit can also be given if more convenient, to the LAC health business support workers on the number above.

An emotional well-being screening tool called the 'Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' (SDQs) is sent out to carers to complete on an annual basis, for children who have been in care for 12 months or more and are aged between 4 and 17. A young person version is also sent for children over the age of 11 years which is not compulsory, but provides an opportunity for their opinion to be taken into account. There is a statutory duty for the carer to complete their questionnaire and it should be returned as soon as possible, as it informs the forthcoming health assessment.

Support and advice is available to young people and carers for sexual health and substance misuse issues. This is provided by dedicated outreach workers within Kirklees. Contact can be arranged via the social workers or LAC nurses.

First Aid

Fostering households should have a basic first aid kit available to deal promptly with minor injuries. First Aid training is mandatory for primary and secondary foster carers and should be refreshed every three years.

Medication

The child's social worker should ensure that the foster carer is aware of all the details related to any medication the child takes and any allergies when a child is placed.

It is essential for a foster carer to record any medication a child is given, whether it is prescribed by the child's GP or not.

In order for a foster carer to accept responsibility to undertake procedures such as injections, administering rectal medication, tube feeding or other additional medical responsibilities the following criteria should be met:

- Any person with parental responsibility has given written consent
- The foster carer is willing to do the task
- The foster carer is instructed in the technique by a health professional, who is satisfied that the foster carer has understood the information and at that time is judged to be competent to undertake the specific procedure. The foster carer should also be aware of any possible adverse reactions to the medication or procedure and the necessary steps to correct such an occurrence

Safe storage of medication is essential, ideally in a locked cabinet out of sight and reach of children. This will be monitored by the supervising social worker through supervision, unannounced visits and the health and safety checklist. Under no circumstances should medication or drugs be left in a place where children can access them.

If a child moves placement, the carer must ensure in collaboration with the social worker, that the medication and instructions for use are safely transported with the child. The social worker must ensure that the new carer is aware of the medication and details for administration. Any issues should be raised with the LAC health team or social worker. The carer must register the child with a local GP as soon as possible, in order to allow for a continuation of care and ensure there is no delay in obtaining further supplies of medication if required.

Medical Consent, including scheduled immunisations and campaigns

Medical consent signed by the person/s with parental responsibility, is available through the 'Parental Agreement to Medical Consent' and occurs alongside the 'Placement Agreement and Plan'. This consent covers: emergency medical examinations and treatment, Regular medical examinations e.g. the Initial and

Review health assessments, Routine medical treatment e.g. scheduled immunisations and planned campaigns for targeted groups and dental examination and basic treatment. Young people who are 'Frazer competent' can be offered the opportunity to consent for themselves in some cases. A copy of the consent form will be saved in the child's local authority and health records.

The foster carer should ensure that delegated responsibility has been recorded by children's social care, which then allows for them to sign for example; the scheduled immunisation consent form that is sent out by child health to the child's home, during routine immunisations sessions and campaigns. If the foster carer signs this form, it should be made clear they are signing as the foster carer.

A foster carer **should not** arrange or agree any other medical intervention or immunisation without a discussion with the child's social worker.

Medical Examinations

Looked After Children, will have an Initial Health Assessment (IHA) within 20 working days of coming into care. This is undertaken by a LAC Paediatrician, usually in a clinic setting. If the child is placed out of the Local Authority, a request may be made for the assessment to be undertaken by an equally qualified practitioner. The assessment is supported by the Looked after Children Nurses.

A mutually convenient clinic date will be arranged with the social worker by the Child Health Department. The social worker will arrange for the attendees including the parents (where appropriate), and carers to be present.

The 'Health Recommendation Plan' following the assessment will be stored in the child's social care file and be made available to the child's social worker, who will share and discuss this with the foster carer. A copy is also sent to the carer to be kept with the child's papers at the foster carer's residence. If the child moves placement the plan should always be sent with the child. The GP and Independent Reviewing Officer will also have access to the plan. The full assessment will be stored in the child's health record in Child Health.

Thereafter children up to age 5 will have a statutory Review Health Assessment (RHA) every 6 months and children and young people age 5 up to 18 years will have an annual health assessment. These assessments are carried out by appropriately qualified health practitioners, e.g. Looked After Child nurses, health visitors, school nurses or specialist nurses. The foster carer should ensure that they engage with the arrangements for these assessments to take place and agree to support any actions that arise from either the IHA or RHA that require their involvement.

The foster carer is expected to organise non-emergency medical treatment, including dentists and opticians, with the permission of the person with parental responsibility. If the person with parental responsibility believes a child requires non-emergency medical treatment, then they should make the necessary arrangements. However if the foster carer feels that the child is not getting the treatment they require, the foster

carer should speak to the child's social worker or the supervising social worker. If the child requires emergency treatment the foster carer should make the necessary arrangements and then contact the child's social worker (see accidents). If the treatment is urgent the attending doctors will generally treat the child first and then ensure the consent issues are addressed. It is essential for the foster carer to keep abreast of medication taken by the child and any allergies, to ensure this information is passed to the appropriate personnel in an emergency situation.

A foster carer should record if there has been a medical incident i.e. hospital admission, consultant/ GP appointment and report this to the child's social worker.

Link to Medication Administration Record and guidance- in links folder

Holidays

Looked after Children want to go on holiday and be involved in planning these. It is a requirement within the Care Planning Regulations for children placed long term to go on family holidays but Kirklees wants all Looked After Children to experience family holidays. It is expected a child will be treated as a member of the family and be included in family holidays. To assist with this a holiday allowance is provided annually for each child paid to the foster carer (**see allowances**)

The delegated authority paperwork will detail what the foster carer can agree such as a child going on a school trip. If something is not covered in delegated authority the foster carer needs to check it with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker before making any plans or consenting to anything.

Consent will not be given for a foster carer to take a child on holiday during the school term. A school cannot consent to a Looked After Child being taken out of school. Please see link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Holidays abroad

If a foster carer is considering taking a child on holiday abroad this needs to be discussed with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker giving plenty of notice. Obtaining a passport for a Looked After Child can be a lengthy and complicated process if they do not have one. The cost of the child's passport will be covered so the foster carer should discuss this with the child's social worker.

If a child is accommodated under Section 20 both parents have to consent to the child going on holiday abroad. If there are ongoing legal proceedings, the Court need to be consulted.

The foster carer will need a letter from the child's social worker detailing that there is permission from the relevant Service Manager to take the child abroad in case this is asked for wherever they are travelling from.

Kirklees follows foreign office advice on holiday destinations. However, before booking a holiday destination the foster carer needs to check with the child's social worker as there may be destinations the foreign office do not advise against travel to but that Kirklees are not allowing children to travel to. Please find the link to the foreign office advice below:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> .

Other things to consider

There may be reasons why a holiday might not be in the best interest of the child. It may be too soon after they have moved in. A foster carer may think of a holiday as an exciting thing but due to the life experiences of Looked After Children it could create things such as fear or trigger something from their past. There may be things to consider such as can the child's dietary requirements be met in a chosen country. This is why it is important to discuss this with the child's social worker and the supervising social worker.

Also see Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Section for additional requirements when taking a child at risk of CSE abroad

DRAFT

K

Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN)

The KFN is an organisation run by Kirklees foster carers for the benefit of all Kirklees foster carers. All Kirklees foster carers get automatic membership.

The KFN run coffee mornings, support groups, events and a helpline.

For further information visit the website:

<http://thekfn.co.uk/>

L

Life story work

If a child has lived and grown up in the same family throughout childhood they will know about themselves, their family and the wider community. A child will maintain their heritage by having personal memories, family history, customs and stories; all of which is the foundation on which self-image and identity is built. A child living with a foster carer will have moved from their birth family and may have moved between different foster carers. The foster carer needs to support a child in their care to keep memories and information about their past safe to avoid confusion and promote identity. If a child has an unhappy past it can be tempting to protect them by encouraging them to forget this. A child will have happy memories from living with their family and other foster carers and needs to remember these. A child needs to understand why they are separated from family and if they have moved from previous foster carers, the reasons for this. This understanding helps them to overcome feelings that they are somehow to blame for the separation, allowing them to accept the past and move forward into the future with more positive hopes and aspirations.

Life story work is a way of supporting a child to maintain a good sense of their life journey and identity. It can offer children the opportunity to gain access to important information, express their wishes, feelings and fantasies, accept difficult areas of their life experiences, learn new ways to understand themselves and increase personal confidence and self-esteem. It can also help a foster carer to gain a better understanding of a child living with them. A wide range of people can contribute to the creation of a child's life story birth family members, social workers, teachers and you. Life story work includes:

- Gathering treasured objects, photographs, videos and mementoes
- Creating a written story, explaining the reasons for the child's moves and information about birth family members
- Communicating the story to a child in a meaningful way.

It is important that life story work starts with the present and positives before covering areas that might be more difficult for the child. Formal life story work will be led by the child's social worker but a foster carer will input into this as a key person in the child's life and the one who the child will come to asking further information when the social worker is not there. The foster carer will need to support a child to engage in the work and deal with any emotional issues it raises. The foster carer should be aware that carrying out life story work can raise strong emotions in the child. They can contribute to life story work by:

- Taking photographs and/or videos of special occasions and creating photo albums for children that include text setting out the date, names of people and their significance to the child; please see the section on photographs
- Recording information about the child's development, for instance when they walked, talked; what toys and food they liked;
- Making a **memory box** for a child containing various types of memorabilia, such as a special toy given to them by a parent, their hospital identification wristband from the time of their birth, a memento from a holiday, birthday cards, pieces of schoolwork, a first tooth
-

Memory boxes

All Looked After Children should have a memory box. If a child comes to live with a foster carer straight from home they will need to start this. If a child comes from another foster carer they should already have one and the new foster carer will need to help them add to this whilst they are living there.

For further support with life story work or memory boxes the foster carer should speak to the child's social worker or their supervising social worker.

Long Term Family Finding

The Long Term Family Finding Team is dedicated to securing permanent placements for children who require permanency through long term fostering.

When a child cannot return home, live with another appropriate family member or be placed for adoption they are referred for a long term foster placement and a social worker from the team is appointed as the family finder. This social worker will remain involved with the child until a permanent placement is secured for them. This can mean remaining with the family that is currently caring for them or moving to a new family.

There is a clear family finding process underpinned by the The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013. The link to view the Regulations can be accessed below:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/495/pdfs/ukxiem_20150495_en.pdf

There is a much greater emphasis on involving the child in the family finding task and it is likely they will be invited to their own family finding meetings and planning meetings where possible.

If a foster carer is already caring for a child short term and wishes to be considered to offer permanency through long term fostering this should be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Link to further information on long-term foster care and permanence:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/policies/long-term-foster-care-and-permanence>

Looked After Child Review

Every child foster care will have Looked After Child reviews, the timings of these are:

- Initial review within 20 working days of the child becoming Looked After
- Second review within three months of the initial one.
- After the second review every six months unless an early review is needed.

Every child has an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The role of the IRO is to ensure that a child's Care Plan meets their needs. They do this by chairing the reviews, ensuring the child has their say and to make sure people do what they agree to do.

The LAC review will consider the child's Care Plan/Pathway Plan, Permanency Plan, Personal Education Plan to ensure that all their needs are being met.

A child should be consulted about who they want to attend their LAC review. If information is needed from some professionals this could be sought in writing, it is good practice not to have too many people at this meeting as this can be overwhelming for a child. A child can choose to attend all or part of it and can have support from Children's Rights with this. They will also have a feedback form to complete ahead of the review and may need your support from the foster carer to complete this. The foster carer will attend the LAC review.

Looked After Children

If a child is in the care of the Local Authority, they are referred to as a Looked After Child. A child in foster care will be subject to legal terms under the Children Act 1989, these are:

- **Police Powers-** if a Police Officer believes a child is at risk of suffering significant harm; they can take them to a place of safety for up to 72 hours.
- **Emergency Protection Order-** can be granted by the Court if a child is considered to be in imminent danger. This lasts for 8 days and can be extended for a further 7 days.
- **Accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act-** Parents have agreed to this or a child has been abandoned; Parent cannot provide a suitable home or UASC.
- **Subject to an Interim or Full Care Order-** Court Order has been granted and the Local Authority shares Parental Responsibility with the Parents.

Please see the link below for terms you will come across as a foster carer:

<http://www.frg.org.uk/need-help-or-advice/an-a-z-of-terms>

M

Marketing and recruitment

Kirklees would like all foster carers to be involved in marketing and recruitment because everyone's experience is individual. There is an expectation that a foster carer receiving skills level 3 payments will be involved in this and they will be contacted by the recruitment team to assist. Involvement could be through a variety of mediums including newspaper, press releases, radio advertisements, posters in public places and social media.

Matching

Matching a child with a foster carer is done based on the child's needs and the identified strengths and vulnerabilities of foster carers. A foster carer will give input into a detailed profile that will assist the Placement Team when they are searching for placements.

All children need a positive identity so it may be in a child's interest to be matched with a foster carer which reflect their own in terms of race, culture, religion and language and can therefore help them build a positive sense of their own identity. If this is not possible the foster carer will receive support to ensure that they can promote this. The foster carer should provide multi-cultural toys, books, cards and any other items required to meet the child's need.

Sibling groups should be kept together whenever possible. Placements for a child from black and minority ethnic groups must ensure that there are clear plans for the child in terms of needs and that the foster carer has ability to meet these. Parents' wishes and

feelings about the placement must be ascertained and given due consideration. However, if the needs of the child are in conflict with the wishes of the parents the needs of the child must be prioritised.

Media

As a foster carer you may be asked by the supervising social worker or the recruitment team to be involved in marketing and recruitment.

Occasionally the newspapers, radio or even television will approach the council to provide more detail about stories, events or activities it is involved in. This contact could be to ask certain questions related to national or local news stories of public interest. In these situations the council Communication Department will manage many any contact with the press and media.

A foster carer should contact the supervising social worker and/ or team manager if approached to provide an interview or comment on the foster carer role. This will enable a foster carer to be directed to any support needed to manage this. It also gives the foster carer, the family and the Looked After Child protection against intrusion in your family life.

Also see marketing and recruitment

Mental health/emotional well- being

A foster carer needs to support a child's mental health and emotional well-being. The foster carer needs to identify, understand and support a child with any mental or emotional health issues. If a foster carer is concerned about the mental or emotional health of a child it should be discussed with the child's social worker. This could lead to an emotional wellbeing clinic appointment, if any additional support the child needs.

The website below contains useful information for a foster carer:

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Self-harm

A foster carer may be caring for a child who is already known to self-harm or begins to self-harm. A child may self-harm for lots of reasons, for example, because of feelings or thoughts that are difficult to deal with. For some it could be a release from the emotional pain or punishing themselves for something they feel bad about. Below are some examples of how a child may self-harm: cutting or scratching

- causing bruises
- banging their head against a wall
- punching a wall

- pulling out their hair
- burning

If a foster carer needs support caring for a child who self-harms or is worried a child may be self-harming this should be discussed with the child's social worker. The foster carer can also access training to assist with this.

Also see support

Mentoring

There are experienced foster carers that have undertaken further training to become mentors. This scheme is currently under review but if a foster carer feels that they would benefit from this it can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Missing from care

Looked After Children often have a history of inconsistent parenting and poor adult role modelling which may lead them to display behaviours which can place them, and sometimes others, at risk.

One such behaviour is absconding, going missing or staying out beyond agreed times. The reasons for such absences are varied and complex and should not be viewed in isolation from a child's home circumstances and experience of care. It is important that you know the difference between **unauthorised absence** and **missing**:

Unauthorised absence

- Child is not where they are supposed to be and
- Child is contactable but they will not return and
- Child is not considered to be at risk

Missing

- Child is not where they are supposed to be and
- Child is not contactable and
- Child is at risk or is a risk to others

If a foster carer has exhausted all attempts possible to contact/locate the child they need to contact the police if a child is missing.

Foster carers should undertake:

- Searching own home, and immediate locality;
- Telephoning and sending a text message to the child's mobile phone and checking their Facebook/social media page if this is accessible;
- Checking the places frequented by the child;
- Making enquiries with the child's relatives;

- Making enquiries with the child's friends;
- Making enquiries with the child's school, college, providers of education or work placement, community groups or places of worship if appropriate;
- Making enquiries with the other children in the foster, residential or parental home to establish if they have seen or heard anything (this can also stop distressing rumours from circulating);
- Making enquiries with and obtaining further information from other carers and professionals involved with the child;
- Attending at addresses frequented by the child to see if they are there.

Useful things to know as a foster carer

- A child/young person who is at risk of going missing should have a missing risk assessment. This is completed by the child's social worker and should be reviewed after every missing episode. The police will have a copy of this and so will the foster carer. There will be steps within this plan for the foster carer to take individual to that child before contacting the police such as contacting a known associate. If a child is going to a respite placement the foster carer will need to share this with that foster carer.
- It is important that a foster carer records information and share this with the child's social worker such as names of new people the child is associating with.
- When a child is reported missing the police review this every six hours. This means they may be contacting the foster carer or visiting every six hours.
- A child who has been missing will be offered an individual return interview by the Missing Team. The foster carer will need to complete an incident form
- The foster carers should ensure that they have photographs (portrait and full length) of a child in their care as the police will need these if a child is missing.
- The foster carer should be observant as to what a child is wearing when they leave the house as this will help the police

What information the police may want from the foster carer

- A description of the child/young person.
- Legal/Immigration Status.
- When the child/young person was last seen and with whom.
- A recent photograph.
- Telephone numbers including the child's mobile phone number if she/he possesses one.
- Names of family, known friends/acquaintances, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Details of previous absconding behaviour.
- Any prevailing medical condition for which the child is requiring on-going treatment together with name, address and telephone number of their GP.
- Any other circumstances which increase the risk to a child including information from previous risk assessments.

- Details of other people the child may be with, including descriptions, approximate age or names, if possible.

When a child returns from being missing

The foster carer should always welcome a child back following a period of being missing and make inquiries to their previous whereabouts. Any information given should be treated sensitively. If the return occurs in the middle of the night it should be followed up in more detail as soon as it practicable. The foster carer may feel upset or angry but expressing these feelings when a child returns/is returned is not appropriate. At this point the foster carer will not know what emotional state the child is in and expressing these feelings could make the child think they do not care. The incident can be discussed the following day when everyone is calmer. When a child returns:

- Remain calm
- Express that you were worried/you are glad they are home safe
- Offer food/drink

Please find link below to incident form:

Link to be added from folder

Also see Children's Rights section

P

Passports

Please find below the link to the Kirklees procedures on obtaining passports for Looked After Children:

http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_passports_lac.html

Also see holidays section

Pets

See assessing and minimising risk

Placement Plan

The Placement Plan sets out the agreed arrangements for the care of the individual child placed. It also serves as a confirmation of what is expected from the foster carers and Children's Services and what has been agreed with the child's parent.

Also see delegated authority

Placement Team

The Placement Team receive referrals for all children requiring placements. Placement referrals can be planned or required in an emergency. The team do not work directly with the families, children or young people but have access to their life stories and work closely with the child's social worker, supervising social workers, foster carers, residential managers, service managers and commissioners to ensure that the most appropriate placement available is identified.

The team identifies all placement types including:

- In house foster placements
- External foster placements
- In house residential placements
- External residential placements
- Respite foster placements for Looked After Children
- Respite foster placements for children at home with their families
- Assessment placements for parent and babies
- Secure unit placements for young people
- Short break placements for children and young people with disabilities
- 16+ placements for young people, this includes:
 - Supported board and lodgings
 - Supported accommodation
 - Supported tenancy
 - Floating support
 - Staying put

Post placement forms

These will be sent to the child's social worker and foster carer following every child placed and kept on the foster carer file. The content of these which will include positives and any learning will be discussed during supervisory visits. These will also be considered as part of the foster carer annual review.

Practice Development Plan (PDP)

A foster carer is expected to demonstrate the fostering competencies detailed in section A of the handbook. This will be monitored through supervisory visits and the annual foster carer review. If a foster carer is struggling with any of these appropriate support will be put in place. If a foster carer continues to not meet they will be invited to a meeting with the supervising social worker and manager and if necessary a PDP will be put in place. This will be a clear plan with timescales of improvements the foster carer is expected to make. This will be monitored through supervisory visits.

The process for PDPs is currently being updated but will be added to the handbook in the future. If a foster carer has any queries about this they should be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Promotion of social and emotional development, activities and hobbies

Play is vitally important to any child's development, it is one of the ways that young children learn and are children, what is most important is that they are given the attention they have previously lacked, and they are encouraged to play and learn and develop through play. The foster carer will need to provide a child with appropriate toys to aid this development. A child may require toys aimed at children lower than their chronological age due to their early life experience and missed play opportunities. If a foster carer is unsure or concerned about a child's skills in this area this should be discussed with the child's social worker or the supervising social worker.

The foster carer should have knowledge about a child's development and activities that they enjoy from the placement planning meeting. The foster carer needs to promote the activities and hobbies of a child placed in their care. Activities and hobbies provide children with the opportunity to build their social skills. If a child is placed who does not have any known interests or hobbies the foster carer will need to encourage them and provide them with opportunities to try different things out. It is expected that a portion of the child's allowance should be spent on activities (**see allowances**).

R

Resilience

Resilience can offer a child a 'cushion' against difficult life experiences and help them to thrive in spite of difficulties. Some children are naturally resilient. The foster carer will need to support a child to develop this due to their early life experiences. Protecting a child against adversity may not always be possible, but increasing their resilience is one way of helping them to overcome setbacks and improve their life chances.

Resilience is developed through:

- A sense of belonging
- Positive self-esteem
- A sense of self efficiency

Promoting resilience in Looked After Children

This can be built by ensuring stability so that the child can develop positive, nurturing relationships, feel in control of their lives and allow them think about their future in a positive way. This is achieved through:

- Supportive relationships with at least one adult
- Supportive relationships with family, especially siblings and grandparents
- A committed adult other than a parent who takes a strong interest in the child and who can act as a mentor or role model
- The capacity to develop and reflect on their life experiences
- Talents and outside interests and hobbies
- Positive experiences of school
- Positive friendships
- The capacity to think ahead and plan for their lives.

The foster carer can support a Looked After Child with all of the above.

Safe use of Information and Communication Technology

The internet is an amazing resource which enables children to connect, communicate and be creative in a number of different ways, on a range of devices. However, there are risks online. These will vary depending on a child's age and online activities. Looked After Children may be more vulnerable to these risks because of behavioural or emotional difficulties, or because of the people they are in contact with.

Children need a certain amount of privacy but also need adult involvement and supervision in their daily lives. The same general parenting skills that apply to the "real world" also apply while online. If a foster carer is concerned about a child's online activities this should be discussed with them. If a foster carer feels that they do not have enough knowledge about computers and the Internet this should be discussed with the supervising social worker. If a child tells a foster carer about an upsetting message, person, or website encountered whilst online, they need to help them to avoid problems in the future. The foster carer should record the incident in the daily log and report it to the child's social worker.

A foster carer should consider the 4 Cs when a child living with them is using the computer or other electronic devices:

- **Content** – is it age appropriate, is it reliable, is it legal. Talk to the child placed about appropriate and inappropriate content.
- **Conduct** – is the child showing respect for other people online and aware not to give out personal information to others online
- **Contact** – is a child being cyberbullied. It helps to be familiar with how to report this and how to block abusive users. Discuss with a child that new friends made online may not be who they say they are. If a child has been approached sexually online you should report to CEOP www.ceop.police.uk
- **Commercialism**- make sure children are aware of hidden costs they can be incurred online. Encourage them to keep their personal information private, learn how to block both pop ups and spam emails, turn off in-app purchasing

on devices where possible, and use a family email address when filling in online forms.

The foster carer should encourage a child to discuss if something online is bothering them and reassure them that they will not get into trouble. The foster carer should show interest in, and discuss websites and apps a child is using.

Sexting

Sexting is when a young person sends the following to a friend, boyfriend/girlfriend or someone they met online:

- Naked photographs
- Photographs in underwear
- Sexual photographs
- Rude text messages or videos.

Sexting is illegal.

Further information

Safe use of Information and Communication Technology is covered in the Safe care Policy and should be individual to the child. Please see links below for further information on Internet safety

<http://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/internet-safety.html>

Link to Marie Collins internet useful resource list, sites popular with C/YP, Emitoms and acronyms

Sexting

<https://www.childline.org.uk/explore/onlinesafety/Pages/Sexting.aspx>

Also see CSE for useful links

S

Sex education and relationships

A foster carer is expected to assist in the ongoing education of Looked After Children with regard to sex and relationships. This includes both discussion of the facts and providing opportunities to discuss worries about relationships.

All schools have a sex and relationship policy which has been agreed by school governors and senior members of staff. It explains what and how children are taught in Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) classes. It is important that the foster carer has a copy of this policy is familiar with its content, so that whatever is taught in school can be followed up at home.

Young people may also get confidential advice on sex and relationships from their local GP, sexual health clinic or sexual health outreach nurse. The sexual health clinic can provide advice and access to treatment around sexuality transmitted infections, contraception through a drop in clinic or appointment system.

If a foster carer needs further information, advice or guidance this can be obtained from the child's social worker, supervising social worker or the sexual health nurse.

Please see below link to a short film that can be used to help children understand consent:

<http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/want-sweet-sexual-assault-victim-11131209>

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

A foster carer should support the child to have open discussions about sexuality. For young people aged 13-19 there is a group called Yorkshire Mixtures Youth, the link to this is below:

<http://communitydirectory.kirklees.gov.uk/communityDirectory/organisationdetails.aspx?orgid=4131>

Also see domestic abuse- abuse in young people's relationships

Short breaks

Kirklees Short Breaks Scheme is a scheme that offers short term respite care for families who have children with additional and complex needs because of a disability or chronic health condition. It is important that children with additional needs have access to alternative family based placements for short periods so they can be continue to have their needs met within a family environment

Having a short break allows the whole family to have a break knowing that the child with complex needs is being well cared for in a family environment. A break can be for one day, a weekend or a couple of weeks: as a regular event or as a one off. By spending time away from their family the child or young person will also have the opportunity to access different activities in the community or a different setting which will help to promote inclusion and independence.

If a foster carer or someone they know are interested in finding out more information about becoming a short breaks foster carer this can be discussed with the supervising social worker.

Social media

Facebook and other forms of social media such as Twitter and Instagram are popular means of communication. These are used by companies, adults and children. There are lots of positive benefits but with these come some risks and challenges in terms of keeping children and information safe. If a foster carer uses social media sites it puts them in a better position to understand what a child might be doing and help keep them safer online.

In Kirklees a prospective foster carer will be subject to social media checks as part of the assessment process. If a foster carer has social media accounts these need to have high security settings. Confidential or disclosing information about Looked After Children must not be shared on social media as this could potentially compromise their safety and well being. A foster carer needs to be mindful of what they access and share on social media.

The following tips will help the foster carer keep themselves and Looked After Children safe when using social media:

- On Facebook the foster carer can be 'friends' with a child in their care so monitor the Facebook page;
- The foster carer can get to know the sites that the child uses. If a foster carer does not know how to log on, get the child to show them. The foster carer can find out more about the site and whether there are settings to block out objectionable material;

- If a foster carer understands how to use privacy settings for their own Facebook profile they can ensure that the child can hide their profile in searches and block unwanted contact;
- Facebook allows users to sort your friends into different lists so that they can control which list of friends or contacts see what. This could be used as a safety mechanism but could also be misused to prevent a foster carer seeing something
- The foster carer should work to create openness about social networking with the child, encouraging them to tell them if their family is in contact with them online. The foster carer can ask to see the messages that are being sent.

There are some simple steps that a foster carer can take to mitigate the negative aspects of using social networking sites for the child:

- Ensure that the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 'panic button' has been installed on any Facebook profile. The panic button is an application aimed at children and young people that allows them to easily report suspected abuse to CEOP and Facebook. The application has to be added by the user even if they are a child.
- Posting of photographs that give out clues as to where a child lives or goes to school should be avoided as this could help others to trace the young person;
- Never allow a child to arrange a face to face meeting with someone they meet online without parental permission. If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public place and go with the young person;
- Have the computer situated in a shared 'family' space such as the lounge and ensure that all computers have updated virus protection;
- Many modern mobile phones have the ability to connect directly to the internet. Some mobile phone operators sell phones with filtering software included;
- The foster carer should make sure that that everyone in the household who is using social networks is aware of their security settings and how to change them if they need to;
- The foster carer should make sure that all children in the household know not to download programs to the computer without checking with them first;
- The foster carer should talk with the child about internet safety and privacy.
- The foster carer should establish common sense rules for the child's use of the internet;

The Home Office has produced a website for children about safety and the internet, see the link below:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Social work visits

The child's social worker and the supervising social worker will work closely together. This will enable them to offer the foster carer any support to meet the needs identified in the child's Care Plan.

A newly approved foster carer will be visited fortnightly for the first three months. The foster carer and supervising social worker will discuss the frequency of visits after this point and this will be agreed by the team manager.

There will be at least one unannounced visit each year.

The supervising social worker will see the child placed alone to discuss how the placement is going and identify if there are any issues.

The foster carer can find more information on what to expect from the supervising social worker by clicking on the link below:

http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sup_fos_carer.html#_6tasks

Special occasions

A foster carer needs to bear in mind that different families, cultures and religions have varying attitudes to how birthdays and festivals should be celebrated. The foster carer can find out from birth parents what their views are and if the practice is very different from that of the foster carer it should be discussed with the child's social worker to decide how to celebrate the occasion. The decision should be based on the needs and wishes of the child.

Foster carers should reward and celebrate the achievements of Looked After Children for instance success in academic examinations or sports.

Staying Put

A Staying Put arrangement is when a young person who was an eligible Looked After Child prior to their eighteenth birthday continues to reside with the former foster carer.

The Staying Put arrangement extends until:

- the young person first leaves the Staying Put arrangement;
or
- the young person reaches their twenty-first birthday, if continuously, and still living in the arrangement

The only exception to the above is when the young person is undertaking an agreed programme of education or training when they reach their twenty-first birthday. In such cases then there may be some negotiation to extend that arrangement to avoid significant disruption for that young person, at a crucial time.

At eighteen the young person is no longer looked after as they are an adult. Staying Put arrangements are not regulated by the same Regulations, Standards or guidance as foster placements.

Staying Put is a three-way partnership with the primary arrangement being between the young person and the former foster care. The Local Authority acts in a facilitating and supporting capacity.

The principles behind the idea of Staying Put

These are:

- Improving the support for a child making the transition to adulthood, and enabling young people to remain with the foster carer beyond the age of 18.
- Staying Put is generally the best way of promoting stability in preparation for transition to adulthood for those living in foster care at 18.
- It enables Looked After Children to experience a transition to independent living that a peer living in the birth family would have

Staying Put is something that Kirklees hopes will happen for most young people in foster care.

The criteria for a Staying Put arrangement

The criteria is straightforward, a young person must be :

- an eligible child i.e. have been Looked After, aged 16-17, and have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.

AND

- living in a foster placement on the day before their 18th birthday

This criteria applies whether the foster placement was long term or short term and includes placements made at any time up to the young person's 18th birthday.

If the situation meets the criteria then only in exceptional circumstances would the Local Authority decide not to support such an arrangement i.e. only when it would not be consistent with the young person's welfare.

Planning for a Staying Put arrangement

Staying Put legislation places a duty on all Local Authorities to help everyone involved in a child's life to plan ahead for Staying Put as much as possible. Staying Put should be discussed at the planning stage of all long term placements and for short term placements when there's a possibility that the young person will still be there at 18. The foster carer and child/young person should be provided with information and discussions should be had at various stages of the life of a placement, to enable both parties to make informed decisions about entering into Staying Put arrangements. These discussions should take place at any pathway planning meetings for the young

person, and at the foster carer annual reviews, but can also take place on a less formal basis in between.

In all situations where a Staying Put arrangement is being requested the arrangement should be considered by the Looked After Child's Service Manager following a referral being made to the placement team by the child's social worker. This should be made at least six months before a child turns 18.

Support for Staying Put arrangements

The young person and foster carer person will continue to get Support during a staying put arrangement.

The young person's support will come from the Care Leavers service; this will usually be via a Personal advisor. They will see the young person regularly i.e. at least 8 weekly and offer support, guidance and advice in keeping with their pathway planning. The level of support, should reflect the fact that the young person is now 18 and an adult, and is moving towards being more independent, so, although visits will continue to be at least 8 weekly, there should be a gradual reduction in the level of support needed over time. The Staying Put carer will continue to get support from the supervising social worker if they are still a foster carer or a social worker specifically for Staying Put if not.

There is a support group available for Supported Lodgings and Staying Put carers that focuses on the issues that arise in living with older young people

Financial support

Please see the relevant section in the Staying Put policy, which outlines in detail the financial support in place for Staying Put arrangements.

Further information

More detailed information can be found in the Kirklees Staying Put policy following the link below:

[Link to Staying Put Policy in links folder](#)

For further information the foster carer can also speak to the supervising social worker.

Support

A foster carer will have regular visits at an agreed frequency from the supervising social worker. Outside of these visits the supervising social worker can be contacted by telephone and additional visits arranged if required. If the supervising social worker is not available a duty worker is available daily for matters that cannot wait. The duty worker can be contacted on 01484 221000 and asking for Placement, Permanency and Support Service. Please see link below for procedure on support from the supervising social worker:

http://kirkleeschildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sup_fos_carer.html#_6task_s

The child's social worker will also have an agreed frequency of visiting the child. If the child's social worker is not available a duty worker is available daily for matters that cannot wait. The foster carer needs to make sure they know which team the social worker is from to access the duty worker.

Office hours are Monday to Thursday 8.45-5.15 and Friday 8.45-4.45.

If there is an emergency situation outside of office hours please contact the Emergency Duty Service **01484 414933**

Various support groups are available to the foster carer through Kirklees and the KFN, details of which will be sent to the foster carer. Any queries can be discussed with the supervising social worker. There is also a support group available for birth children.

Mentoring is also available from experienced and trained foster carers.

Foster carers can also access a mentoring scheme (*see mentoring*)

Placement Support Team (PST)

The Placement Support Team is a Multi-Disciplinary Team which has 3 Senior Social Work Practitioners, 1 social worker, 1 Community Care Officer, a Child Psychotherapist, Child Psychologist and a Senior Mental Health Worker.

The focus of the team is to prevent placement disruption, promote placement Stability and promote the emotional health and wellbeing for Looked After Children. The Placement Support Team offer the following interventions to foster carers to support them in understanding and meeting the emotional and psychological needs of the children placed with them:-

- Attend new foster carers' transfer meetings
- Undertake pre-placement work with a newly approved foster carer around the generic issues of parenting Looked After Children
- Provide targeted early support to a new foster carer with the first child placed, as a continuation of the above, if required.

- Attend pre-placement meetings for long-term foster carer matches and to provide, if required, proactive, child specific, early support strategies, through an allocated Placement Support Practitioner.
- Telephone consultations, where appropriate on referred cases
- Provide input within a package of support for proposed placements
- Direct work with new and experienced foster carers around the use of dyadic, attachment-based parenting/ behaviour management strategies based on Bruce Perry's work, Dan Hughes' Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE Model), Pillars of Parenting and "Emotional Warmth" strategies
- Psycho-educational exploration of specific difficulties including going Missing, CSE, sexualised behaviours, low self-esteem, Loss, anger, low level generalised anxiety, low level deliberate self-harm, disaffection, parent/child conflict
- Specific work with foster a carer to address practice development issues in discussion with the supervising social worker
- Identification of the therapeutic needs of children placed with foster carers and support to access an appropriate resource to meet any identified needs.

Clinicians on the team will offer the following:-

- Clinical Consultations – focussing on identifying the emotional, psychological and mental health needs of looked after children.
- Emotional Wellbeing consultation clinics/ Drop in sessions for the child's social worker and supervising social worker
- Training Workshops for the foster carer, child's social worker and supervising social worker.

How the Placement Support Team is accessed

- Referrals can be made by any professional involved with the child, foster carer, family (with the knowledge of the allocated social worker for the child)
- Foster carers should speak to their supervising social worker if they wish to access the placement support team and this has not already been offered as part of the placement plan.
- Role of placement support should be considered at placement planning meetings.

Support for children/young people

The info 4 Care Kids website helps Looked After Children understand their rights and entitlements while they are in care. It includes first-hand experiences and presents animated information on key topics, such as health, education, changing placements, keeping in touch, identity and moving to independence. The link can be found below:

www.info4carekids.org.uk

Also see Children's Rights, mentoring, social work visits

T

Tax advice

The financial position of each foster carer will be unique as some will be in receipt of benefits and others will have income outside of fostering. Foster carer fee and allowance payments can impact on Income Tax and welfare benefits, if applicable. A foster carer needs to be familiar with HMRC guidance on tax and relevant guidance on welfare benefits. A foster carer can seek individual advice from HMRC, welfare benefits service, other foster carers or the supervising social worker.

The finance team send a financial statement annually (April) to the foster carer which should be used for fulfilling HMRC tax return requirements.

For benefits advice please click the link below:

<https://www.betteroffkirklees.org.uk/#/home>

Training

Foster carer mandatory training is currently under review. The foster carer can discuss current expectations with the assessing social worker and supervising social worker.

Personal Development Record (PDR)

A foster carer should keep record of any training or support groups attending using the PDR template. This should be used to reflect on this and how learning will be put into practice. The PDR is discussed as part of supervisory visits and will be considered as part of the foster carer annual review.

Cancelling training

If a foster carer fails to attend training it costs money. If a foster carer cannot attend a booked course this needs to be discussed with the supervising social worker. If a foster carer cannot attend training due to illness or an emergency they should notify Learning and Development,

U

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

UASC who enter the UK seeking refugee status alone are usually accommodated by the Local Authority. As a foster carer you may be asked to care for a UASC. The information available to a foster carer on a UASC could be limited. The supervising social worker can offer further support on things such as meeting cultural needs and applying for permission to stay in the UK.

Further information can be found on The Fostering Network, please see link below:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/looking-after-fostered-child/looking-after-unaccompanied-asylum-seeker-children>

W

Welcome packs.

A foster carer will complete a welcome to the home booklet during assessment. This can be used to show children and Parents the family and home prior to a placement being made. This booklet should be updated as required. A Parent needs to know where their child is unless it is too much of a risk. A foster carer needs to empathise with the need to know where and who a child is living with.

FAQs from foster carers

1. What do I do if a child arrives with no clothes or inadequate clothing?

See allowances

2. If a child changes school do I get help with school uniform?

See allowances

3. Who do I ring if I have a problem with payments?

See allowances

4. How does my looked after children get to contact if I don't drive/or picking my own children up from school prior to the contact team been involved.

This needs to be discussed with the child's social worker and your supervising social worker.

5. What do I do if my supervising social worker and child's social worker are not available, and I have an issue?

See support

6. Who do I contact out of hours in emergency – telephone numbers etc?

See Useful telephone numbers

7. Do I get help with equipment and furniture?

See Equipment

8. What mileage can I claim for?

See allowances

9. How do I get delegated authority and what does it cover and when should I receive the paperwork of the child. i.e. Placement Plans etc ?

See delegated authority and Confidentiality, Records and Record Keeping

Abbreviations

ADM Agency Decision Maker

Cafcass Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

CEOP Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

CICC Children In Care Council

CPCC Child Protection Case Conference

DLA Disability Living Allowance

EEP Early Permanence Placements

EDS Emergency Duty Service

IHA Initial Health Assessment

IRM Independent Review Mechanism

IRO Independent Reviewing Officer

KFN Kirklees Fostering Network

Ofsted Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

PA Personal Advisor

PHSE Personal, Health and Social Education

PST Placement Support Team

PDR Personal Development Record

PDP Practice Development Plan

RHA Review Health Assessment

UASC Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Useful telephone numbers

Emergency Duty Service 01484 414933

Fostering Network 020 7401 9582, 24 hour legal and stress counselling helpline
0345 013 5004

Kirklees Fostering Network 24 hour helpline 07866 635147.

Kirklees switchboard 01484 221000

Prevent Hub 01924 483747.

DRAFT

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 24th September 2018
Title of report: Kirklees Looked After Children Service (Children's Rights Team) annual report

Purpose of report

To inform the Board of services delivered by the Children's Rights Team during the period of 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 (annual report)

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Sal Tariq) - 12.9.18
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr. Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

1. **Summary**

The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children's Rights team) shares the views and opinions of children looked after with Children's Social Work Services to ensure that the voice of the child is heard and taken into account in respect of Local Authority policy development and service delivery. The service also supports children and young people aged ten and over when they are subject to a child protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the complaints process and training them to be able to take part in the recruitment process for posts such as Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. Children and young people are also trained to deliver their own training session to adults (Total Respect Training). This training helps adults to consider what the barriers are to the participation of children and young people and why it's important to listen to what children and young people say. Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7) receives an 'Initial Visit' from a Children's Rights team, Advocacy & Participation Worker. During this, children and young people are informed about the service and the support that they can receive from the team, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Following a Looked After Review, every child or young person looked after is invited to complete a Rate My Review feedback form, which is then shared with the Children's Rights team. The team subsequently contact children and young people who have completed the form to discuss their responses, in order to support the development of review meetings being conducted in a way which allows children and young people to be comfortable and able to participate in what is their meeting.

Within the Children's Rights team, a full time Officer co-ordinates the Independent Visitors Scheme. This scheme matches children and young people with volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with; supporting and listening to them, as well as undertaking positive activities. A separate annual report is produced for this scheme.

The full report includes statistics showing how many children and young people have had involvement with the Children's Rights team during the reporting period which continues to evidence an increase year on year.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

For information only, no decision required.

3. **Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**

Not applicable

3.2 **Economic Resilience (ER)**

Not applicable

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

The Children's Rights team enable children and young people who are looked after by the Local Authority to ensure that their voice is heard in terms of decisions that are being made which affect their lives as individuals and to ensure that service provision in general is influenced by the voice of children and young people and that they meet their needs.

It is important that children and young people feel that they are included in decisions which affect them and that their views are listened to. This can help lead to stability in their lives, overall health and wellbeing, higher attainment and long term positive outcomes for children and young people.

Through advocacy children and young people often achieve a positive outcome or a compromise to their request. If it is not possible for the child or young person to have the outcome they desire their advocate supports them in trying to understand the reasons why. Some specific examples of positive outcomes during 2017 to 2018 are given below:

- Additional contact with family being agreed
- Clarity about contact arrangements being reached
- Children /young people remaining in placement or new placements being agreed.
- The views of the child or young person being taken into consideration about what they wanted from their long term placement
- Attending school trips or holiday activities

3.4 Reducing demand of services

Not applicable

3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps

- To work with Senior Managers to ensure that the voice of the child is included in sufficiency planning.
- Offer Student Social Work placements within the Children's Rights Team, to lead on gaining the voice of the child within the child protection process.
- To re-establish links between Senior Managers, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Groups, with clear pathways that enable young people to present their views clearly and influence service provision.

- As per the annual report / key priorities for the Independent Visitors Scheme, re-assess the current offer and function, proposing changes as necessary in order to provide a service which meets the needs of children in care and care leavers.

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

That the report be noted.

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable

8. **Contact officer**

Melanie Tiernan

melanie.tiernan@kirklees.gov.uk

Tel no 01484 221000

9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Not applicable

10. **Service Director responsible**

Elaine McShane (Family Support and Child Protection)



Annual Report

Looked After Children Independent Service Children's Rights Team April 2017 to March 2018

Melanie Tiernan
Sara Miles

Independent Service Manager
Service Manager – Child Protection and Review
Unit
Children and Young People Service
30 June 2018

Dated

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2. The Aim of the Children's Rights Team
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 - 4.5 Children's Rights
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6. Independent Visitors Scheme Summary
7. Conclusion
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1 Introduction

Advocacy and children’s rights help to create a culture of openness where listening and responding to children’s voices is an integral part of everyday practice.

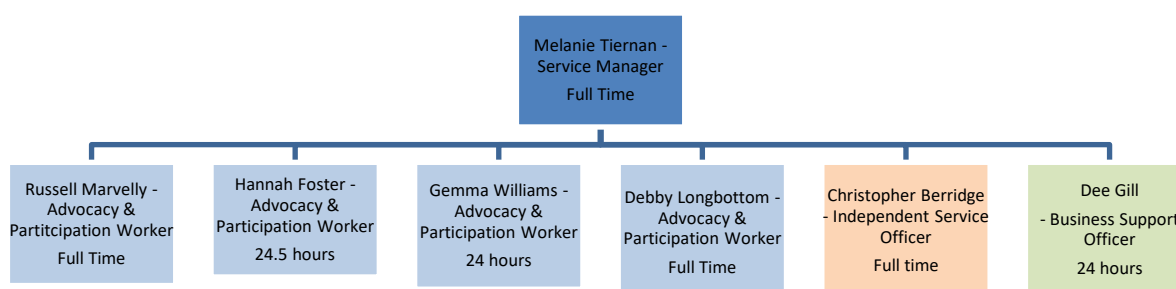
The Kirklees Looked After Children Independent Service (Children’s Rights Team) offer advocacy, advice and representation to children and young people who are Looked After by Kirklees Local Authority residing within the borough or in external placements.

2 The Aim of the Children’s Rights Team

The aim of the Children’s Rights team is to:

- Promote and support the rights of all children and young people looked after by Kirklees Local Authority within the current framework of legislation, incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (UNCRC)
- Support the empowerment of children and young people looked after by Kirklees Local Authority, to help enable them to engage in meaningful participation in respect of decision-making that affects them, individually and collectively.
- Provide a quality assurance function in respect of services received by children looked after by Kirklees Local Authority.
- Support children and young people involved in the child protection process to be able to voice their opinions.

3 Children’s Rights Team Structure



4 Children's Rights Team Overview

The Children's Rights team shares the views and opinions of children looked after with Children's Social Work Services to ensure that the voice of the child is heard and taken into account in respect of Local Authority policy development and service delivery. The service also supports children and young people aged ten and over when they are subject to a child protection plan.

The Children's Rights team deliver a number of other functions which include, supporting children and young people to use the complaints process and training them to be able to take part in the recruitment process for posts such as Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers. Children and young people are also trained to deliver their own training session to adults (Total Respect Training). This training helps adults to consider what the barriers are to the participation of children and young people and why it's important to listen to what children and young people say. Every child or young person who is new into care (or when they reach the age of 7) receives an 'Initial Visit' from a Children's Rights team, Advocacy & Participation Worker. During this, children and young people are informed about the service and the support that they can receive from the team, as well as what participation opportunities they can become involved in.

Following a Looked After Review, every child or young person looked after is invited to complete a Rate My Review feedback form, which is then shared with the Children's Rights team. The team subsequently contact children and young people who have completed the form to discuss their responses, in order to support the development of review meetings being conducted in a way which allows children and young people to be comfortable and able to participate in what is their meeting.

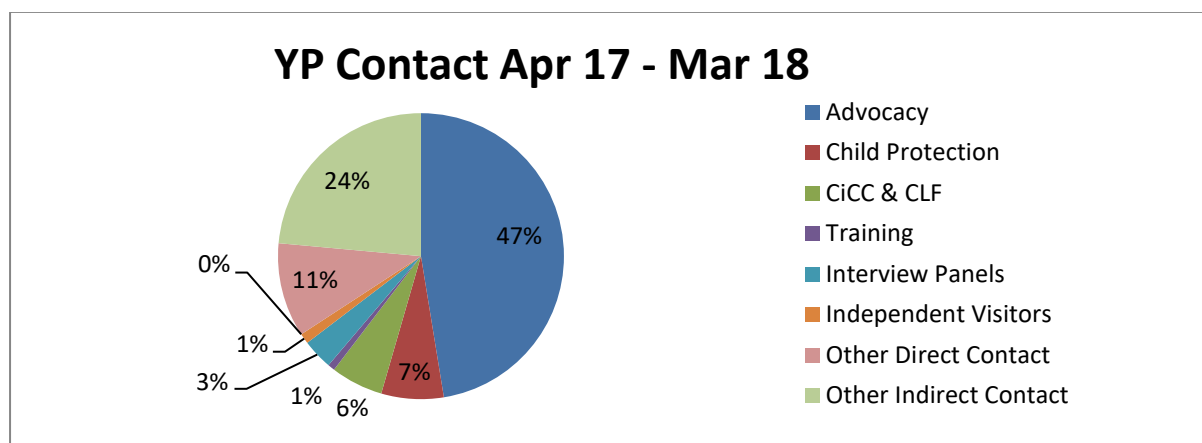
Within the Children's Rights team, a full time Officer co-ordinates the Independent Visitors Scheme. This scheme matches children and young people with volunteers who spend time with the child or young person they are matched with; supporting and listening to them, as well as undertaking positive activities. A separate annual report is produced for this scheme and this can be found at appendix 1.

Although for the majority of 2017/18 the responsibility for co-ordinating and supporting the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum was held by the Leaving Care Team, as from June this year this responsibility reverted back to the Children’s Rights team. The Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum enable children and young people looked after by the Local Authority and young people who are Care Leavers to come together to work on projects, and to meet with Senior Managers to enable their voices to be heard and influence service provision.

4.1 Contact with young people

Every child looked after by the Local Authority has the right to an independent advocate. The Children Act 1989 placed a duty on Local Authorities to provide advocacy for children and young people looked after, who wish to make a complaint. Subsequent updates and other legislation such as The Adoption and Children Act 2002, extended this to include care leavers, and to children and young people outside of the complaints procedure when decisions are being made that affect their lives.

The chart below shows that the highest proportion of work undertaken by the Children Rights team between April 2017 and March 2018, related to advocacy for children and young people looked after, (47%).



In the chart above, ‘other direct work ‘ includes the team sending birthday and Christmas cards to every child or young person over the age of 7 looked after by the Local Authority, or who is a Care Leaver.

In the period between March 2017 and April 2018, the team received 61 referrals for advocacy services for children and young people from professionals and carers. The team also received requests from professionals for support in obtaining the views of young people relating to Court proceedings and ongoing care planning.

During 2017/18, the service has supported 16 children and young people in care, who have a physical or learning disability.

The majority of children and young people have received support from the team on more than one occasion, with the most common support being for their Looked After Child Review or other meetings.

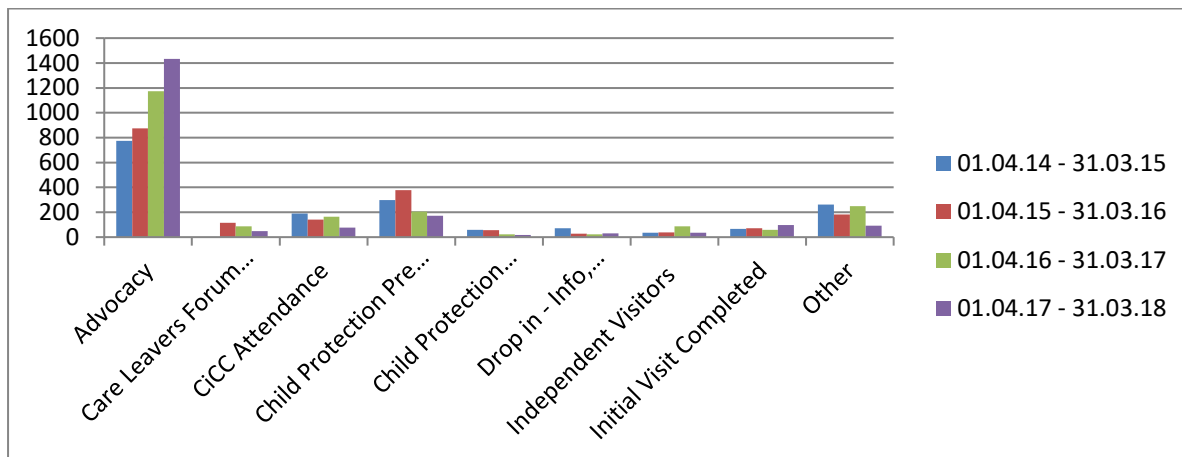
The service continues to receive more requests relating to girls and young women; within this reporting period the service supported 106 girls and young women and 75 boys and young men.

4.2 Comparison over a 4 year period

The demand for Advocacy work with children and young people looked after continues to increase, (as indicated in the graph below). This increase demand coupled with the team holding a vacant post for a number of months between April 2017 and March 2108, resulted in a reduced capacity to support children and young people subject to a child protection plan.

4.3 Work undertaken under the heading of 'other' includes:

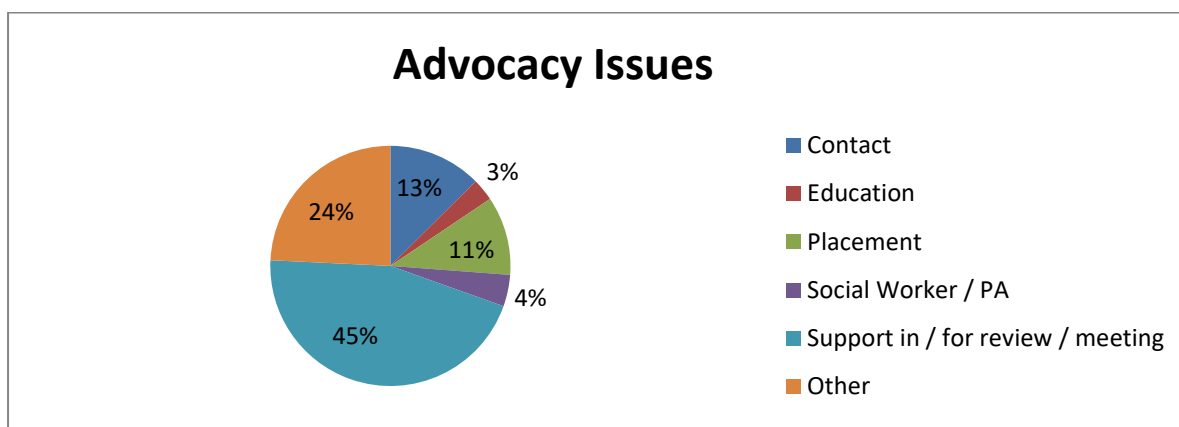
- Training and supporting children and young people to undertake interview panels as part of the Kirklees recruitment process
- Supporting children and young people to deliver training
- Monthly visits to the Kirklees Local Authority children's homes
- Weekly attendance at 'Number 11'; the Care Leavers Drop in facility



4.3 Advocacy Issues for children and young people who are Looked After

The pie chart below shows that apart from support at Looked After Child Review or other meetings, the highest number of advocacy issues for children and young people have related to contact and placement. The 'other' section incorporates a number of individual issues that children and young people have raised such as;

- personal belongings
- residential day to day issues
- finance (including pocket money or other celebratory allowance issues / or requests for additional financial support)



Children and young people looked after, placed in another local authority area, are some of our most vulnerable children, and over the last twelve months a total of 78 children and young people placed outside of Kirklees have received support from the Children's Rights Team. In the main this related to children and young people

requesting support at their Child Looked After review meetings, but there were 6 other specific issues and a further 6 which related to placement planning such as:

- wanting to stay in placement
- not knowing where they would be living
- obtaining their views in order to inform planning

Positive outcomes for children and young people have included:

- Additional contact with family being agreed
- Clarity about contact arrangements being reached
- Children /young people remaining in placement or new placements being agreed.
- The views of the child or young person being taken into consideration about what they wanted from their long term placement
- Attending school trips or holiday activities

4.4 Child Protection Conference Advocacy

The Children Rights team have been notified of 174 initial Child Protection conferences and 467 Child Protection review conferences since April 2017. This resulted in an additional 37 children being supported at their initial Child Protection conference, and 94% of children visited by the team accepting the support of an Advocate to help them present their views at their Child Protection conference meeting. This level of engagement and feedback received from professionals and parents has indicated that this provision is highly valued.

4.5 Children's Rights

The team works to ensure that the rights of the child in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are upheld for all children and young people who are looked after. This includes ensuring that the voice of the child is heard within care planning. This year, the team was asked to provide an Advocate to undertake the role of a 'Litigation Friend', which is someone who speaks on behalf of a young person in respect of a matter which is being decided by the Courts. In this instance the

Advocate supported a young person who was seeking to resume contact with his sister and a successful outcome for the young person was achieved.

4.6 Participation Opportunities

The Children's rights team works with children and young people in a number of ways to support participation opportunities, these include:

- **Children in Care Council:** The council consists of children and young people looked after aged between 12 and 16, who meet to consider issues relevant to being looked after, and work with professionals to promote the views of children and young people to inform change and best practice.
- **The Care Leavers Forum:** is for young people aged 16 and over, in which young people work with professionals to ensure that professionals hear their views when considering how best to deliver Care Leaver service provision

The responsibility for co-ordinating these groups was transferred to the Leaving Care Team in 2017. However, this responsibility will revert back to the Children's Rights Team from June 2018.

- **Professional Interview Panels:** Children and young people have been involved in a high number of interview panels over the last twelve months particularly for posts within Children's Social Work Services Assessment and Intervention teams.
- **Total Respect training:** Two sessions have been delivered to professionals in the past year, with both dates being fully booked. Evaluation from the training, indicates that professionals find attending the course worthwhile, with feedback highlighting that it impacts on consideration being given to how they can improve their daily practice.
- **Skills to Foster training:** Six sessions of this training have been delivered by young people to potential new Foster Carers. Again, as with the Total Respect training this has been well received.

- Engagement Event: In October 2017 Independent Reviewing Officers and the Children's Rights Team worked together to organise an Engagement Event for children and young people to share their views about contact and placements. Feedback received indicated that the children and young people didn't like the terms 'contact' or 'placement' and would prefer professionals to use terms such as 'keeping in touch' and 'where I live'; highlighting the importance of professionals adopting child friendly language.

4.7 Quality Assurance

The Children's Right team works closely with The Child Protection and Review Unit (CPRU) in endeavouring to support young people in obtaining the best possible outcome there can be for them, and sharing information such as trends from Advocacy.

In addition to this, the Children's Rights team manager meets regularly with the Complaints Manager to discuss ongoing complaints and cater for joint working to resolve these, to ensure services provided to children in care are of a high quality, and separately with the Head of Corporate Parenting to discuss trends in advocacy and/or individual cases as required. The Children's rights team manager also now attends Corporate Parenting Board.

5 Young People's Voice

Following completion of any advocacy service children / young people receive, they are asked to complete an evaluation feedback form and share their views on how the service could be improved, overall feedback received indicates that children/young people are happy with the support and services that they receive.

Over and above the 'formal' feedback route, how much children and young people value the service they receive can be measured in other ways, such as direct feedback to advocates and /or via thank you cards, or by what children and young people say about the service to others, for example; during a visit to Parliament, when one young person was asked by MP's in a discussion about the issues for Looked After children, if he had access to an advocate, he said that he did and described his advocate as '*awesome*'.

6 Independent Visitors Scheme

Whilst this scheme is one of the functions of the Children's Rights Team a separate annual report is written by the scheme Co-ordinator which is available at appendix 1. In summary, demand for the scheme continues and the number of volunteers who are matched with a young person with whom they can build a positive relationship has increased during 2017/18.

7 Conclusion

2017/18 has seen a continued demand on the service, with an increase for children looked after and care leaver's advocacy. Request for support around issues relating to contact, placements and Social Worker relationships have continued to be the highest received, with the majority of these being resolved informally, rather than through the formal complaints process. Alongside this the team has continued to offer advocacy support to a number of children and young people subject to a child protection plan and arrange and support Young People's interview panels, which have had an influence on the recruitment of a substantial amount of the current Children's Services workforce.

It is envisaged that a student Social Work placement in the autumn, coupled with recruitment to the Participation post, (which has returned to the team's structure) will help the service to meet the current levels of request for advocacy support.

8 Key areas of development

8.1 To work with Senior Managers to ensure that the voice of the child is included in sufficiency planning.

8.2 Offer Student Social Work placements within the team, to lead on gaining the voice of the child within the child protection process.

8.3 To re-establish links between Senior Managers, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Groups, with clear pathways that enable young people to present their views clearly and influence service provision.

8.4 As per the annual report / action plan for the Independent Visitors Scheme, re-assess the current offer and function, proposing changes as necessary in order to provide a service which meets the needs of children in care and care leavers.

Appendix 1

Kirklees Independent Visitor Scheme (IV)

Annual Report – 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

1.1 Introduction

Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen is a Local Authority funded scheme which sits within the Looked After Children Independent Service. The Scheme was established in its current format six years ago and is coordinated by an Independent Service Officer. Day to day administration for the scheme is provided through Business Support within the wider Children Independent Service.

The aim of the scheme is to provide independent adult volunteers to befriend young people in Care; to spend time with them on a one to one basis, undertaking activities and developing a positive relationship with a trusted, responsible adult. The volunteers are someone who the young person can talk to, seek advice, guidance and support from and have fun with, in an informal setting.

Volunteers undergo a rigorous recruitment and selection programme including submitting a formal volunteer's application, adult and young person interview panel and bespoke training package, tailored to equip and inform volunteers for the role of an Independent Visitor. Enhanced DBS checks are undertaken, together with employment checks and two references are sought.

Young People are referred to the Scheme by either their Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The IRO has a duty to discuss the Scheme at a young persons' review. Young people are also encouraged to express an interest themselves in having an Independent Visitor, and can discuss this directly with the Scheme Coordinator, their Social Worker, key worker or carer.

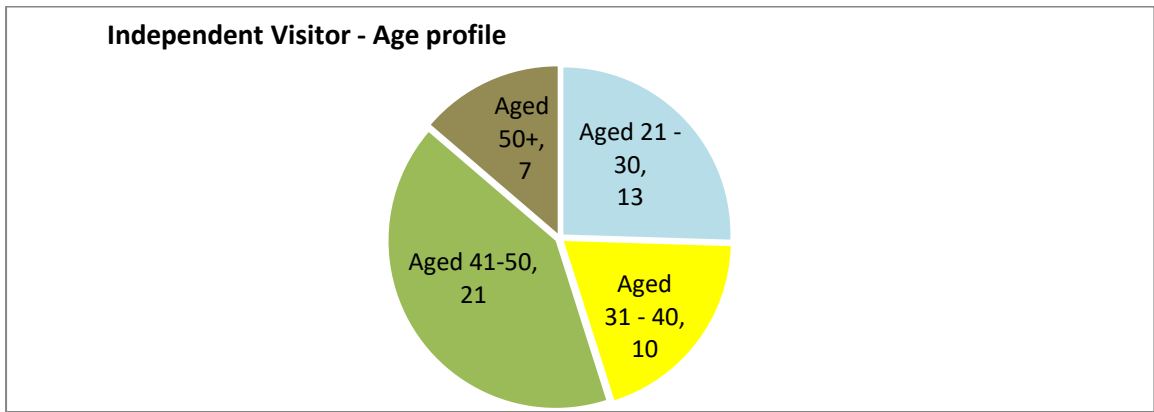
1.2 Current position

- There are currently 51 trained volunteers, 44 of whom are matched on a one to one basis with a young person. In addition, one volunteer supports two young people who are seen individually.
- Eight volunteers have recently completed training and are in the process of being matched with young people.
- There are 8 young people placed out of Kirklees who are waiting to be matched. To date, attempts to 'spot purchase' Independent visitor services from other authorities have been unsuccessful due to limited volunteers' availability and waiting lists in the host authorities. Continuing attempts are being made to match these young people from the existing pool of Kirklees volunteers.
- There are 9 young people placed within Kirklees waiting to be matched, the majority of whom will be matched shortly from newly trained Independent Visitors. Waiting times for young people to be matched are monitored and have significantly reduced from an average of 4 to 6 months to 8 weeks. Once the existing pool of available volunteers are matched however, the waiting times for young people who remain on the waiting list will inevitably increase as the Scheme does not, at present, have sufficient capacity to sustain additional volunteers.

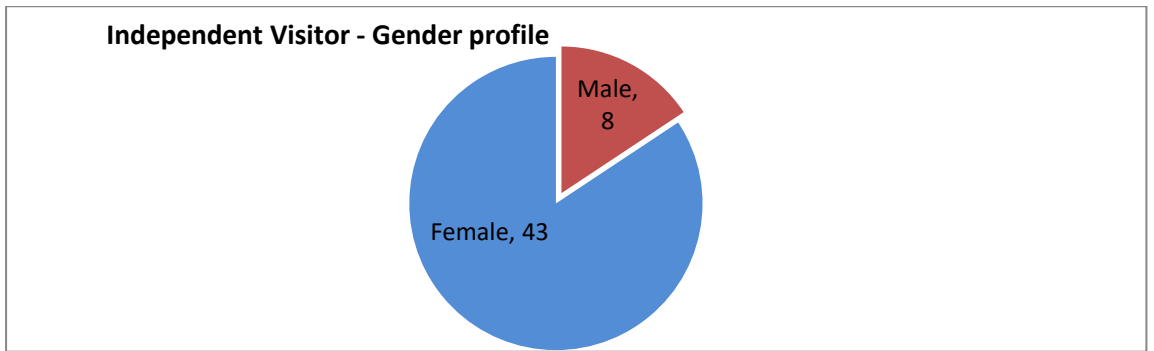
2 Volunteers and Young Person Profile

2.1 Volunteer profile

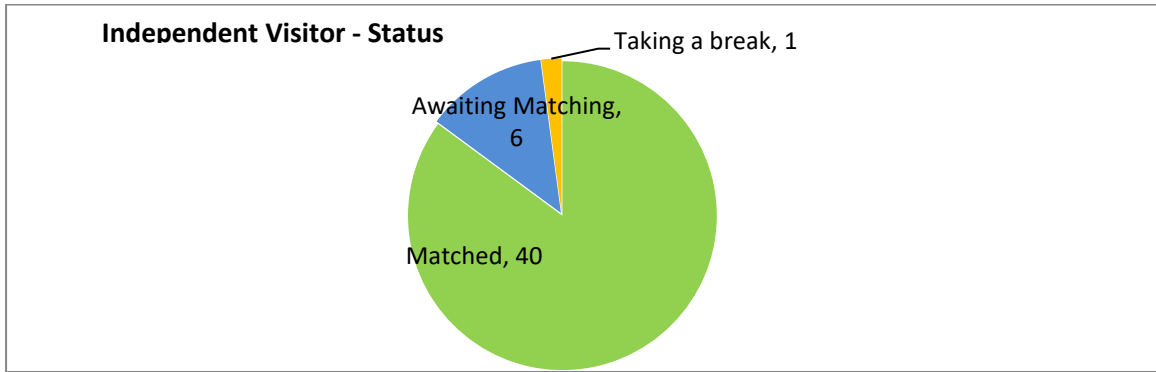
The Independent Visitors Scheme has a diverse range of volunteers. Volunteers have to be at least 18 years old and there has to be at least a 5 year age gap between the adult and young person. Volunteers in the youngest age range are only accepted by the scheme if they are able to demonstrate an appropriate degree of maturity.



Currently 85% of the volunteers involved with the scheme are female; this is broadly the same as seen in other regional schemes. Attempts have been made to specifically identify and recruit more male volunteers, such as advertisements being placed in traditionally male dominated work and leisure places, however this has not been overly successful. In practice, although some young people have specified that they would like a male volunteer, many have accepted a female volunteer and these relationships have been successfully sustained.



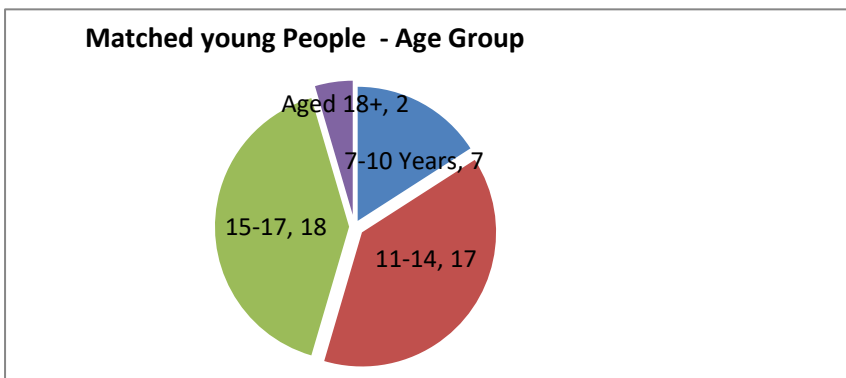
Once training and necessary checks have been completed, the Scheme seeks to match volunteers within 8 weeks with a young person who meets their preference in terms of placement location, age and gender.



2.2 Young Person Profile

- There are currently 44 young people matched with an Independent Visitor, of these:
- Slightly more girls (59%) than boys (41%) benefit from the scheme.
- 18 are older teenagers (15-17 years old)
- 17 are young people aged 11-14 years old
- 7 children under the age of 11 have an Independent Visitor and;
- 2 young adults over 18 are currently being supported.

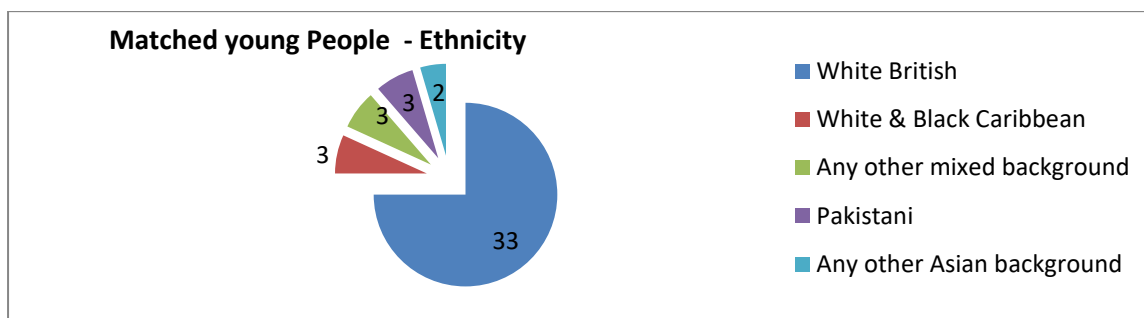
Whilst some Volunteer / Young person relationships have ended shortly after the young persons' 18th birthday, the 2 young adults over 18s shown in the chart below have each had their Independent Visitor for a number of years and continue to benefit from the relationship and the support and guidance offered within this.



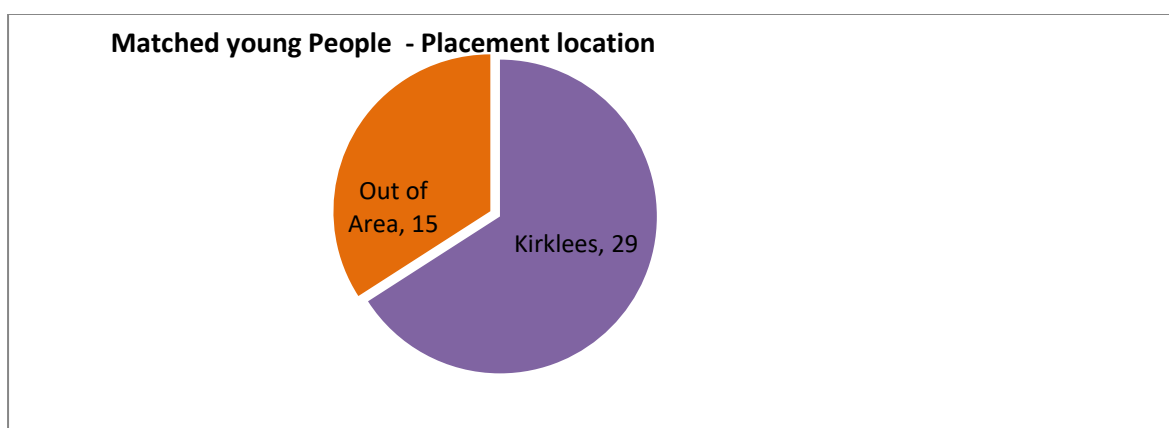
44 young people matched

- 59% Female
- 41% Male
- 18 aged 15-17
- 17 aged 11-14
- under age of 11
- over 18 years old

The ethnic background of young people who have an independent visitor is broadly representative of the wider Kirklees community. ¹



34% of matched young people are in placement in a host authority, with a high proportion of young people living in neighbouring authorities' i.e. Leeds, Calderdale and Bradford. There are three young people placed further afield who also benefit from regular outings and activities with their chosen Independent Visitor.



3 Making a difference.

The scheme Co-ordinator speaks with children and young people who have an Independent Visitor at least every twelve months and more regularly if needed, for example, if issues are identified with the relationship. A questionnaire regarding their Independent Visitor experience is sent out to children and young people on an annual basis. Some of the positive feedback received includes:

- *'He is very supportive and kind'* (Boy, aged 8)

¹ <http://observatory.kirklees.gov.uk/profiles/ethnicorigin>

- *'Because it's nice to have someone to talk to'* (Girl, aged 10)
- *'I'm able to get out and about more now'* (Boy, aged 12)
- *'My Independent Visitor has helped me gain confidence in interacting with people socially'* (Girl, aged 16)
- *'I have a friend that I can trust and spend time with'* (Girl, aged 13)
- *'My Independent visitor has helped me to do things and become more independent'* (Boy, aged 15)
- *'I really like my IV, we have fun together, we've been to the theatre, swimming and played football in the park.'* (Boy aged 11)

Following each visit or activity with a child /young person, Independent Visitors are requested to submit a short feedback form. Below are some extracts from these which highlight some examples of the positive difference /experiences volunteers believe have been achieved with children and young people.

- *'Had a full day out with my dogs at Bolton Abbey. We enjoyed a picnic and walking the paths of the estate. B said that she really enjoyed it all and she had never had a picnic so this was a first'.* (IV for a girl aged 13)
- *'Visited the National Coal Mining Museum, took the underground tour and visited the pit ponies which C said she really enjoyed.'* (IV for a girl aged 17)
- *A day of sport in Greenhead Park. **Football** after the World Cup, J was keen to demonstrate some of his skills and tell me about being selected for a team at his new school. **Basketball** J introduced me to the 'slow-mo' video feature on my phone and we took a great video of a basket being scored. **Tennis** after Wimbledon, he'd obviously been practicing his backhand, given the number that whizzed past me. Also did a World Cup Quiz for J to identify players and their country. I thought it was quite difficult but he quickly reeled off 10 correct answers! Covered 8 miles with all the running about. So some aching muscles for me. J seemed fine!* (IV for a boy aged 11)

Key Priorities

- **Create a 'pool' of volunteers either living within the Kirklees area or elsewhere who are willing to travel regularly to meet with young people placed Out of Authority.**

The need for flexibility of volunteers to travel out of area and meet young people more frequently is being discussed with applicants at an early stage. A number of volunteers are prepared to travel greater distances and this has helped in matching some young people living in host Authorities.

- **18+ Care Leaver offer**

In line with recent legislation relating to support for care leavers up to the age of 25 the Independent Visitor Scheme will be evaluated and consideration given as to whether it currently meets the needs of children who are looked after and care leavers. Currently the continuation of the Independent Visitor relationship post 18 is offered only to those who are the most vulnerable. It will be explored as to whether this should be offered more widely. Alongside this consideration will also be given as to whether an Independent Visitor should be offered to young people who are already 18 plus. If this were to be the case there would need to be clarity about what the role would entail and any differences between the volunteer role and that of the Personal Advisor who is currently appointed to all care leavers by the Leaving Care Team.

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Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 24th September 2018
Title of report: Independent Visitors Scheme Annual Report

Purpose of report

To inform the Board of the work of the Independent Visitors Scheme during the period of 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 (annual report)

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Sal Tariq) – 12.9.18
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr. Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: Not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen is a Local Authority funded scheme which sits within the Looked After Children Independent Service.

The aim of the scheme is to provide independent adult volunteers to befriend young people in Care; to spend time with them on a one to one basis, undertaking activities and developing a positive relationship with a trusted, responsible adult. The volunteers are someone who the young person can talk to, seek advice, guidance and support from and have fun with, in an informal setting.

Young People are referred to the Scheme by either their Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The IRO has a duty to discuss the Scheme at a young persons' review. Young people are also encouraged to express an interest themselves in having an Independent Visitor, and can discuss this directly with the Scheme Coordinator, their Social Worker, key worker or carer.

The number of children and young people accessing this service has increased during the reporting period of April 2017 to March 2018 with 44 being matched with an Independent Visitor.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

Not applicable

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

Not applicable

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

Whilst it is difficult to quantify the 'softer' outcomes for children and young people who have benefited from the role of an Independent Visitor it is clear from comments from children / young people, carers, Social Workers and the Independent Visitors themselves that this is a highly valued service.

Children and young people enjoy going out to do fun activities but according to a report by Dr Roger Morgan the most important thing for them is that the Independent Visitors are volunteers. They are not paid to be part of their lives and they do not know everything about them which has been written in a file. This gives children and young people the freedom to build a trusting relationship with someone, sharing as much or as little about themselves as they wish. Below are some examples of comments made by young people:

- *'My Independent Visitor has helped me gain confidence in interacting with people socially'* (Girl, aged 16)

- *'I have a friend that I can trust and spend time with'* (Girl, aged 13)
- *'My Independent visitor has helped me to do things and become more independent'* (Boy, aged 15)

3.4 Reducing demand of services

Not applicable

3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable

5. Next steps

To create a 'pool' of volunteers either living within the Kirklees area or elsewhere who are willing to travel regularly to meet with young people placed Out of Authority.

The need for flexibility of volunteers to travel out of area and meet young people more frequently is being discussed with applicants at an early stage. A number of volunteers are prepared to travel greater distances and this has helped in matching some young people living in host Authorities.

18+ Care Leaver offer

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6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Melanie Tiernan / Christopher Berridge
melanie.tiernan@kirklees.gov.uk
christopher.berridge@kirklees.gov.uk
 Tel no 01484 221000

9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Not applicable

10. **Service Director responsible**

Elaine McShane (Family Support and Child Protection)



Annual Report

Looked After Children Independent Service Independent Visitors Scheme April 2017 to March 2018

Christopher Berridge
Melanie Tiernan
Sara Miles

Independent Visitor Scheme Co-Ordinator
Independent Manager
Service Manager – Child Protection and Review
Unit

Dated

30 June 2018

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1. Introduction
2. Independent Visitor Scheme – current position
3. Volunteers and Young Person Profile
 - 3.1 Volunteer profile
 - 3.2 Young Person Profile
4. Making a difference
5. Key Priorities

Kirklees Independent Visitor Scheme (IV)

Annual Report – 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

1.1 Introduction

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Volunteers undergo a rigorous recruitment and selection programme including submitting a formal volunteer's application, adult and young person interview panel and bespoke training package, tailored to equip and inform volunteers for the role of an Independent Visitor. Enhanced DBS checks are undertaken, together with employment checks and two references are sought.

Young People are referred to the Scheme by either their Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The IRO has a duty to discuss the Scheme at a young persons' review. Young people are also encouraged to express an interest themselves in having an Independent Visitor, and can discuss this directly with the Scheme Coordinator, their Social Worker, key worker or carer.

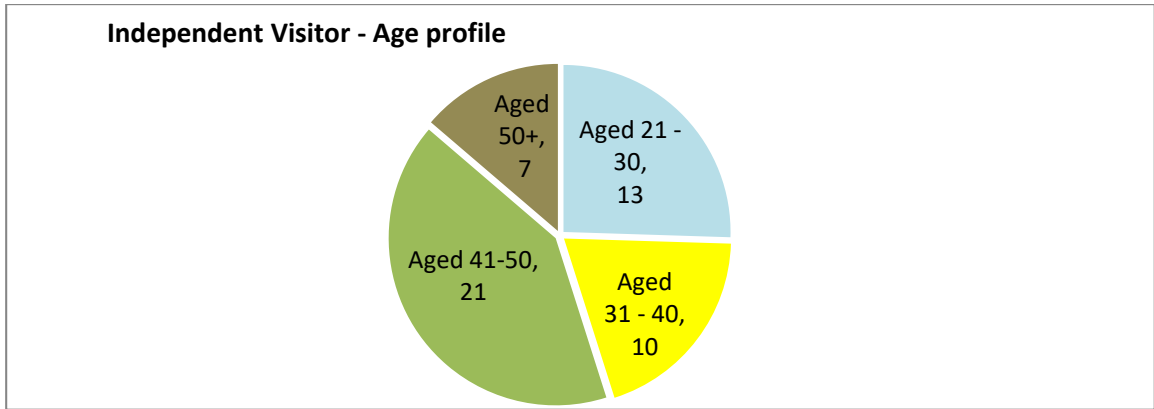
2 Current position

- There are currently 51 trained volunteers, 44 of whom are matched on a one to one basis with a young person. In addition, one volunteer supports two young people who are seen individually.
- Eight volunteers have recently completed training and are in the process of being matched with young people.
- There are 8 young people placed out of Kirklees who are waiting to be matched. To date, attempts to 'spot purchase' Independent visitor services from other authorities have been unsuccessful due to limited volunteers' availability and waiting lists in the host authorities. Continuing attempts are being made to match these young people from the existing pool of Kirklees volunteers.
- There are 9 young people placed within Kirklees waiting to be matched, the majority of whom will be matched shortly from newly trained Independent Visitors. Waiting times for young people to be matched are monitored and have significantly reduced from an average of 4 to 6 months to 8 weeks. Once the existing pool of available volunteers are matched however, the waiting times for young people who remain on the waiting list will inevitably increase as the Scheme does not, at present, have sufficient capacity to sustain additional volunteers.

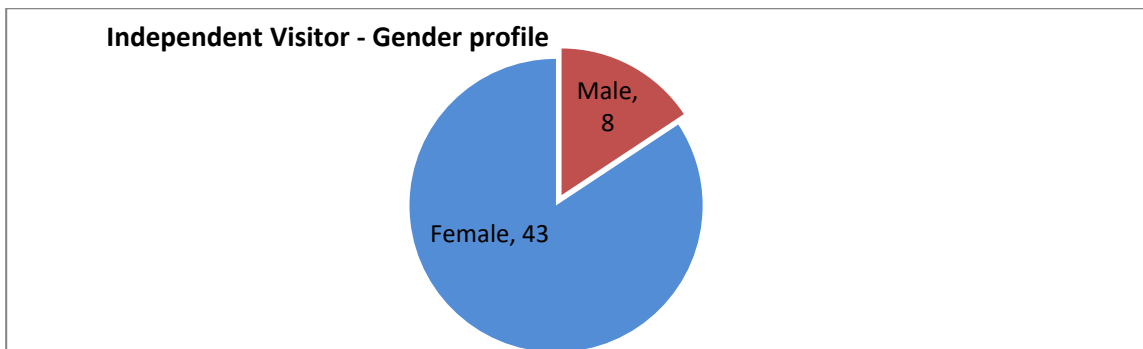
3 Volunteers and Young Person Profile

3.1 Volunteer profile

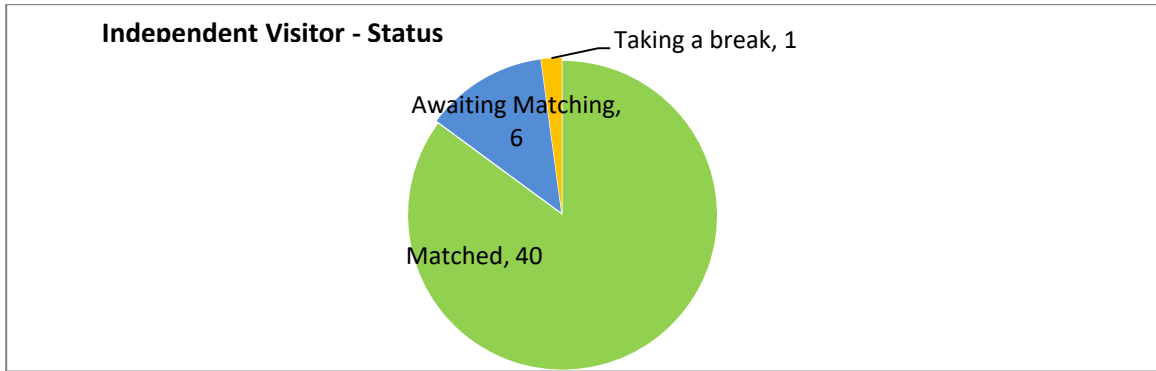
The Independent Visitors Scheme has a diverse range of volunteers. Volunteers have to be at least 18 years old and there has to be at least a 5 year age gap between the adult and young person. Volunteers in the youngest age range are only accepted by the scheme if they are able to demonstrate an appropriate degree of maturity.



Currently 85% of the volunteers involved with the scheme are female; this is broadly the same as seen in other regional schemes. Attempts have been made to specifically identify and recruit more male volunteers, such as advertisements being placed in traditionally male dominated work and leisure places, however this has not been overly successful. In practice, although some young people have specified that they would like a male volunteer, many have accepted a female volunteer and these relationships have been successfully sustained.



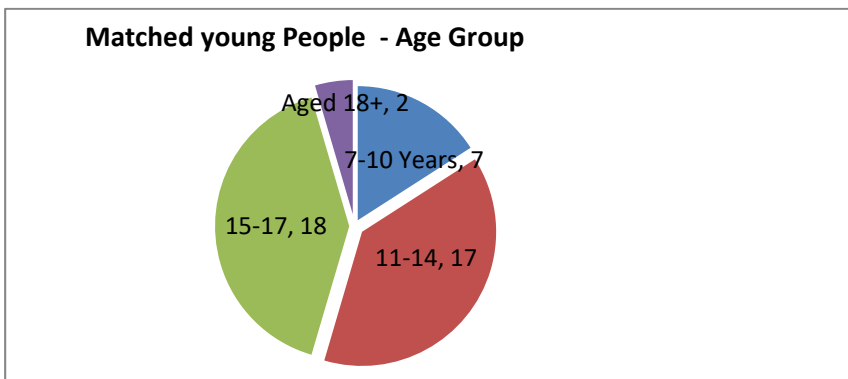
Once training and necessary checks have been completed, the Scheme seeks to match volunteers within 8 weeks with a young person who meets their preference in terms of placement location, age and gender.



3.2 Young Person Profile

- There are currently 44 young people matched with an Independent Visitor, of these:
- Slightly more girls (59%) than boys (41%) benefit from the scheme.
- 18 are older teenagers (15-17 years old)
- 17 are young people aged 11-14 years old
- 7 children under the age of 11 have an Independent Visitor and;
- 2 young adults over 18 are currently being supported.

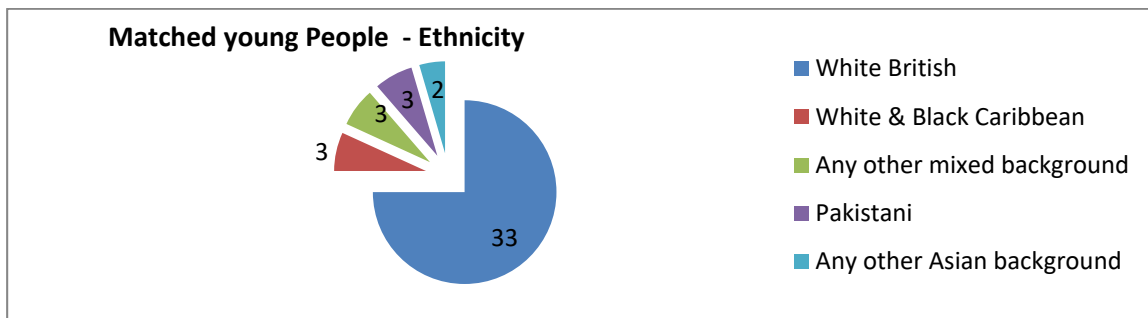
Whilst some Volunteer / Young person relationships have ended shortly after the young persons' 18th birthday, the 2 young adults over 18s shown in the chart below have each had their Independent Visitor for a number of years and continue to benefit from the relationship and the support and guidance offered within this.



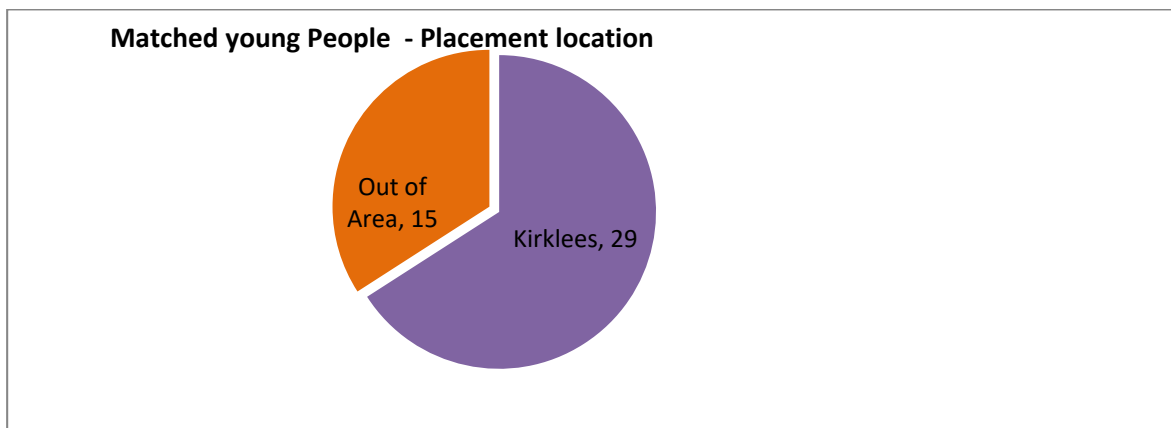
44 young people matched

- 59% Female
- 41% Male
- 18 aged 15-17
- 17 aged 11-14
- under age of 11
- over 18 years old

The ethnic background of young people who have an independent visitor is broadly representative of the wider Kirklees community.¹



34% of matched young people are in placement in a host authority, with a high proportion of young people living in neighbouring authorities' i.e. Leeds, Calderdale and Bradford. There are three young people placed further afield who also benefit from regular outings and activities with their chosen Independent Visitor.



4 Making a difference.

The scheme Co-ordinator speaks with children and young people who have an Independent Visitor at least every twelve months and more regularly if needed, for example, if issues are identified with the relationship. A questionnaire regarding their Independent Visitor experience is sent out to children and young people on an annual basis. Some of the positive feedback received includes:

¹ <http://observatory.kirklees.gov.uk/profiles/ethnicorigin>

- *'He is very supportive and kind'* (Boy, aged 8)
- *'Because it's nice to have someone to talk to'* (Girl, aged 10)
- *'I'm able to get out and about more now'* (Boy, aged 12)
- *'My Independent Visitor has helped me gain confidence in interacting with people socially'* (Girl, aged 16)
- *'I have a friend that I can trust and spend time with'* (Girl, aged 13)
- *'My Independent visitor has helped me to do things and become more independent'* (Boy, aged 15)
- *'I really like my IV, we have fun together, we've been to the theatre, swimming and played football in the park.'* (Boy aged 11)

Following each visit or activity with a child /young person, Independent Visitors are requested to submit a short feedback form. Below are some extracts from these which highlight some examples of the positive difference /experiences volunteers believe have been achieved with children and young people.

- *'Had a full day out with my dogs at Bolton Abbey. We enjoyed a picnic and walking the paths of the estate. B said that she really enjoyed it all and she had never had a picnic so this was a first'.* (IV for a girl aged 13)
- *'Visited the National Coal Mining Museum, took the underground tour and visited the pit ponies which C said she really enjoyed.'* (IV for a girl aged 17)
- *A day of sport in Greenhead Park. **Football** after the World Cup, J was keen to demonstrate some of his skills and tell me about being selected for a team at his new school. **Basketball** J introduced me to the 'slow-mo' video feature on my phone and we took a great video of a basket being scored. **Tennis** after Wimbledon, he'd obviously been practicing his backhand, given the number that whizzed past me. Also did a World Cup Quiz for J to identify players and their country. I thought it was quite difficult but he quickly reeled off 10 correct answers! Covered 8 miles with all the running about. So some aching muscles for me. J seemed fine!* (IV for a boy aged 11)

Key Priorities for 2018 / 2019

- **Create a 'pool' of volunteers either living within the Kirklees area or elsewhere who are willing to travel regularly to meet with young people placed Out of Authority.**

The need for flexibility of volunteers to travel out of area and meet young people more frequently is being discussed with applicants at an early stage. A number of volunteers are prepared to travel greater distances and this has helped in matching some young people living in host Authorities.

- **18+ Care Leaver offer**

In line with recent legislation relating to support for care leavers up to the age of 25 the Independent Visitor Scheme will be evaluated and consideration given as to whether it currently meets the needs of children who are looked after and care leavers. Currently the continuation of the Independent Visitor relationship post 18 is offered only to those who are the most vulnerable. It will be explored as to whether this should be offered more widely. Alongside this consideration will also be given as to whether an Independent Visitor should be offered to young people who are already 18 plus. If this were to be the case there would need to be clarity about what the role would entail and any differences between the volunteer role and that of the Personal Advisor who is currently appointed to all care leavers by the Leaving Care Team.

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Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 24th September 2018
Title of report: Outcomes for Looked After Children involved with the Youth Offending Team (YOT)

Purpose of report

To inform Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) about the improvement in outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) subject to an Intervention by the Youth Offending Team (YOT).

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Sal Tariq) – 12.9.18
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: not applicable

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

This report is about the success that the Youth Offending Team (YOT) has had in improving the outcomes for Looked After Children involved with the YOT.

In late 2012 the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Prisoners Act (LASPO) was passed by Parliament with the main provisions coming into effect in 2013. The provisions of this Act of significance for the Local Authority and Youth Offending Team are: a) Youth Detention Accommodation was introduced for all young people aged up to and including 17 years, this replaced remands into custody, previously 17 year olds were treated as adults for bail/remand purposes; b) any young person remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation was deemed to be a Looked After Child and the responsibility of their home local authority; c) the costs of Youth Detention Accommodation would be borne by the responsible Local Authority.

At about the same time the YOT were becoming aware of the significant disparity in outcomes for LAC dealt with by the YOT, compared with the general YOT population. Thus, fewer than 30% of LAC successfully completed their intervention with the YOT compared with almost 70% of the general YOT population. It should also be noted that historically Kirklees had performed relatively badly in terms of the proportion of LAC who offended. Thus, in 2010 almost 13% of Kirklees LAC were convicted of an offence, this compared with a national average of about 5% and a local average of under 7%.

In response to the above we took the decision to create a small team of LAC specialists who would take all cases at the YOT involving LAC. Also for the past four or five years the YOT has worked with Kirklees residential homes to increase the use of “restorative justice” as a way of dealing with most minor crimes that occurred within the homes. Over the past couple of years this has changed so that the restorative team within the YOT work with the residential sector to encourage a more general restorative approach to dealing with all issues/problems that may arise.

Further details and outcomes are outlined in section 3.3 below.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only, no decision required.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 **Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**
Not applicable

3.2 **Economic Resilience (ER)**
Not applicable

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

As mentioned above, in 2013 the YOT created a small team of staff who were all social work qualified YOT Officers that took responsibility for all LAC YOT interventions. This included becoming case responsible for all LAC who

became LAC by virtue of being remanded to Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA). The reasons for this were basically two-fold: firstly, developing greater expertise and skills in the additional processes required when working with LAC; secondly, to improve and develop liaison and joint working with other agencies (e.g. residential sector) and staff (e.g. Children's Social Workers and Residential Staff).

Because of our concerns about the poor outcomes for LAC in the YOT we wanted an objective measure that we could use to measure performance. Initially we used the relative rate of breach of LAC compared with the general YOT population. Breach is when a young person is returned to Court because of failure to comply with the terms of their Court Order (Referral Order, YRO). Initial findings were that LAC were more than twice as likely to be breached. Unfortunately this measure was difficult and laborious to collect as the report could not be run by our case management system (Child View) and had to be collected manually. It was also difficult to validate. Thus in 2015 we changed to measuring successful outcomes at the end of a young person's intervention. A successful outcome is defined as completing an order without re-offending or being returned to Court in breach and being resentenced.

The YOT knew that outcomes for LAC were significantly worse than the general YOT population, our aim was to bring outcomes for LAC more in line with the general population.

In the year April 2015 to March 2016 29% of LAC successfully completed their intervention, while 70% of the general population did so.

Last year (April 2017 to March 2018) 75% of LAC successfully completed while 68% of the general population did so, a remarkable transformation. Figures for the latest quarter (April 18 – June 18) maintain the equivalence with 75% LAC and 81% general population successfully completing.

The YOT have been able to achieve this by having a small group of staff (initially 4 now 2.5) who could develop expertise, links and joint working, what was crucial was having the information. Thus we initially had a vague understanding that we weren't doing as well in our work with LAC because it appeared that more were being returned to Court. Once we could show to staff at the YOT the clear, easily understood evidence that less than 30% of LAC were completing compared with almost 70% of non-LAC young people, we were able to work together to come up with strategies to improve and we could easily demonstrate if we were improving.

There has also been an improvement in the percentage of 10-17 year old LAC who are convicted of an offence, though far less dramatic. In 2010 almost 13% of Kirklees LAC were convicted of an offence compared with a national average of under 5%. By 2016 the Kirklees figure was just over 6% compared with a national average that remained at about 5% (2016 is the latest year for which we have comparative data). Unfortunately the figure for 2017 has increased slightly to 7.2% but we don't have any comparative data.

Over the past 4 – 5 years the YOT’s Restorative Justice Team has been working with the residential sector to encourage the use of restorative justice to deal with minor offences that occur within children’s homes. This is basically where, with the agreement of all parties, a young person is given the opportunity to make amends (reparation) for their offence rather than going through the criminal justice system. Thereby reducing the number of young people criminalised for relatively minor offences. More recently the approach has been broadened from just using this approach for minor offences to using a restorative approach as a general problem solving method involving all parties.

The benefits for all of this approach are perhaps best summed up by a quote from the Manager of a children’s home, in the recent YOT Restorative Justice Newsletter.

“As a Children’s home we are often faced with the challenging behaviours that could be addressed using methods other than sanctions, which were ineffective and unproductive. As a team we needed to use the same approach so as not to discriminate or show favouritism when trying to manage difficult situations.

Following the training day, adopting the Restorative Approaches within a home setting will enable a more reflective style of intervention for both the team and the young people. The training has also helped to sign post the team to additional support available in the YOT team, which will also help to embed the practice throughout the home. This has also strengthened the partnership working between children’s residential settings and YOT, which in turn will promote good outcomes for the residents.”

3.4 **Reducing demand of services**

Not applicable

3.5 **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

Not applicable

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

Not applicable

5. **Next steps**

- a. YOT to continue monitoring LAC performance in terms of outcomes and offending relative to the general YOT population so that we are quickly aware of any developing concerns.
- b. YOT to maintain current level of resources for LAC (specialist YOT Social Workers).
- c. YOT restorative justice workers to continue to support residential sector by delivering training and advice on the use of restorative practices in children’s homes.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Richard M Smith
richardm.smith@kirklees.gov.uk
Tel no 01484 221000

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Elaine McShane (Family Support and Child Protection)

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Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 24th September 2018
Title of report: Care Leavers – Local Offer Keep on Caring

Purpose of report.

To ensure that members of the Corporate Parenting Board are kept informed of the progress of the development of the Kirklees Local Offer and extending Personal Advisor support to care leavers to the age of 25.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Sal Tariq) – 12.9.18
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not applicable
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: not applicable

Ward councillors consulted: not applicable

Public or private: Public

1. Background

The local offer

Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires each local authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its care leavers. The local offer should provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the local authority and partner agencies including information about both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support that a local authority chooses to provide.

Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to have regard to seven corporate parenting principles when discharging their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers. The local offer should set out what support all local authority departments will provide (not just Children's Services), having regard to the corporate parenting principles.

Details of the services and support that should be included

The local offer should include details of the services and support that may assist care leavers in, or moving to, adulthood and independent living that the local authority provides in relation to:

- **Health and wellbeing:** This will include services that teach about, support and enable good health and wellbeing. It should include links to, or information about, universal health services that might be particularly relevant to care leavers, as well as specific health and wellbeing services targeted at them.
- **Relationships:** having strong and supportive relationships is crucially important for care leavers as they move to independent adult life. Local authorities will want to consider the services and/ or support that is available to help care leavers develop and maintain positive social networks and to understand what positive relationships look like.
- **Education and training:** Care leavers should be supported to access appropriate education or training that will enable them to fulfil their goals. This will include the statutory support available to care leavers, such as the £2,000 bursary for care leavers in Higher Education, as well as any other support from the local authority; and signpost to universal information such as careers advice and financial support for young people.
- **Employment:** this will include information to care leavers about general employment support, such as careers support and links to local Job Centre Plus. Local authorities should also include any other employment support that they or partners deliver that is specifically available to care leavers, for example, any apprenticeships that the local authority offers, in particular where such opportunities are ring-fenced for care leavers.
- **Accommodation:** care leavers should be supported to access appropriate and suitable accommodation. The local authority should include relevant information about their Staying Put policy, the support available from Housing Services and any other assistance that is available to care leavers, such as advice on maintaining a tenancy.
- **Participation in society:** this will include links to and information about activities, events or volunteering opportunities available in the local area that care leavers can get involved in.

2. **Summary**

In October 2017 no 11 was opened as a drop in centre for Children in Care and Care Leavers to access support from a variety of professionals. There are currently a number of services available from a number of partner agencies including housing, health, education, employment and training and local services providing support with drugs and alcohol misuse. It has been identified that there are a number of services available however there is further need for development in relation to providing a more effective service for our Young People.

As a service we have been reviewing our service provision as part of the process of developing our Local Offer for Care Leavers.

In order to progress these developments we have updated the action plan please refer to Action Plan Appendix 1.

3. **Information required to take a decision.**

For information, no action required.

4. **Implications for the Council**

4.1 **Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**

Not applicable

4.2 **Economic Resilience (ER)**

Not applicable

4.3 **Improving Outcomes for Children**

The implementation of the Kirklees Local Offer will provide a Partnership Approach in providing support and services that will assist Care Leavers with their transition to adulthood.

4.4 **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

Not applicable

5. **Consultations**

Action Plan and proposed draft of the Local Offer - 9th July 2018 members of the Corporate Parenting Board were consulted in relation to the action plan and the proposed draft of the Local Offer.

Views from CICC and CL Forum on the proposed Local Offer - On the 9th and 11th July 2018 members of the steering group attended the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum in order to discuss the draft proposed Local Offer and to seek their views as part of the consultation process.

On the 31st July 2018 the draft Local Offer was presented to the Senior Leadership Team as part of the consultation process. Recommendations were made to make some amendments to the proposed draft.

Meeting with partner agencies - On the 28th August 2018 meeting was held with partner agencies this was a mix of partners who are already providing services at no 11 along with other partners in order to discuss their role in the Local Offer in relation

to enhancing the service provision for our Care Leavers. The partners have been asked to provide feedback on the proposed draft offer.

Design of the offer - One of our Care Experienced Apprentices is currently looking at the design of the offer in consultation with other Young People.

6. Next steps

Drop in Centre in North Kirklees - On the 13th September 2018 members of the steering group with visit premises in Dewsbury to consider appropriate premises for a drop in centre in North Kirklees.

Partnership meeting - On the 25th September 2018 a further partnership meeting to be held.

Proposed draft Local Offer - On the 30th October 2018 the proposed draft Local Offer to be presented to the Senior Leadership Team.

7. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the Board note the report and the revised action plan attached at Appendix 1.

8. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable

9. Contact officers

Julie Bragg Interim Head of Service Children in Care Leavers Service.
julie.bragg@kirklees.gov.uk
01484 221000

10. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Report to Corporate Parenting Board on the 9th July 2018 "Care Leavers – Local Offer Keep on Caring"

11. Service Director responsible

Elaine McShane (Family Support and Child Protection)

Local Offer for Care Leavers & No 11 – Action Plan

No	Action	Update	By Who	By When	Status
1.	Update draft CL local offer with details on support available for Care Leavers		CAS	02.07.18	Completed
2.	Ascertain full governance route for CL Local Offer	Emailed Tina Cooper. Steve Comb to advise	CAS	02.07.18	Completed
3.	Review statement of purpose for No 11		JB, JS, RK, CAS	25.06.18	Completed
4.	Updated list of services to be sent to be included in No 11 statement of purpose	JS & RK to send mapping list	RK, JS	29.06.18	
5.	Draft process for supporting young people over 21 (initial assessment tool to help with this) to be sent for inclusion in No 11 statement of purpose	To be sent to CAS once complete	JS	06.07.18	
6.	Arrange consultation with young people via Children in Care Council and Care leavers Forum	Emailed to request dates and to add to agenda	CAS, Sanna Mahmood	25.06.18	Completed
7.	Arrange meeting with key partners/stakeholders to discuss No 11	Arranged for 28 Aug 18	CAS	29.06.18	Completed
8.	Book Local Offer and No 11 Statement of Purpose onto Corporate Parenting board – preferably September	On agenda for 24 September 18	CAS, Helen Kilroy	02.07.18	Completed
9.	Book Local offer onto SLT	Booked for 31.07.18	CAS	02.07.18	Completed
10.	Meeting to review draft Local Offer prior to consultation with young people		JB, JS, RK, CAS	02.07.18	Completed
11.	Discuss and agree reception cover in No 11 with Business Support Managers	Conversations ongoing, just need formal confirmation from BSM's	RK,JS	06.07.18	In progress
12.	Report the work in the Leaving Care Service - Keep on Caring to Corporate Parenting Board		JB	09.07.18	Completed
13.	Consultation via Children in Care Council	Julie Bragg attending	JB	09.07.18	Completed
14.	Consultation via Care Leavers Forum	Julie Bragg, Janette Singh & Rosie Khan attending	JS	11.07.18	Completed
15.	Ideas for potential use of/changes to space in no 11 to be produced and sent to JB	Need an update on this	RK, JS	13.07.18	
16.	Discuss proposed changes to space in No 11 and ascertain the amount of available Transformation Challenge budget to fund this	Need an update on this	JB, SC	20.07.18	

17.	Review and update Local Offer following consultation with young people		JB, JS, RK, CAS	31.07.18	Completed
18.	Share draft local offer & No 11 Statement of Purpose with Senior Leadership Team		JB	31.07.18	Completed
19.	Partner consultation on local offer and No 11 Statement of Purpose	JB on leave, SC to chair	SC, Partners	28.08.18	Completed
20.	Share Care Leavers Local Offer and No 11 Statement of Purpose with Portfolio Holder	Shared at Corporate Parenting Board on 9 July 18	SC, JB	09.07.18	Completed
21.	Care Leavers Local Offer and No 11 Statement of Purpose to Corporate Parenting Board	Papers to Helen Kilroy by 12.09.18	JB, SC	24.09.18	
22.	Follow up meeting with partners to discuss feedback on local offer		JB, Partners	25.09.18	
23.	Updated Care Leavers Local Offer to SLT		JB, SC,CAS	30.10.18	
24.	Updated Local Offer to ET	Sal to advise at SLT on 25.09.18 of when local offer should go to ET	JB, SC	TBC	
25.	Develop comms plan for Care Leavers Local Offer		JB, JS, RK, CAS, Comms	October	
26.	Plan launch and publication of Care Leavers Local Offer & relaunch of No 11		JB, JS, RK, CAS	Early November	
27.	Launch of Care Leavers Local Offer & relaunch of No 11		Leaving Care Service	Mid November	